Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford

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Dear Members

Planning Committee

A meeting of the Planning Committee will be held on **Wednesday 10 June 2026** at **6.30pm** in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown in each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.

Head of Law and Governance

PLANNING COMMITTEE - 10 JUNE 2026

Chairman - Councillor B McKeown

Vice-Chairman - Councillor S N Spencer

AGENDA

		Page Nos
1	**Minutes**	
2	**Apologies**	
3	**Declaration of Member's Interests/Lobbying**	
4	**Delegated Applications**	
	Details of Delegated applications will be circulated separately to Members.	
5	**Planning Applications**	3 - 95
6	**Planning Appeals**	96 - 131
7	**Enforcement Matters**	-

MEMBERSHIP

Chairman - Councillor B McKeown

B M Cross
P C Edgeller
A D Hobbs
J Hood
R A James
P W Jones
B McKeown
A R McNaughton
D M McNaughton
A J Sandiford
S N Spencer

ITEM NO 5 ITEM NO 5

PLANNING COMMITTEE - 10 JUNE 2026

Ward Interest - Nil

Planning Applications

Report of Head of Economic Development and Planning

Purpose of Report

To consider the following planning applications, the reports for which are set out in the attached **APPENDIX**:-

		Page Nos
24/39849/COU	**Land at Marston Meadow, Marston Lane, Marston** The application was called in by Councillor F Beatty **Officer Contact** - Richard Wood, Development Lead Telephone 01785 619324	5 - 22
25/41424/FUL	**Squirrel Barn, Sandon Lane, Milwich** The application was called in by Councillor F Beatty **Officer Contact** - Ed Handley, Development Lead Telephone 01785 619326	23 - 43
25/41286/FUL	**Land Adjacent to Acorn Cottage, Drointon Lane, Stowe By Chartley** This application was called in by Councillor F Beatty **Officer Contact** - Ed Handley, Development Lead Telephone 01785 619326	44 - 66

25/40919/PIP	**Land West of Old Road, Barlaston, Stoke-On-Trent** This application was called in by Councillor E Jones **Officer Contact** - Leon Carroll, Team Leader Telephone 01785 619184	67 - 95

Previous Consideration

Nil

Background Papers

Planning application files are available for Members to inspect, by prior arrangement, in the Development Management Section. The applications including the background papers, information and correspondence received during the consideration of the application, consultation replies, neighbour representations are scanned and are available to view on the Council website.

Application:	24/39849/COU
Case Officer:	Jodie Harris
Date Registered:	1 May 2025
Target Decision Date: **Extended To:**	26 June 2025 12 June 2026
Address:	Land At Marston Meadow, Marston Lane, Marston, Stafford, Staffordshire
Ward:	Milwich
Parish:	Marston
Proposal:	Change of use from current agricultural use to that of a securely fenced dog field with hard standing for customer car parking
Applicant:	Mr S Clarey
Recommendation:	Approve, subject to conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application has been called in by Councillor F Beatty, Ward Member for Milwich, for the following reason(s):

"1. Safeguarding the countryside: does the extension of the proposed non-agricultural business onto greenfield land constitute sustainable development in the countryside?

2. Business Plan: the application should be accompanied by a business plan setting out its viability. The BP would include detailed management and supervision of the site; supervision and control of the animals in relation to passers-by on the adjacent footpath; types of dogs being exercised (the report recognizes problems on site in handling dangerous breeds); impact of any lighting; noise management.

3. Noise

4. Location adjacent to St Leonard's Church

5. Visual amenity"

Context

1.0 Site and Surrounding

1.1 The application site is a parcel of agricultural land between Marston Lane and Yarlet Lane. The site is surrounded by further agricultural fields with some nearby residential properties and the Grade II listed St Leonards Church.

1.2 It is stated within the application form that the last use of the land was grazing for sheep.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1 Planning permission is sought for a change of use of an agricultural field to a dog walking field. Other works include, the erection of a secure timber post and wire fence, and a parking/turning area for vehicles.

2.2 The submission states that the field would work on private bookings only, accommodate no more than 4 dogs, 3 people, and then 2 parking spaces per booking.

2.3 It was noted during the Officer's site visit that the fencing had already been erected.

Officer Assessment – Key Considerations

3.0 Planning policy framework

3.1 Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, require decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 Parts 1 and 2 (TPSB).

4.0 Principle of Development

4.1 The application site lies within the rural parish of Marston, which is not defined as a Key Service Village within the Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy (SP3) of the Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB).

4.2 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas, and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, amongst other criteria.

4.3 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

4.4 TPSB provides direction for all developments in Stafford Borough and generally supports sustainable rural development. In particular policy E1 (f) encourages farm/rural diversification for employment or serve general uses.

4.5 Policy SP6 – Achieving Rural Sustainability gives priority to supporting the rural sustainability of the Borough by protecting and enhancing its environmental assets and character whilst sustaining the social and economic fabric of its communities.

4.6 Particularly relevant in this case is Policy E2 of TPSB, which supports rural development outside settlements in circumstances, including (v) diversification of the agricultural economy and (viii) recreation uses appropriate to a rural location. All development are subject to a number safeguarding limitations, particularly relevant in this case are: (c) complementary to and not prejudice any existing viable agricultural or other uses; (d) respect and protect the natural landscape: (f) be appropriately designed for its purposes; and (g) not be detrimental to the amenity of the area.

4.7 The proposed use is a dog walking and exercising facility, that would provide a service for the local and wider community. In this case it is considered that the use constitutes an appropriate form of rural diversification that will contribute to the growth of the rural economy, provide a service to the local area, and not involve the irreversible change of use of the agricultural land with little in the way of operational development, and as such, would not lead to the permanent loss of agricultural land. As such, it is neither reasonable, necessary nor a policy requirement to require the applicant to submit a business plan setting out its viability as suggested by the local Councillor.

4.8 For the above reasons, the principle of development is therefore considered acceptable in accordance with the NPPF and the provisions of Strategic Policy 6 and policies E1 and E2 of TPSB.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 7, 8, 10, 11, 88

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: SP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development; SP3 Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy, SP7 Supporting the location of new development

The Plan for Stafford Borough: Part 2

Policies: SB1 Settlement boundaries

5.0 Character and Appearance

5.1 Policies N1g and N1h of TPSB require that proposals are of a high standard of design and have regard to the local context. The National Planning Policy Framework also places great emphasis on high quality design and requires that developments add to the overall quality of the area.

5.2 Policy N8 states that new development should respect the character of the landscape setting through design, layout and materials. Policy N9 states that development proposals will be expected to sustain and, where appropriate enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting.

5.3 Consideration has therefore been given to the proposal and its visual impact on the wider setting, including, the grade II listed Church of St Leonard. Neighbour representations concerning the proposals impact upon the character and appearance of the area and to the nearby listed St. Leonards Church are noted.

5.4 The proposal concerns a change of use of the field to securely fence dog walking field with hard standing for customer parking. The fence and gates have already been erected on site, which comprise of timber post and wire deer fence to a height of between 1.8m and 2m.

5.5 Due to the sites proximity to St. Leonards Church, the Council's Conservation Officer has provided comment and states that the deer fencing is not uncommon in rural landscapes and is almost completely permeable in appearance and has very little impact on the openness of the field. It is also noted that the church sits on the opposite side of the field, and as such the galvanised gates are barely visible in distanced views.

5.6 As such, the proposed change of use and associated infrastructure would preserve the setting of the grade II listed church, subject to conditions securing grass grid reinforced parking mats for the parking and turning area which should be permeable and reversible, together with details of any external lighting.

5.7 In terms of the proposals impact upon the wider setting, the fencing is not considered to appear overly prominent within the landscape, and even when viewed along the public right of way, it is not considered an unusual feature in a rural setting. It is also noted that for the most part, the mesh fencing is screened by existing hedging with bounds the site.

5.8 Aside from the fencing and gates, the application site would largely remain the same as a grassed field bound by vegetation. The design and access statement states that a small open sided moveable shelter with seating would be situated within the field to be used by customers during poor weather conditions. The location or appearance of this shelter has not been shown on the submitted plans, as such, it is considered both reasonable and appropriate to attach a condition securing these details before its installation.

5.9 For the above reasons, the proposed dog walking exercise area would not adversely affect visual amenity of the immediate or wider landscape character.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 12. Achieving well-designed places

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031

Policies N1 Design, N8 Landscape Character

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) ¬¬– Design

6.0 Amenity

6.1 Criteria (e) of Policy N1 of the TPSB and the SPD require design and layout to take account of adjacent residential areas and existing activities.

6.2 Consideration has therefore been given to the proposals impact on residential well-being to surrounding properties. Neighbour representations are noted concerning the proposals impact upon residential amenity. It is noted that an audio recording of the applicants' dogs barking (on the site), however, for technical reasons, this could not be uploaded to Stafford Borough Council's public access website. Nevertheless, neighbour concerns regarding dogs barking and overall noise has been taken into consideration of this proposal.

6.3 The application site is located in a quiet rural edge location whereby ambient noise levels are low, and there are several nearby residential properties (Elm Cottage, Wayside, Church Farm, The Granary, Sunnyhill Farm and Woodhill Farm). Whilst there are a number of residential properties situated in proximity to the site, including Elm Cottage, Wayside, Church Farm, The Granary, Sunnyhill Farm and Woodhill Farm properties, it is not considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, due to the management of the enterprise.

6.4 The proposal relates to a managed and relatively low-intensity use of the land, with the facility operating on a pre-booked basis only. The applicant has confirmed that bookings would operate in 50-minute sessions with a 10-minute changeover period between users. Furthermore, the use would be controlled by condition to ensure that no more than two vehicles, three people, and four dogs are present on the site at any one time. These restrictions would significantly limit the level of activity associated with the use and prevent excessive comings and goings, congregation of people, or intensification of the site.

6.5 In respect of overlooking and privacy, the activity associated with the proposal would largely comprise individuals walking dogs within an open field environment. Such activity would be transient in nature and would not result in prolonged or direct overlooking of neighbouring residential properties. Whilst it is acknowledged that some neighbouring dwellings are positioned at a lower land level relative to parts of the application site, the proposal does not involve the introduction of built development, or elevated structures that would facilitate sustained overlooking. Furthermore, existing hedgerows and boundary vegetation surrounding the site provide a degree of natural screening.

6.6 The suggested opening times in the submitted application form are:

Monday to Sunday including bank holidays:

Spring and Summer 07:00 - 20:00

Winter months 08:00 - 16:00

6.7 However, the Council’s Environmental Health Team (EHT) have assessed the proposal and have requested that the following opening hours are conditioned:

Monday to Friday: 08:00 - 18:00

Saturday: 08:00 - 14:00

Not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

6.8 These restrictions are considered reasonable and necessary in order to safeguard the amenities of nearby residents and would limit the potential for disturbance during more sensitive periods, such as in the evening and on Sundays/bank holidays.

6.9 The applicant has reviewed similar proposals approved in the borough to justify extended opening hours; however, these sites are not considered comparable. The application site for 22/36826/FUL (Holdiford Road, Stafford) is separated from the nearest residential properties by an operational railway line. As such, the existing noise environment in the vicinity of that site was already characterised by intermittent transport noise associated with passing trains. The area in general also comprises more urban development when compared to the application site, which establishes a relatively elevated baseline noise climate.

6.10 Similarly, the application site for application 21/33777/COU (Green Lane, Eccleshall) is located on the edge of a settlement, whereby the ambient noise levels would naturally be higher. The proposed dog walking field is also set back from the highway and is a distance of approximately 61m from the nearby residential property. As such, these sites are not directly comparable to the current case and the operating hours requested by the EHT are considered appropriate and reasonable.

6.11 In summary, the proposal would not result in undue harm to the residential amenity of surrounding properties, subject to securing the opening hours suggested by the Council's EHT, by condition.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Paragraph 135

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031 – Policy N1 Design

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Design

7.0 Parking and Highway Safety

7.1 Policy T2 of TPSB also requires all new development have safe and adequate means of access, egress and internal circulation/turning arrangements for all modes of transport. Neighbour representations raising concern over the proposals impact upon highway safety are noted and the Local Highway Authority have been consulted.

7.2 The application site would include four parking spaces and a turning area, so vehicles are safely parked off the highway and have capacity to turn and egress the site in forward gear. Again, the applicant states that there would be no more than 2 cars per booking, with a maximum of 3 people and no more than 4 dogs at any one time. The bookings are to be managed on a 50-minute basis with a 10-minute change over between a customer leaving and another customer arriving.

7.3 A section of hedgerow is to be removed next to the site entrance to ensure suitable visibility splays. Any re-planting of the hedgerow will be planted between the visibility splay and shall be conditioned to be retained as such for the lifetime of the development.

7.4 The Local Highway Authority raises no objection in principle to the proposal but recommends the following conditions should permission be granted.

- The parking and turning area must be completed before the site is brought into use.
- The vehicular access must be resurfaced to an agricultural standard (tarmac) for the full width of the access and for at least 10m into the site.
- The repositioned access gate must be retained permanently.
- The replacement hedge must be removed for at least 9.6m to achieve visibility splays and retained permanently.
- A 10 minute gap between bookings must be maintained for the lifetime of the development.
- The site must not be floodlit.
- The dog walking field must not be used for events or shows.

7.5 All of which are considered reasonable and appropriate and will be attached should planning permission be forthcoming.

<u>Policies and Guidance:-</u>

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 9. Promoting sustainable transport

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031

Policies T1 Transport, T2 Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities, Appendix B - Car Parking Standards

8.0 Ecology

8.1 Policy N4 of TPSB seeks to protect the Borough's natural environment, which is reflected within the NPPF under the section heading of Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

8.2 Policy N5 states the highest level of protection will be given to European Sites.

8.3 Policy N6 states development will not be permitted where it would lead directly or indirectly to an adverse impact on the Cannock Chase SAC and the effects cannot be mitigated.

European Sites

8.4 The site is within 15km of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation; however, due to the nature of the proposal it is not considered that the development would result in any impact on the reasons for the designation of the SAC. The Council is, therefore, not required to carry out an appropriate assessment

Trees

8.5 The proposal is not considered to impact upon in-site trees given the proposal concerns the change of use of the land.

Newts

8.6 The application is supported by a newt survey. The Newt Officer (Nature Space) state that the scale of work involved is minor and no high value habitat for newts will be removed.

8.7 The Newt Officer has requested that, whilst they are satisfied with the ecological report submitted with the application, a compliance condition is recommended to secure the measures set out in the ecology report, along with an informative reminding the applicant that it is an offence to deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill great crested newts.

8.8 The Newt Officer also advises against the installation of a pheasant feeder, due to pheasants being a non-native species that feed on insects, reptiles and amphibians. An informative can be added, should planning permission be forthcoming, to draw the applicant's attention to this.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

8.9 The proposal is not exempt from BNG as a change of use of the land, and therefore, a 10% uplift is required. A BNG Assessment has been undertaken by Hewitt and Carr Services which advises the agricultural habitats onsite are not significant and there are no protected species issues.

8.10 The Biodiversity Officer has been consulted and states that the revised BNG metric shows that both habitat and hedgerow units meet the statutory requirements. Habitat units will increase by 13.42% and hedgerow units by 18.87%.

8.11 As such, management and monitoring plan will need to be included at the biodiversity Gain Condition Stage to ensure the habitats are maintained over the statutory 30-year period.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 8, 124, 187, 193, 194 and 195

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N2 Climate change; N4 The natural environment and green infrastructure; N5 Sites of European, national and local nature conservation importance; N6 Cannock Chase special area of conservation

9.0 Other

9.1 The application site lies within the site of Marston medieval deserted settlement, and given the archaeological potential of the site, further archaeological investigation of the site is recommended.

9.2 SCC Archaeology have requested the below pre-commencement condition concerning an Archaeological project design, which the applicant has agreed too.

A) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, an Archaeological Project Design shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The Archaeological Project Design shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-excavation reporting and appropriate publication.

B) The archaeological site work shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with the Archaeological Project Design approved under condition (A).

C) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post-excavation assessment has been completed in accordance with the Archaeological Project Design approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

9.3 Public Right of Way (PROW) Footpath Marston lies adjacent to the site; however this should not be hindered by the proposed use of the field. The SCC PROW Officer has commented and notes that following a site visit, the legal line of the footpath has not been obstructed.

10.0 Conclusion and planning balance

10.1 The proposed development would support the diversification of the rural economy and provide a facility for the local residents to utilise. The development is considered to be acceptable having to design, amenity, highway safety and ecology, subject to conditions.

Consultations

Highway Authority:

No objection subject to conditions.

Conservation Officer:

No objection subject to condition.

Environmental Health:

No objection subject to condition.

SCC PROW:

No impact upon the PROW.

Biodiversity Officer:

No objection, management and monitoring plan will need to be included at the Gain Condition Stage to ensure the habitats are maintained over the statutory 30-year period.

Newt Officer:

No objection subject to condition.

SCC Archaeology:

No objection subject to condition.

Parish Council:

No comment received.

Neighbours:

10 representations received in objection to the proposal, raising the following material considerations:

- Residential amenity (noise, privacy, overlooking)
- Highway safety
- Design and impact upon historic environment
- Flood

Publicity

Site Notice:

Expiry date: 4 July 2025

Relevant Planning History

None

Recommendation

Approve, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.

2. This permission relates to the originally submitted details and specification and to the following drawings, except where indicated otherwise by a condition attached to this consent, in which case the condition shall take precedence:-

   Drawing No. 8178-2c Rev D;

   Visibility Splay received 23 March 2026.

3.

A) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, an Archaeological Project Design shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The Archaeological Project Design shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-excavation reporting and appropriate publication.

B) The archaeological site work shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with the Archaeological Project Design approved under condition (A).

C) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post-excavation assessment has been completed in accordance with the Archaeological Project Design approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

4. No Shelter shall be erected or installed within the proposed dog walking field hereby approved until details of its siting and appearance including its scale, design and materials, have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The shelter shall thereafter be installed only in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.

5. Before the development is first brought into use, suitable receptacles for the disposal of dog waste shall be provided within the exercise field and the car parking area (or such other locations as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) and shall thereafter be retained as such for the life of the development.

6. The dog walking field hereby permitted shall be operated as a single field only and shall not be subdivided, portioned, or separated into multiple fields, paddocks or enclosures at any time.

7. The site shall only be used for the approved purpose of supervised dog exercising between the hours of:

Monday to Friday: 08:00 - 18:00

Saturday: 08:00 - 14:00

Not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

At all times, use of the facility shall be operated by appointment only and limited to a maximum of 4 canines accompanied by no more than 3 people in 2 private vehicles.

8. A minimum period of 10 minutes shall be maintained between each private booking of the dog walking field hereby approved, for the lifetime of the development.

9. The development hereby approved shall not be used for dog training events/shows for the lifetime of the development.

10. Notwithstanding any description, details and specifications submitted, the parking areas and turning areas shall comprise grass grid reinforced parking mats and thereafter retained as such for the life of the development.

11. No floodlighting shall be installed or operated at the site at any time. Any other external lighting shall not be installed unless details of its position, design, luminance and shielding have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting shall thereafter be installed and operated only in accordance with the approved details for the lifetime of the development.

12. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the parking and turning area has been provided and the vehicle access rear of the carriageway edge has been surfaced and thereafter maintained to an agricultural standard in tarmac for its full width for a minimum depth of 10m into the site to the repositioned access gate as shown on Drawing No 8178-2C Location and block plan Revision D and shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details for the lifetime of the development.

13. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the road side hedge has been completely removed for a minimum of 9.6m and a replacement hedge set back a minimum of 1m behind the visibility splay lines as shown on Drawing No 8178-2C Location and block plan Revision D and Visibility Splay received 23 March 2026 and shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.

14. The development hereby approved shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the recommendations/measures stated on pages 15-16 of the supporting document Great Crested Newt (GCN) Impact Assessment (Hewitt and Carr Services, March 2025).

15. Prior to the development being brought into use, details of the replacement hedge shown on the approved Visibility Splay plan received on 23 March 2026, including species, planting specification and maintenance arrangements, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The replacement hedge shall thereafter be planted in accordance with the approved details and retained as such for the lifetime of the development.

The reasons for the Council's decision to approve the development subject to the above conditions are:

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. To define the permission.

3. To safeguard and record archaeological interest within the site in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. To safeguard the visual amenities of the area (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

5. To safeguard the amenities of the area (Policy N1e of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

6. To define the permission.

7. To safeguard the amenities of the area. (Policy N1e of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

8. In the interests of the safety and convenience of users of the highway (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough)

9. In the interests of the safety and convenience of users of the highway (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

10. To safeguard the nearby Grade II Listed building St Leonards Church (Policy N9 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

11. To safeguard the amenities of the area. (Policy N1e of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

12. In the interests of the safety and convenience of users of the highway (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

13. In the interests of the safety and convenience of users of the highway (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough)

14. To minimise the impacts of development on biodiversity (Policy N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

15. To safeguard the visual amenity of the area (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

Informatives

1 In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Order) 2015, as amended, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, the Council has worked in a positive and proactive way in determining the application and has granted planning permission.

2 The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning permission for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. Should great crested newts be found at any stage of the development works, then all works should cease, and a professional and/or suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (or Natural England) should be contacted for advice on any special precautions before continuing, including the need for a licence.

3 Public Footpath No.9 Marston Parish runs adjacent to the application site, immediately north of the proposed development. The granting of planning permission does not constitute authority for any interference with the public right of way and associated items - or its obstruction (temporary or permanent). This is the case both during the building stage or once the development is completed should the permission be granted. The term obstruction, in this context, applies to items such as gates or stiles which are regarded as licenced obstructions which must be sanctioned by the highways authority, and also to any vehicles parking on the right of way, including those associated with construction. Any hedging/trees/shrubs planted within 3 metres of the public right of way are the responsibility of the landowner not the Highways Authority (including maintenance and liability). Where private rights exist that allow the use of vehicles along a footpath, drivers of vehicles must give way to pedestrians. In the absence of private rights, driving a vehicle on a public right of way is a criminal offence.

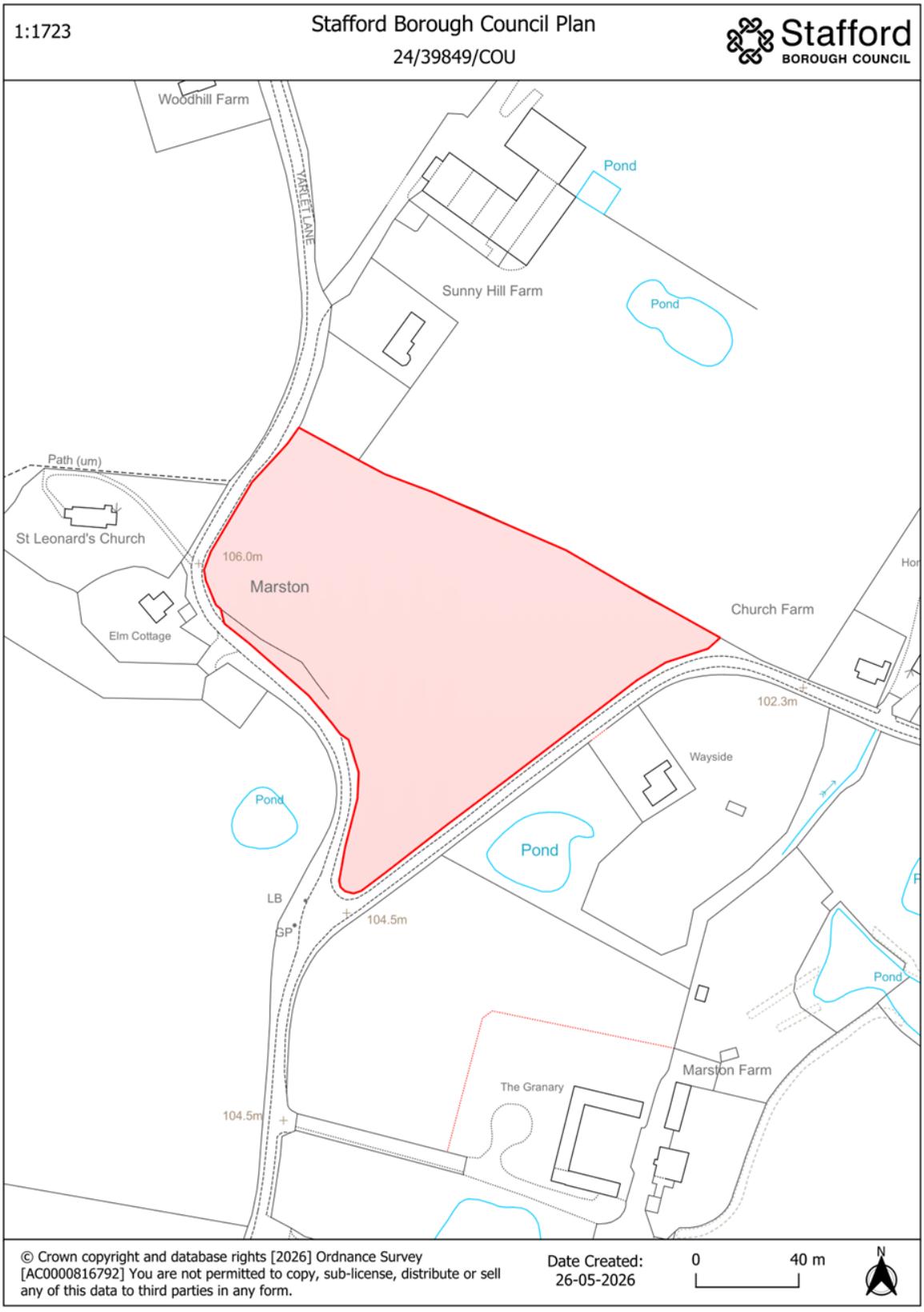
4 The applicants attention is drawn to comments provided by Nature Space on pheasant feeders dated 15 May 2025.

5 Radon risk maps were updated in December 2022, as a result a number of areas in the Borough are now affected. It is advised that precautions are made for Radon protection measures in any new build homes. Further information can be found at www.ukradon.org

6 If the application were to be approved the access would require a Highway Works Agreement and Permit to Dig with Staffordshire County Council to re-surface the existing access to an agricultural standard (tarmac) for its full width for a minimum depth of 10m. The applicant is requested to contact Staffordshire County Council in order to secure the Agreements. The link below is to the Highway Works Information Pack including an application form. Please complete and send to the address indicated on the application form or email to highway.agreements@staffordshire.gov.uk. The applicant is advised to begin this process well in advance of any works taking place in order to meet any potential timescales. www.staffordshire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/highway-applications-and-licences/highway-agreements/minor-works. Please note traffic management may also be required whilst works are carried out to resurface the vehicle access crossing due to the location of the access being close to a blind bend. The applicant would need to apply for retrospective section 184 permit to legalise the widened access.

7 The applicant's attention is drawn to the protected status of nesting birds and the requirement that they are not disrupted during the nesting season (March to August).

24/39849/COU
Land At Marston Meadow
Marston Lane
Marston



Application:	25/41424/FUL
Case Officer:	Hannah Cross
Date Registered:	14 November 2025
Target Decision Date: **Extended To:**	9 January 2026 -
Address:	Squirrel Barn, Sandon Lane, Milwich, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST18 0EG
Ward:	Milwich
Parish:	Milwich
Proposal:	Change of use of dwellinghouse to holiday let
Applicant:	Squirrel Lettings
Recommendation:	Approve, subject to conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application has been 'called-in' to be determined at Planning Committee by Councillor F Beatty, Ward Councillor for Milwich for the following reasons:

For members to consider:

> *"1. The applicant has no right of access to the property for commercial purposes. The only rights that exist are for residential use.*
>
> *2. The applicant is subject to currently unenforced enforcement proceedings for the illegal operation of a hotel and party business. The addition of the proposed accommodation, without the illicit operations being closed down, further encourages the illegal hospitality enterprise/party venue.*
>
> *3. The boundary plans submitted are inaccurate and their correction has a material impact on the validity of the application.*
>
> *4. There is wholly inadequate parking proposed, too few parking spaces."*

1.0 Context

The Application Site

1.1 Squirrel Barn is one of two residential dwellings within a converted, curtilage listed, former agricultural building associated with the Grade II listed Milwich Hall to the south of the site. The agricultural building was converted to two residential dwellings (Squirrel Barn and Swallow Barn) under planning permission and listed building consent (reference 89/24395/FUL and 90/25789/LBC); the western barn (Squirrel Barn) later had a separate application submitted under references 95/32262/FUL and 95/32263/LBC to address underpinning issues.

1.2 The current application follows an active enforcement investigation where it has been established that the property has undergone an unauthorised change of use from a Class C3 residential dwelling to a holiday let. It is understood that this use has since ceased pending determination of the current planning application.

The Proposal

1.3 The application seeks planning permission for a proposed change of use of the dwelling to a holiday let (short-term let). The submission indicates that the proposal would be for up to 8 guests however officers have, during the course of consideration, advised the applicant that the use should be restricted to up to 6 guests; this recommendation has been accepted.

1.4 Amended plans have been received throughout the course of the application to show an extended red edge (to include the whole first floor of Squirrel Barn), and to indicate available parking provision at Squirrel Barn and Swallow Barn.

1.5 No alterations to the building are proposed or form part of this application; listed building consent is, therefore, not required in this instance.

Officer Assessment - Key Considerations

Planning Policy Framework

Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, require decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031.

2.0 Principle of Development

2.1 Paragraphs 11 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework maintain the Development Plan as the starting point for determination of applications and state that proposals in accordance with Development Plan policies should be approved unless outweighed by harm to material considerations. The NPPF itself is a material consideration.

2.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets down the three overarching economic, social and environmental objectives for achieving sustainable development.

2.3 The NPPF specifically supports sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments to benefit rural businesses whilst respecting the character of the countryside. In particular paragraph 88 requires that planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.

2.4 In turn, paragraph 89 recognises that, in order to meet local business and community needs in rural areas, sites may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and in locations not well served by public transport. Furthermore, that in such circumstances it is important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings and does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads.

2.5 Policy SP6 of the Plan for Stafford Borough (i) aims to promote a sustainable rural economy; it is considered that the proposed development would meet this aim.

2.6 Policy E6 aims to promote opportunities for new visitor accommodation, where it can be demonstrated through a business case that the use can be sustained in the long term, to include, amongst other things, tourism opportunities in rural areas, providing they are sensitively designed and are not detrimental to the natural environment or local amenity.

2.7 The supporting text to Policy E6 further states that in smaller villages and hamlets, tourism development will be used to strengthen the local economy and reduce the impact of the declining agricultural sector. However, this must be compatible with its rural location.

2.8 The applicant has submitted a Planning Statement and Business Case statement in support of their application. On the basis of the information submitted, it is noted that the site has been used as a holiday-let for several years (between 2016 and 2024), and based on the detail provided, it is evident that the operation generated a profit.

2.9 The proposed use would provide additional tourist accommodation within this rural area and, as such, would subsequently support the local rural economy. The applicant has provided a list of local areas and facilities for tourism in support of the proposal and its location.

2.10 Based on the information provided and given the previous (albeit unauthorised) use as a holiday-let there is nothing to suggest that the proposal could not be sustained in the long-term, and the proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with Policy E6.

2.11 The provision of holiday accommodation in attractive local countryside locations is accepted as an economic, social and environmental benefit of rural diversification and the attraction to tourism of the location is accepted in this case.

2.12 The principle of the development is therefore accepted, subject to other material planning considerations.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 8, 11, 12, 88

Section 13 Protecting Green Belt Land

Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: SP1 Presumption In Favour of Sustainable Development; SP6 Achieving Rural Sustainability; SP7 Supporting the Location of New Development; E2 Sustainable Rural Development; E6 Tourism; N9 Historic Environment

3.0 Character, Appearance and Heritage

3.1 Policy N1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough supports development that does not harm the character and appearance of area, whilst Policy N9 seeks to sustain, and where appropriate enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting.

3.2 The current application does not include any internal or external alterations to the building and relates solely to the use of Squirrel Barn. The Council's Conservation Officer (BCO), Parish Council, and neighbouring occupiers indicate that other, potentially unauthorised, works that have taken place on site however the current application relates solely to the use of the building and no other works are considered under this application. An informative could be attached to any permission granted, as requested by the BCO, to draw the applicant's attention to this.

3.3 The BCO nonetheless requests conditions to limit the scale of the use, as set out in the consultations section of the report below, which are not considered directly relevant to heritage and are discussed in the Residential Amenity (4.0) section of this report.

3.4 In all, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies N1 and N9.

Policies and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 12 Achieving well-designed places

The Plan for Stafford Borough:

Policies: N1 Design; N9 Historic Environment; Policy E6 Tourism

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) ¬¬- Design

4.0 Residential Amenity

4.1 Policy N1 of TPSB requires, in part, that development proposals take into account the amenity of adjacent residential areas or operations of existing activities. Furthermore, as above, policy E6 supports tourism opportunities in rural areas provided they are not detrimental to local amenity.

4.2 The lawful use of the site as a dwellinghouse allows for residents living together as a single household, with "single household" to be construed in accordance with Section 258 of the Housing Act 2004. Under this definition, it should be noted that the existing dwelling, in planning terms, could be lawfully occupied by any number of individuals, provided they are living together as a "single household".

4.3 The proposed holiday let use, would be associated with more sporadic activity at the site, i.e. at certain times of the day when guests arrive and leave, and a more frequent change-over of occupiers means that the character of the site would differ from that of a dwelling. Nonetheless the use of the site as a holiday-let is intended as a 'home-from-home' where guests would occupy the site as a dwellinghouse, albeit on a temporary basis.

4.4 Given the nature of the accommodation offered which is aimed at families, and in particular children, it is considered likely that the site would attract family groups, comprising a mix of adult and child guests from the same household(s), which would generate fewer vehicle movements. This is supported by the submitted planning statement which states that the property is marketed as a tranquil retreat and is aimed at families and especially children with extensive child play facilities both inside and outside.

4.5 Concerns raised by adjacent neighbouring occupiers surrounding noise, disturbance, waste, and anti-social behaviour are noted. It must be acknowledged that the occupation of a dwellinghouse will result in some level of noise and disturbance; be this through the occupants of the dwellinghouse (such as young children) or the activities carried out in the course of the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse (such as the use of power tools, entertainment systems, or gatherings in garden areas). For example, many dwellinghouses, whether used as short-term holiday lets or not, may be occupied by people who create significant levels of noise. Furthermore, it should also be acknowledged that an occupier of any dwellinghouse has the potential to behave in an anti-social manner, whether as a temporary or permanent occupier.

4.6 Preventing all instances of excessive noise emanating from a dwelling is therefore not possible. However, should undue levels of noise result from any dwelling (including the proposed holiday let) it would then be usual practice for this to be dealt with under separate legislation which deals with statutory noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

4.7 It is noted that Regulatory Services have requested a noise management plan be secured via condition. Officers have however had regard to a recent appeal decision APP/Z3445/C/24/3346118 for a similar proposal for holiday-let accommodation within the Borough of Tamworth, whereby the inspector found that noise reduction measures such as a curfew for use of outdoor areas, is only likely to be managed reactively and thus would not stop occurrences at the outset.

4.8 Similarly, whilst a complaints procedure could be put in place by the applicant this would not necessarily stop occurrences taking places in the first instance. In the case of the aforementioned appeal scheme the Inspector instead opted to limit the number of guests permitted on site at any one time, and attached a condition to the decision accordingly. It is recommended that the same approach be taken with the current proposal, restricting the number of guests to 6 people as opposed to the 8 guests originally proposed. The conditions requested by the BCO restricting the number of occupants and for a guest register to be kept are, therefore, considered to be appropriate.

4.9 The BCO recommends a condition to prohibit internal access between Squirrel Barn and Swallow Barn by blocking up a doorway on the first floor of the building. As this would require listed building consent via the submission of an application made under separate legislation, it is not considered that this condition would meet the tests required of planning conditions. Notwithstanding this, given any permission granted would relate to Squirrel Barn only (as outlined on the submitted plans), any permission granted would not grant or imply consent for the use of the adjacent property (Swallow Barn) as a holiday let, and it is therefore not considered this condition would be necessary to make the proposed use acceptable. Should any future occupier use Swallow Barn in a manner which falls outside of the scope of its lawful use as a dwellinghouse and which would require planning permission, this would comprise a breach of planning control and may be subject to enforcement action.

4.10 Neighbouring occupiers raise concerns regarding glare from existing lighting erected on site, and it is noted that Regulatory Services have requested a condition relating to this matter. It should be noted that this application does not relate to the installation of any external lighting and, furthermore, that domestic external lighting such as fairy lights, LED security spotlights, and lanterns are not generally subject to planning control. Notwithstanding this, should any of the lighting erected on site require planning permission, this would need to be dealt with under a separate planning application. Furthermore, should undue levels of light result it would be usual practice for this to be dealt with under separate legislation outside of planning control, which deals with statutory nuisances caused by artificial light (Environmental Protection Act 1990).

4.11 For the reasons set out above it is considered that conditions requiring a noise management plan and details of external lighting as requested by Regulatory Services would not meet the tests of a condition set out in the NPPF.

4.12 It would, nonetheless, be reasonable and necessary to attach a condition to ensure that the number of guests accommodated at the property shall not exceed six at any one time.

4.13 In view of the above, subject to conditions, it is not considered that the development would have any undue impact on visual amenity or the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers which would justify the refusal of the application.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 135

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N1 Design; Policy E6 Tourism

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Design

5.0 Access and Parking

5.1 Policy T2 states that all new development must have a safe and adequate means of access and internal circulation, not have unacceptable highway safety impacts, and provide sufficient parking provision.

5.2 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

5.3 Appendix B to Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough sets out the recommended parking standards for different development types. There is no specific reference to holiday let uses within these standards.

5.4 No change to existing parking provision or access is proposed. The highway authority considers that the parking standards for a four-bed dwelling should apply and, therefore, there is a requirement for three parking spaces on site. The application drawings demonstrate parking provision for three vehicles at the site and the highway authority accept that there is sufficient parking provision on this basis.

5.5 Although accepting the parking arrangements, the highway authority raise concerns with the narrowness of the lanes in the surrounding area and visibility from the site entrance, advising that although this situation is existing, the intensification of the use as a holiday let would lead to an increase in potential conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

5.6 Furthermore, the highway authority consider that the proposal does not constitute a sustainable development in that it would be entirely reliant on the private car and does not enable future guests to reasonably choose sustainable modes of transport to access the site.

5.7 This broad assertion relates to ‘accessibility’ rather than assessing sustainable development ‘in the round’. By definition, all rural tourist development will be in less accessible locations, where potential visitors will be largely reliant of the private motor vehicle to access such locations, nearby facilities, and attractions. Indeed, the NPPF acknowledges at paragraph 89 that sites to meet local business and community needs may have to be found beyond settlements and in locations not well served by public transport.

5.8 Whilst the views of the highway authority are acknowledged, it is considered that the movements associated with the holiday-let use for up to 6 guests is unlikely to be materially different from the movements and activities associated with a family home of this size, particularly when we consider that holiday lets will inevitably have periods of vacancy and that dwellinghouses will often have a number of visitors whereby it is unlikely that many guests staying at a holiday let would generate additional visitors to the site. Even if the proposed use attracts more vehicle movements than the existing lawful use as a dwellinghouse, given the suggested restriction on the number of guests and noting that the accommodation is aimed at families which are likely to car-share, it is not considered that this result in a ‘severe’ adverse impact on the local highway network.

5.9 Furthermore, the lawful use of the site as a dwellinghouse means that the issues of ‘accessibility’ raised by the highway authority, i.e. limited street lighting and lack of segregated facilities are existing and would also apply to any future occupiers of the dwellinghouse should permission for the use as a holiday-let be refused.

5.10 In all, it is considered that the proposal would provide sustainable rural tourism-related development, would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and is therefore acceptable. Officers however recommend that a condition be attached to ensure that the three parking spaces shown within the application site are retained and kept free of obstruction for the lifetime of the development.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 9 Promoting sustainable transport; Paragraphs 115 and 116

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: T1 Transport; T2 Parking and manoeuvring facilities; Appendix B - Car parking standards

6.0 The Natural Environment

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

6.1 The proposal is for a change of use only and would not affect any habitats on site; it is therefore considered exempt from statutory biodiversity net gain requirements. The Biodiversity Officer confirms that they have no comment on the application.

Great Crested Newts

6.2 The site falls in an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. The Newt Officer advises that they are satisfied that should the development go ahead it would be unlikely to have any impact on great crested newts or their habitats.

Cannock Chase SAC

6.3 The proposal falls within 15km of the Cannock Chase SAC. Natural England initially advised that insufficient information had been provided, stating there was a lack of certainty over how the applicant would mitigate the impacts upon Cannock Chase SAC. It was advised that contributions to the Cannock Chase SAC recreational mitigation strategy should be made in line with the Council's Guidance.

6.4 The Council's guidance indicates that holiday lets require the standard financial contribution, which as at April 1st 2026 is £369.58 per residential unit, but that this be weighed against the occupancy rate of the proposed use. No indication of expected occupancy rate has been provided and therefore this is assumed at 100%. The required contribution was therefore calculated at £369.58.

6.5 The applicant has made a financial contribution of £369.58 and completed an agreement under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972; it is, therefore, considered that adequate mitigation has been provided in relation to potential adverse effects upon the Cannock Chase SAC arising from the proposed development.

6.6 In all, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any undue detrimental impact upon the natural environment.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment: Habitats and Biodiversity (Paragraphs 192- 195)

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N4 The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure; N5 Sites of European, National and Local Nature Conservation Importance; N6 Cannock Chase special area of conservation

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

7.0 Flood Risk

7.1 The site falls, in part, within Flood Zones 2 and 3, with the dwelling itself falling within Flood Zone 2.

7.2 The LLFA comment that whilst surface water flooding can be difficult to predict there are no reported flooding hotspots within the vicinity of the property, and that the current proposals by their nature would not result in any significant change to the impermeable area or the surface water generated by the site.

7.3 The Environment Agency refer to their standing advice and process note 5: Change of use to a more vulnerable use; they do, however, note that the proposed change of use is from residential to use as a holiday let, and therefore both the existing and proposed use are considered ‘more vulnerable’ uses.

7.4 Based on the above in flood risk terms, Officers are satisfied that the proposal would not significantly increase flood risk on site or elsewhere.

Policies and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding, and coastal change

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N2 Climate change; N4 The natural environment and green infrastructure

8.0 Other Matters

8.1 The Parish Council, Conservation Officer, and neighbouring occupiers raise that other potentially unauthorised alterations have taken place on site. The current application relates only to the change of use of Squirrel Barn and it should be noted that any permission would not grant or imply consent for any other unauthorised alterations.

8.2 Comments raised by neighbours in respect to access rights and restrictive covenants are civil matters which do not constitute material planning considerations that may affect the determination of the current planning application.

8.3 It is noted that 'existing elevations' drawings have been submitted as part of the application, however, as the application does not relate to any external works to the building these do not need to be included within any plans condition to which any approval would be subject.

9.0 Concluding comments and the planning balance

9.1 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle and, subject to conditions, the development complies with the requirements of the relevant local plan policies and national guidance in respect of amenity, highway safety and ecology. It is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

Consultations (Comments summarised)

Neighbours (8 representations received from 6 different addresses):

- Concerns surrounding noise, disturbance and anti-social behaviour based on past experiences when the property was in use as a holiday-let
- Concerns surrounding lighting erected on site
- Concerns surrounding parking and impact upon highway safety
- Access rights surrounding the driveway (stated to be in ownership of Milwich Hall)
- Comments surrounding restrictive covenants on property
- Comments noting other potentially unauthorised works at the site
- Damage to access drive as a result of guests
- Concerns surrounding waste generated by holiday let use
- Concerns surrounding the impact of the proposals on the character and setting of listed building Milwich Hall

- Noting property is served by a septic tank not main sewers

Milwich with Fradswell Parish Council:

The Parish Council query the reason for this planning application as the property has been used as a holiday let for many years and understand that the submission of a planning application puts a halt to the Planning Contravention Notice issued. As the Notice is for unauthorised alterations which are not resolved by this application the Parish Council is concerned that this is merely a delay.

The Parish Council would in principle recommend allowing the change of use but would like to highlight complaints related to noise and nuisance arising from the previous letting operation at this location. The Parish Council request that, should change of use be granted, appropriate conditions, including quite time restrictions and a clear protocol to handle complaints, be attached to ensure effective control of noise and disturbances affecting neighbouring properties, with consequences should the conditions be broken.

Conservation Officer (Summarised):

There is no conservation objection in principle to the use of Squirrel Barn as a holiday let, provided that the use remains limited in scale and is subject to robust controls. In particular, any permission should include a restriction on occupancy to no more than six guests and should address the internal connection to Swallow Barn to prevent intensification of use. However, the current proposal must also be considered in the context of the ongoing enforcement matters and the unauthorised alterations that have caused harm to the significance and character of the curtilage listed building. Those works remain unacceptable in heritage terms and would need to be addressed through a separate application for listed building consent.

Suggested Planning Conditions:

1. The accommodation hereby permitted shall be used for short-term holiday accommodation only. A register of all occupiers shall be maintained by the owner/operator, including the names of all occupiers and their main home addresses, together with the dates of their arrival and departure. The register shall be made available for inspection by the Local Planning Authority on request.

2. Notwithstanding the details and specifications submitted, the holiday accommodation hereby permitted at Squirrel Barn shall not be occupied by more than six persons at any one time. No additional sleeping accommodation shall be formed or brought into use within the building without the prior permission of the Local Planning Authority.

3. The use hereby permitted shall not commence, or in the event that the use has already commenced shall cease within 1 month of the date of this permission, until the first-floor doorway opening between Squirrel Barn and Swallow Barn has been permanently blocked up in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and appropriate Listed Building Consent for this obtained. The approved details shall thereafter be implemented and retained as such for the life of the development.

Informative:

For the avoidance of doubt, the grant of planning permission for the material change of use of Squirrel Barn does not authorise, regularise or imply consent for any unauthorised operational development or other works undertaken within the curtilage of Squirrel Barn or Swallow Barn. Nor does it grant or imply Listed Building Consent for any unauthorised works carried out to either curtilage listed building. Any such matters would need to be addressed separately through the submission of the appropriate applications, which may include Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent and/or Lawful Development Certificates, as applicable.

Natural England:

Latest comments dated 19 January 2026:

- No objection subject to securing appropriate mitigation (re. Cannock Chase SAC)

Original comments dated 23 December 2025 stating insufficient information provided -

- Based on evidence, , it is recognised that Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is being impacted by recreational impacts (https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cannock-chase-special-area-of-conservation-sac). A 15km zone of influence for impacts on the SAC from increases in housing and tourist accommodation has been established. The proposal site is within 11km of Cannock Chase SAC and therefore within the zone of influence.

- There is a lack of certainty over how recreational impacts on Cannock Chase SAC from this proposal will be mitigated. The Applicant has not proposed any mitigation.

- The HRA suggests that impacts could be mitigated either through informing guests of appropriate behaviour when visiting the SAC or through a financial contribution. Informing guests of appropriate behaviour is not mitigation and therefore cannot be used to rule out adverse effects on integrity.

- Clarification should be provided on mitigation measures proposed.

- Contributions to the Cannock Chase SAC recreational mitigation strategy should be made in line with the Council's Guidance - www.staffordbc.gov.uk/cannock-chase-special-area-of-conservation-sac.

Lead Local Flood Authority:

We offer the following comments in good faith:

We note that areas of the application site are within Flood Zones 2 and 3 with risk of flooding from Main River. As the Environment Agency (EA) are a statutory consultee upon all proposed developments within Flood Zone 2 and 3, it is envisaged that the EA will comment on the flood risk vulnerability, flood depths and suitability of the proposal in flood risk terms. Where the EA do not provide bespoke comments, you should be guided to their standing advice.

Surface water flooding can be difficult to predict, more so than river or sea flooding, as it is hard to forecast exactly where or how much rain will fall in any storm. This is based on the best available information, such as topography, ground levels and drainage. However, there are no reported flooding hotspots within the vicinity of the property.

Given the nature of the proposals, they have resulted in no significant change to the impermeable area and little change to the surface water runoff generated by the site. Therefore, the Flood Team have no further comments to offer on this application.

District Newt Officer:

I am satisfied that if this development were to go ahead it would be unlikely to have an impact on great crested newts or their habitats.

As this is a change of use application without much impact to existing habitat and buildings on site, it would be considered disproportionate to ask for further information or surveys in this case.

I therefore have no further comments to make at this time. If the proposal changes, then please seek further advice from me if necessary.

Highway Authority (summarised):

The site is accessed off Sandon Lane via a shared driveway for Swallow Barn, Squirrel Barn, and Milwich Hall. Even though this is an existing access the visibility on the egress is restricted.

Within the Planning Statement under section 3 The Proposed Development it states the property was used as a holiday let between 2016 and 2024. It slept up to 15 guests. Following a temporary stop notice the use of the property as a holiday let ceased. The applicant wishes to resume that use on a smaller scale, accommodating up to 8 guests.

Given the above submitted comments I have noticed there appears to be a review on Google Street View a month ago regards a visitor stay therefore the lodge seems to still be in use.

Under section 5.9 it states the holiday let is managed by the applicants from their adjoining dwelling, and as such they are on hand immediately in the unlikely event of any antisocial behaviour. Internal and external noise sensors are fitted which are monitored 24/7. Guests sign terms and conditions which state that if any unacceptable sound is detected either inside or outside, the power to Squirrel Barn will be turned off and they will be evicted. The applicants have not received any complaints regarding noise to date.

According to the existing ground/first floor drawings Squirrel Barn appears to be a 4-bed dwelling. Given Stafford Borough Council do not have any parking standards to cover a Holiday Let only hotels I have therefore calculated the use under Class C3 Residential Dwellings, for 4 or more bedrooms - which requires 3 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m). Drawing No 1609 Rev A 07 dated 1 April 2025 (Existing site layout) identifies x3 car parking spaces which is acceptable.

The proposed location for the holiday let is not in a sustainable location. By this I mean the location has no amenities such as a local shop or access to any medical facilities. Given the above examples of nearest local facilities all trips to such facilities are more than likely to be made via a private car. Any future guests would need to travel to Stafford or Stone to access the nearest facilities therefore it is likely that all journeys would be made by private car. The neighbouring roads are partially lit and have no footway provision and would require any guest to walk within the road should they wish to walk within the immediate neighbourhood. The application site’s rural location and lack of adequate pedestrian and cycle facilities to local services and amenities means that the site is not sustainably located in transport terms.

In summary given the nature of the existing access and the narrowness of the lanes within the immediate area, visibility from the site entrance for pedestrians and motorists leaving the site would be restricted. Visibility for road users approaching the site from either direction would also be restricted. Although the access, and limited visibility, is existing the intensification of the use as a holiday let would lead to an increase in potential conflict between those leaving the site and vehicles on the highway. As stated above I have concluded that most journeys are likely to be completed by private motor vehicle, some future guests may wish to walk within the local area to gain access to The Green Man pub and local public rights of way walks, it is necessary for me to consider this also. However, pedestrians leaving the site would also use the vehicular access, and as there is no pavement on Sandon Lane there would be conflict between pedestrians and vehicles leaving the site, and given the slow speed of pedestrians, they would be at greater risk of conflict with motor vehicles on the highway.

Recommendations:

In consideration of the above, the Highway Authority recommends the application should be refused for the following reason:

- The proposed development would exacerbate the risk of conflict between vehicles/pedestrians and cyclists due no segregated facilities, limited street lighting therefore unsuitable to cater for this proposed development leading to an increase in the likelihood of highway danger to highway users particularly those considered vulnerable.

- The proposed development is not sustainable in transport terms and solely reliant on private vehicles.

Environmental Health Officer

Environmental Health has no objection to the application, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to use of the holiday let, a noise management plan shall be in place for the use of the accommodation and the mitigation measures that will be applied to prevent, or minimise, the impact of the noise upon surrounding premises. A complaints procedure must be also in place for any local residents who wish to raise concerns.

2. External lighting to any outside areas should be of a design and positioned not to cause a light nuisance to any neighbouring properties. Glare from any lighting must be kept to a minimum.

Biodiversity Officer:

No Comment

Site Notice:

Expiry date(s): 18 December 2025

Newsletter advert:

Expiry date: 24 December 2025

Relevant Planning History

25/40886/LDC - Demolition of former agricultural building and erection of residential building in similar form; subsequent extensions and alterations to include orangery, lean-to shed on eastern gable, and front porch; erection of timber gates to access track; erection of timber outbuildings; and erection of garden fencing and patio - Refused 17 February 2026

19/31028/FUL - Retention of hot tub, and patio decking, wooden garden shed, wooden store for logs, fence to divide garden in half and wooden entrance gate. In conjunction with 19/31029/LBC. - Refused 12 May 2023

19/31029/LBC - Installation of hot tub, decking, fence, gate and shed. - Refused 12 May 2023

95/32262/FUL and 95/32263/LBC - Conversion of West End Stable Into 1 Dwelling House - Application for Faulty Underpinning Respect of App 24395 - Permitted

94/30389/LBC - Creation of Two Dwelling Units Listed Building Application (To Conform with Detailed Planning Permission No 24395) - Permitted

90/25789/LBC - Renovation of Old Barn - Permitted

89/24395/FUL - Conversion to Form 2 Dwelling Units and Walling and Double Garage Etc - Fully Described in Planning Application Documents - Permitted

Recommendation

Approve, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.

2. This permission relates to the following drawings, except where indicated otherwise by a condition attached to this consent, in which case the condition shall take precedence:-

   1609 REV B - 01 Existing Ground Floor Plan

   1609 REV B - 02 Existing First Floor Plan

   1609 REV B - 06 Site Location Plan

   1609 REV B - 07 Existing Site Layout

3. The approved holiday let shall not be occupied either continuously or cumulatively by any particular person(s) for a period exceeding 31 days in any twelve month period.

4. The three parking spaces shown within the application site on drawing 1609 REV B - 07 Existing Site Layout shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

5. A register of all occupiers shall be maintained by the owner/operator, to include the names of all occupiers and their main home addresses, together with the dates of their arrival and departure. The register shall be made available for inspection by the Local Planning Authority on request.

6. Notwithstanding any description/details in the application documents the holiday let hereby permitted shall not be occupied by more than six persons at any one time. No additional sleeping accommodation shall be formed or brought into use within the building without the prior permission of the Local Planning Authority.

The reasons for the Council's decision to approve the development subject to the above conditions are:

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. To define the permission.

3. To safeguard the amenities of the area (Policy N1e of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

4. To ensure sufficient on-site parking provision (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

5. To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

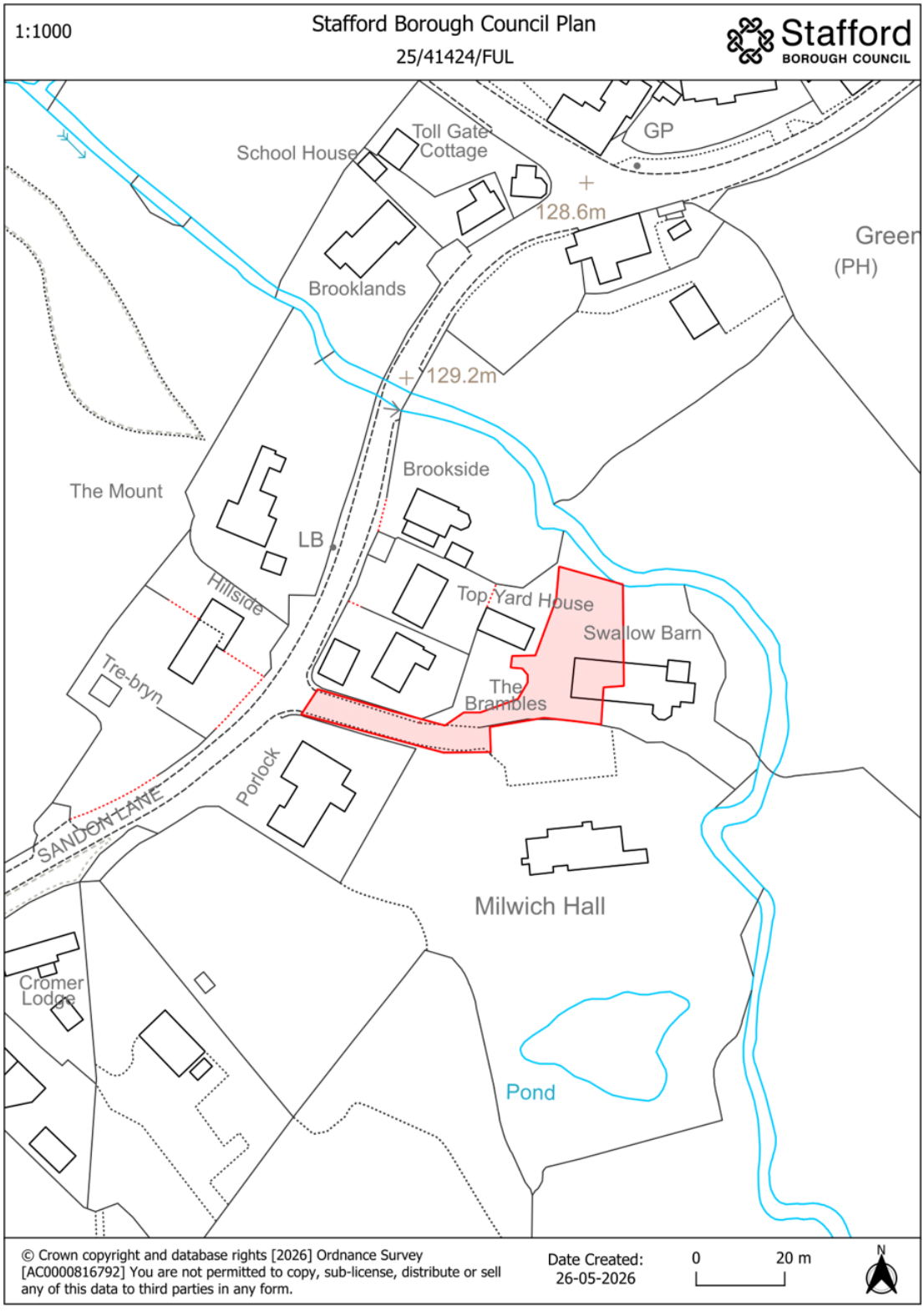
6. To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

Informatives

1 In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Order) 2015, as amended, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, the Council has worked in a positive and proactive way in determining the application and has granted planning permission.

2 For the avoidance of doubt, the grant of planning permission for the material change of use of Squirrel Barn does not authorise, regularise, or imply consent for any unauthorised operational development or other works undertaken within the curtilage of Squirrel Barn or Swallow Barn. Nor does it grant or imply Listed Building Consent for any unauthorised works carried out to either curtilage listed building. Any such matters would need to be addressed separately through the submission of the appropriate applications, which may include Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent, and/or Lawful Development Certificates, as applicable.

25/41424/FUL
Squirrel Barn
Sandon Lane
Milwich



Application:	25/41286/FUL
Case Officer:	Hannah Cross
Target Decision Date: **Extended To:**	2 January 2026 30 April 2026
Address:	Land Adjacent to Acorn Cottage, Drointon Lane, Stowe By Chartley
Proposal:	Erection of Passive House Plus dwelling and associated works
Recommendation:	Approve, subject to conditions

REASON FOR 'CALL-IN' TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

The application has been called-in to be determined at Planning Committee by Ward Councillor F Beatty for the following reason:

> *"For members to consider whether the application is:*
>
> *contrary to SBC policies SP3 and SP7 inappropriate development within a residential garden supporting local need - has a local housing needs assessment been produced? Unsympathetic in design in the rural environment contrary to best environmental practice in proposing to discharge water run-off into the public sewer rather than an on-site arrangement."*

Context

1.0 Site and surroundings

1.1 The site comprises approximately 0.2 acres of amenity land situated on the south side of Drointon Lane, and in between two residential dwellings 'Acorn Cottage' to the east and 'Greenhills' to the west. The land historically appears to have formed part of the residential curtilage to 'Acorn Cottage' however today is clearly separated from this dwelling by an established hedgerow.

1.2 The site falls within the rural settlement of Stowe by Chartley, and in policy terms, is located in open countryside.

1.3 The application site lies within the red impact risk zone for great crested newts; within 5km of the Pasturefields Saltmarsh SAC (special area of conservation) and Chartley Moss RAMSAR and SAC; and within 15km of the Cannock Chase SAC.

2.0 Proposed development

2.1 The application seeks permission for the erection of a one and a half storey dwelling of contemporary architectural design, specifically designed and to be) constructed to Passive House Plus standards. The proposal requires the removal and replanting of the hedgerow to the front of the site, with a gap provided in the new hedgerow to allow for a new vehicular access off Drointon Lane.

2.2 The application follows an outline application (all matters reserved except for access) 20/33078/OUT for a new dwelling on the site, which was refused in September 2021, and later dismissed at appeal under reference APP/Y3425/W/22/3291378.

2.3 The appeal was dismissed on the basis that the dwelling conflicted with the Council's spatial strategy in respect of housing delivery, and the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

2.4 As a recent appeal decision, this forms a material consideration to be given due weight in the assessment of the current proposal. It should however be noted that the planning policy context has shifted significantly since this appeal decision was made in that the appeal scheme was considered at a time when the Borough could demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, and therefore the 'tilted balance' set out in Paragraph 11 of the NPPF was not engaged. Furthermore, this was an outline application where details of the appearance, layout, and scale of the dwelling were not provided, unlike the current application which includes full details.

Legislative framework

2.5 Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, require decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.6 The development plan for the purposes of this application comprises The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 21-2031 Parts 1 and 2.

Officer Assessment - Key Considerations

3.0 Principle of development

Conflict with local development plan

3.1 Policy C5 (A), where development sits outside of the identified settlements, finds that proposals for new residential development will be required to meet the criteria in policy SP7 alongside three other criteria. These require demonstration that provision cannot be accommodated within the identified boundaries of settlements in the hierarchy; supported by a parish based local housing needs assessment and appraisal showing that it meets the defined needs, and that the development is of high quality reflecting local character.

3.2 The submitted information does not provide information on whether the development can be provided within the settlement boundary and is not supported by a parish based local housing needs assessment and appraisal showing that it meets the defined needs.

3.3 Accordingly, the proposed development would conflict with Policy SP3, Policy E2, Policy C5A and Policy SP7, whose objectives have already been outlined above.

Housing land supply and the 'tilted balance'

3.4 Stafford Borough does not currently have a 5-year housing land supply and policies in The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) which relate to the supply of new market housing are more than 5 years old. Consequently, these policies are not up to date and as such the 'tilted balance' is engaged where the National Planning Policy Framework's (hereafter referred to as the 'Framework') 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is applied for decision taking as set out in paragraph 11 of the Framework.

3.5 Paragraph 11 states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, local planning authorities should grant permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

3.6 In respect of directing development to sustainable locations, Paragraph 110 states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Paragraph 110 does, however, recognise that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

3.7 Furthermore Paragraph 115 states that sustainable transport modes should be prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location.

3.8 In applying above criteria, the thrust of the spatial strategy in the Plan for Stafford Borough remains relevant for the purposes of steering new residential development for market housing in the Borough in a sustainable manner.

3.9 The settlement of Stowe-by-Chartley is not identified as a Key Service Village and is limited in terms of available services and public transport provision, where occupiers would be largely reliant on the use of a private vehicle.

3.10 The Council's Planning Policy Manager has advised that the policy position is not to support the proposal on the basis that the dwelling is contrary to the Council's spatial strategy. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged within the response that Stafford Borough cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, and therefore this should be considered alongside other material considerations to be taken into account in the overall planning balance.

3.11 In all, the proposal would conflict with the development plan spatial strategy and is considered to fall within an unsustainable location.

3.12 Nonetheless, and unlike the scheme determined under 20/33078/OUT at which time the Council could demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing, the 'tilted balance' is engaged and it is therefore necessary to weigh the adverse impacts of this policy conflict against any benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. All other relevant material considerations are therefore assessed below, with the overall planning balance made in the concluding section of the report.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Paragraphs 8 and 11

The Plan for Stafford Borough - Part 1

Spatial Principle 1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

Spatial Principle 3 (Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement)

Spatial Principle 7 (Supporting the Location of New Development)

The Plan for Stafford Borough - Part 2

Spatial Principle 7 (Supporting the Location of New Development)

4.0 Character and Appearance

4.1 TPSB Policy N1 sets the requirement for design and layout to take account of residential amenity and local context and to have high design standards. Policy N8 states that new development should respect the character of the landscape setting, through design, layout and materials.

4.2 NPPF Paragraph 139 states that “significant weight” should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

4.3 The dwelling would be sited roughly centrally within the plot and would be similar in terms of its overall form, height and footprint to other dwellings in the area, albeit taking a more contemporary appearance with the use of dark timber cladding at first floor. The proposed dwelling incorporates dormer windows at first floor which are a common feature in the surrounding area. Furthermore, the building would broadly follow the staggered build line on this side of Drointon Lane. The dwelling, subject to a condition to secure precise details of materials, is therefore generally not considered to be out of keeping with the surrounding area.

4.4 Under the previous appeal decision the Inspector found the site to play an important role in the verdant, spacious character of the village as it marks the transition between the built up area of Drointon Lane and the countryside to the east, where built development becomes more sporadic amongst agricultural land, and that removing this undeveloped gap would be harmful to the spacious and verdant character of the village.

4.5 The Council’s Design Advisor, whilst acknowledging that the site creates a spatial fragmentation of what is essentially linear development at the edge of the settlement (which does soften the visual transition between the urbanised areas and the surrounding landscape), goes on to state that the site represents a ‘natural in-fill development opportunity’ and that the site does not constitute a defining and key contributor to the underlying quality and character of the street scene and wider settlement which might prevent development on the site per se.

4.6 Unlike the previous refused proposal, the current application includes full design details. The application is supported by a Passive House report which confirms that the proposed dwelling has been designed to meet 'the rigorous energy efficiency standards of the Passive House Plus certification' which exceeds both the energy requirements of building regulations and the already stringent requirements for Passive House Classic Certification.

4.7 The report concludes that provided that the building is constructed strictly in accordance with the submitted drawings and this report, its completion will result in a dwelling that is not only exceptionally comfortable and healthy but also has a near-zero heating demand and is a significant producer of its own renewable energy.

4.8 In respect of Paragraph 139 of the NPPF, the Council's Design Advisor considers that, although the design is considered to be of attractive and relatively sensitive contextually, it is not considered to be of outstanding design, from a purely visual architectural perspective.

4.9 The NPPF does not provide a definition of "innovative", however this is defined within the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as follows: introducing or using new ideas, ways of doing something, etc.

4.10 The submitted design and access statement states that the Passive House Plus standards were introduced in 2015. As such the certification category itself cannot be considered entirely new. Nonetheless, it is stated that there are only 20 certified Passive House Plus projects in the UK, and therefore it is clear that the implementation and delivery of these projects is not widespread for market housing. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the Passive House Plus classification is part of a newer generation of standards intended to push buildings from merely being efficient to being net-positive generators of energy.

4.11 The Council's Design Advisor considers that the proposals could be accepted as being innovative on the basis that the proposals are showing and/or utilising new methods and/or ideas.

4.12 The Passive House Plus classification is intended to push buildings from merely being efficient to being net-positive generators of energy and therefore promotes sustainability in this regard. Furthermore, it is considered that the construction of the dwelling, which has already been publicised locally, if approved, would help (even if only indirectly) raise the standard of design more generally in the Borough.

4.13 In all, the proposal is considered to be of an innovative design which promotes high levels of sustainability, and is considered to fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings, and as such complies with Paragraph 139 b) for which significant weight should be given in the planning balance.

5.0 Residential amenity

5.1 TPSB Policy N1 sets out the requirement for the design and layout of development proposals to take account of amenity and existing activities.

Occupier amenity

5.2 The proposals would provide sufficient private amenity space for a 4-bed dwelling as set out within the Council's SPD, and there is considered adequate space within the site curtilage for the necessary bin storage. Furthermore, each habitable room would benefit from at least one window, offering appropriate levels of outlook and the proposals are therefore considered satisfactory in terms of light/outlook.

5.3 The Council's Environmental Health Officer recommends that if any contamination is found, additional measures for remediation of this source of contamination shall be submitted to and approved in writing. There is no indication based on available planning history that the site would be at risk of contamination, and this was not raised as a concern under the previous appeal decision. Nonetheless, Paragraph 197 of the NPPF requires that where a site is affected by contamination, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner. It is therefore considered a condition is not required, however that the applicant's attention be drawn to paragraph 197 of the NPPF.

Neighbour amenity

5.4 The dwelling would sit approximately 7.7m from a set of French doors serving a dining room at neighbouring dwelling Acorn Cottage and would be in direct view from this outlook. The proposals would therefore somewhat alter the outlook from this habitable room. Nonetheless it is noted that this outlook is already restricted to an extent by the existing hedgerow on the boundary which sits approx. 3m from the doors, and that the room benefits from an unrestricted primary outlook on the front elevation which would be unaffected by the proposals.

5.5 Whilst the rear facing, first floor dormer windows would allow for some views of the gardens at Acorn Cottage and Greenhills, it is accepted that some degree of overlooking is inevitable in residential areas; it is considered that these views would be limited, and the property would not be overlooked to an unreasonable degree.

5.6 It is noted that two first floor windows are proposed to en-suite bathrooms, and that these would face towards the rear garden area of Greenhills. It is recommended a condition be attached to ensure the first-floor en-suite windows on the west facing elevation are fitted with obscure glazing to prevent undue overlooking to the neighbouring garden. Subject to this condition it is not considered that the proposal would detrimentally affect living conditions for occupiers at Greenhills.

5.7 The Environmental Health Officer recommends limited construction working hours and delivery times through planning conditions due to the proximity of nearby properties. These conditions can be attached to any permission granted.

5.8 Concerns raised by neighbouring occupiers in respect of potential glare from the proposed roof-mounted solar panels are noted, however given the orientation of the panels in relation to neighbouring dwellings it is not anticipated that glare from the panels would be significant.

5.9 In all, subject to conditions, the impact of the proposal on neighbouring occupiers is not considered such to warrant refusal of the application.

Access and car parking

5.10 Policy T2 requires development proposals to provide adequate means of access and sufficient car parking provision in accordance with the parking standards as set out in Appendix B of the PSB.

5.11 The NPPF states at Paragraph 116 that Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

5.12 The proposed layout shows 3 parking spaces along with turning areas, which meet the parking standards for a 4+ bed dwelling as set out in Appendix B of TPSB. The Highway Authority raise no objection to the parking provision proposed.

5.13 A new vehicular access is proposed off the adopted highway ‘Drointon Lane’. Visibility splays have been provided on the proposed site plan drawing and demonstrate visibility of 8.5m to the east and 12m to the west.

5.14 The highway authority considers the proposed access to be unacceptable on the basis that they consider visibility to be insufficient. The highway authority advises that a visibility splay of 43m in each direction is required for the speed of the road.

5.15 The Inspector under the previous appeal decision, however, considered that a visibility splay of 43m was not necessary, noting that the existing hedgerow would be removed and set back (2.4m at the point of access) to create a small verge either side, and considering that Drointon Lane is lightly trafficked and that vehicle speeds are likely to be relatively low given the restricted road width. The Inspector also acknowledged that parking and turning areas were sufficient to allow cars to enter and leave the site in a forward gear.

5.16 The current proposal shows a similar arrangement, i.e. a hedgerow set back with a small grass verge (approx. 2.4m deep) either side of the access, and sufficient parking and turning areas. As such, provided conditions are attached to ensure these parking areas and visibility splays are provided and retained, it is not considered that a refusal reason in relation to highway safety could be sustained.

5.17 In all, the proposal is not considered to result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)

Paragraphs: 116 and 117

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 Part 1 (TPSB)

T1 (Transport), T2 (Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities)

6.0 Ecology and Arboriculture

Biodiversity net gain

6.1 The proposal is not considered to fall within any of the exemptions to providing statutory minimum BNG requirements of an overall 10% biodiversity net gain. The submitted BNG metric indicates that the proposal will result in a net loss of 0.15 units (-58.52%). Based on the submitted report achieving the 10% net gain will not be possible on the site, and the applicant therefore proposes to purchase units from a Biobank e.g. GAIA, marketplace to be confirmed.

6.2 It is noted a part of the hedgerow fronting the site would need to be removed to accommodate the proposed access, and that the existing hedgerow would need to be replanted rear of the proposed visibility splays. The applicant should be reminded of the legislation surrounding nesting birds via an informative.

6.3 The Council's Biodiversity officer notes the submitted ecology survey which does not present any significant ecological constraints. The Ecology Officer recommends a working method statement regarding nesting birds be agreed by condition, however, as above, this matter can be appropriately addressed by separate legislation. It is also recommended that a bird box be installed on site and for any loss of hedgerow to be compensated for with new hedgerow/ shrub planting. It is considered these matters can be covered via conditions to secure a soft landscaping scheme.

Newts

6.4 The site falls within the red impact risk zone (high risk) for great crested newts. The District Newt Officer advises, however, that they are satisfied with the submitted ecological report and recommend a condition to ensure the stated precautionary working measures are complied with.

Trees

6.5 The application is supported by an arboricultural report which identifies that there are no protected or other trees that would pose a constraint to development.

6.6 The report identifies four lengths of hedgerow to the site boundaries, and notes that hedgerows to side and rear boundaries are to be retained. Whilst it is regrettable that the existing hedgerow along the front boundary would need to be removed, its replacement can be secured by condition. It is noted that the majority of this hedgerow would be replanted in a similar location, and its replacement is considered necessary to provide improved visibility at the access.

6.7 The tree report recommends protection measures in relation to retained hedgerows, to be secured through an arboricultural method statement to be provided prior to commencement to agree these measures. This matter can be addressed via condition.

Cannock Chase SAC

6.8 Policies N1 and N6 of TPSB state that development which had a direct or indirect adverse impact upon the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC, and the effects cannot be mitigated, will not be supported.

6.9 Policy N6 of TPSB sets out that any development leading to a net increase in dwellings within a 15km radius of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) will be deemed to have an adverse impact on the SAC unless or until satisfactorily avoidance and/or mitigation measures have been secured. The Council has adopted guidance acknowledging a 15km Zone of Influence and seeking financial contributions for the required mitigation from residential developments of 1 or more net units within the 0-15km zone. The proposal lies within the 15km zone of the Cannock Chase SAC and proposes 1 net dwelling, as such a financial contribution is required.

6.10 Under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, the Local Planning Authority as the competent authority, must have further consideration, beyond the above planning policy matters, to the impact of this development, in this case, due to the relative proximity, on the Cannock Chase SAC. Therefore, in accordance with Regulation 63 of the aforementioned Regulations, the Local Planning Authority has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment. The Council's Appropriate Assessment (AA) concludes that the mitigation measures identified within the Council's Development Plan for windfall housing sites, would address any harm arising from this development to the SAC.

6.11 The proposal lies within the 0-15km buffer of the Cannock Chase SAC, as such a financial contribution is required. Natural England raises no objection to the proposal subject to securing adequate mitigation in line with the Council's guidance. The applicant has paid the required financial contribution of £369.58 and completed an agreement under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972. Therefore, it is considered sufficient mitigation has been provided in respect of the Cannock Chase SAC.

Habitats sites

6.12 Further to the Cannock Chase SAC, the application site lies within 5km of both Pasturefields Salt Marsh and Chartley Moss which forms part of the Midlands Meres and Mosses. Given the location of the application site and the scale of the proposed development, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in any adverse impacts upon these designated sites. Consequently, the Council has screened out the proposed development under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 Part 1 (TPSB)

N4 (The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure)

N6 (Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

7.0 Flood Risk and Drainage

7.1 The site falls within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. lowest risk of flooding). Nonetheless, issues of flooding have been raised by local residents and the LLFA have been consulted accordingly. The LLFA initially requested further information in relation to the proposed drainage strategy which has since been submitted. A drainage report has subsequently been submitted, setting out the proposed drainage strategy, which includes a swale with a depth of 0.25m being created along the southern and western boundaries of the site.

7.2 The LLFA advise that inclusion of a swale feature and the measures indicated in the Flood Risk Assessment are acceptable measures to mitigate against identified risks of surface water flooding to the property and to third parties. The LLFA subsequently raise no objection to the proposal subject to the relevant drainage documents being conditioned accordingly. The LLFA have nonetheless requested an informative to advise the applicant liaise with Severn Trent Water in respect of the proposed connection to the public sewer. Whilst Severn Trent Water have been consulted during the course of consideration of this application, no representation has been received.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 Part 1 (TPSB)

N2 (Climate Change)

8.0 Other Matters

8.1 Representations from neighbouring occupiers are noted and the material considerations raised are assessed in the main body of the report above.

9.0 Conclusion and planning balance

9.1 The site falls outside of any designated settlement boundary and, in policy terms, within an unsustainable location with limited services and access to public transport and in this respect the proposal would conflict with the spatial strategy set out within the local plan.

9.2 Nonetheless the proposal would not constitute an ‘isolated home’ in the countryside and would effectively infill an area within an existing row of dwellings, within what is an established rural settlement. The proposal would also contribute to addressing the Borough’s current housing shortage, which is given weight in the overall balance. Furthermore, the proposal is considered to be of an innovative design which promotes high levels of sustainability and this is afforded significant weight by Paragraph 139 of the NPPF.

9.3 Subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable in terms of highway safety, residential amenity, flood risk and ecology. These factors are neutral in terms of the overall planning balance.

9.4 In all, on balance it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

Consultations (summarised)

Neighbours (14 representations received, all objections, material considerations summarised below):

- Concerns surrounding the design and appearance of the development in relation to the surrounding area e.g. loss of openness
- Concerns surrounding loss of hedgerow
- Concerns stating that the site represents an unsustainable location for housing
- Concerns surrounding over development of the plot
- Concerns surrounding drainage and flood risk, including the proposed drainage strategy
- Concerns surrounding proposed roof mounted solar panels
- Concerns surrounding impact on wildlife
- Concerns surrounding capacity of highway network
- Concerns surrounding impact upon the outlook/light received by nearby properties e.g. dining room at Acorn Cottage
- Comments noting previous refused schemes at the site and subsequent appeal decisions

Parish Council:

No response received.

Highway Authority:

As Drointon Lane at this location is signed as a 30mph road, therefore current national guidance (Manual for Streets) requires all new vehicular accesses to provide visibility splays of 43m in each direction. I note from the appeal comments the Inspector has dismissed the required splays and has not recommended the option of a speed survey to ascertain the 85%ile speed of passing traffic which could reduce the splay requirements if speeds are below 30mph or may increase splay requirements if speeds are above 30mph.

The applicant has provided a visibility splay of 2.4m x 8.5m to the east and 2.4m x 12m to the west. As stated above the applicant does not appear to have conducted a speed survey to ascertain the 85%ile speed of passing traffic to see if the visibility splays can be reduced. Therefore, I cannot accept what has been submitted.

If this application were to be approved Highways will require the section of the vehicle access between the new planted hedges to be widened towards the western side to provide a minimum of 4.2m at this location to enable two vehicles to safely pass as currently the proposed width at this position is 3.12m.

Noting the applicant has provided x3 car parking spaces and there is adequate room for a vehicle to manoeuvre within the site to egress in a forward gear.

Concern that the site is not within a suitable location for a new dwelling, as future occupants would also not have reasonable access to services and facilities, and there is no footway provision.

Recommendations: Refusal

- The submitted application fails to demonstrate suitable visibility splays from the centre of the proposed vehicular access points on to Drointon Lane.

If the planning officer is minded on approving the application I would request the below to be placed on any decision notice:

1. The vehicle access to be widened towards the western side of the access to a minimum of 4.2m in between the proposed new hedges and the vehicle access to be surfaced to tarmac for its full width for a minimum depth of 2.5m into the site.

2. A minimum of x3 car parking spaces shall be provided in accordance with Stafford Borough Council car parking standards and shall thereafter remain for the lifetime of the development.

3. Any vehicle access gates to be set back a minimum of 5m rear of the edge of carriageway and open inwards towards the site.

Design Advisor:

It is my understanding that this application follows a previously refused application and subsequent appeal dismissal for a similarly scaled and sited dwelling, but that the current scheme has been modified and is now coming forward as a Passivhaus Plus proposal. It is also acknowledged that the previous application and subsequent appeal were considered within the context of Stafford Borough being able to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply.

From reading the associated appeal decision, it would appear that the inspector gave significant weight to the contribution that the site/open space gave to the underlying character and quality of the locality. Although I acknowledge that the site does provide open views through it and that it creates a spatial fragmentation of what is essentially linear development at the edge of the settlement (which does soften the visual transition between the urbanised areas and the surrounding landscape), my own view is that the site does not constitute such a defining and key contributor to the underlying quality and character of the street scene and wider settlement to warrant special protection from development. It seems more of a natural in-fill development opportunity, where the provision of a sensitively designed single dwelling would not undermine or be significantly detrimental to the underlying urban morphology and character of the street scene and immediate locality. Therefore, from a purely design perspective, there is no intrinsic or in-principle objection to the concept of providing a single dwelling on the site.

It is noted that although the application acknowledges that the site is outside of the recognised residential development boundary for the settlement, it is requesting that the scheme be afforded significant weight in support of it on the basis of its accordance with part B of Paragraph 139 in the NPPF. This therefore invokes a key question as to whether the proposals represent either outstanding or innovative design. From a purely visual architectural perspective; despite the design being considered to be attractive and relatively sensitive contextually (in respect to the style, scale, form, massing and materiality of the proposed dwelling) and that it would therefore not be so out of keeping with the existing quality and character of the street scene and wider settlement to be detrimental to them, it would be difficult to assess its architectural design qualities as being truly outstanding. In respect to whether the design is innovative, there are differing accepted definitions of what innovative actually means; on the one hand it could be considered that only those things or approaches that are new and/or original could be viewed as being innovative (and by that measure the proposals are not convincing as by the statements of the Passivhaus Trust themselves, approximately 1% of all new homes under construction in the UK are being built to the Passivhaus standard and are therefore now a mainstream option) on the other hand, innovative could also be considered to be those things or approaches that are showing and/or utilising new methods and/or ideas, and by this measure, it is considered that the proposals could be accepted as being innovative.

Taking into consideration the further guidance within part B of Paragraph 139, which appears to give significant weight to outstanding or innovative designs where they are promoting high standards of sustainability so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings (which are both aspects of the scheme that are considered to be achieved), it is my view that the more generous definition of what innovative is defined to be (as outlined above) should be applied. On that basis it is therefore my view (notwithstanding that there may be other compelling policy reasons for refusing the application) that support for the design of the scheme should be given significant weight in the overall planning balance.

Forward Planning:

The proposed new housing development of 1 new dwelling is on a greenfield site not associated or in close proximity to a settlement boundary. Therefore it is not considered acceptable within the context of Spatial Principle 7. It is noted that Stafford Borough Council does not have a 5-year housing land supply and the adopted Plan is more than 5 years old meaning that the NPPF paragraph 11 presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

Taking into account NPPF paragraphs 11, 110 and 115 together with the full weight of Spatial Principle 7 at this stage the planning policy position is not to support this proposal development, and this being alongside other material considerations that will be taken into account in the overall planning balance in determining the application. Therefore, the advice provided is the Planning Policy perspective and DM Officers will take a balanced approach to decision-making.

Natural England:

No objection subject to securing appropriate mitigation re. Cannock Chase SAC

SBC Ecology Officer:

Protected Species:

Adapt Environment Ltd undertook a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report during August 2025. Like the previous ecological survey in 2020, no significant protected species/habitat constraints were identified.

Nesting birds:

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This means that vegetation works should not be undertaken in the nesting season (March to August), unless it can be demonstrated by the developer that breeding birds will not be affected. This can be done by requesting a method statement for protection / avoidance of nesting birds as a condition - this may include timing of work, pre-work checks, avoiding nesting areas etc.

Habitats:

Recommendations for habitat enhancement should include:

1x Schwegler 1B bird box should be installed in an appropriate location on site.

Any loss of hedgerow should be compensated with new hedgerow and shrub planting.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The BNG Report correctly states that BNG cannot be provided on-site due to the scheme rules on gardens and securing their long-term gain.

The proposed units to be removed from site include 0.25 units. The required units to meet the trading requirements are 0.28 units. The development will therefore not meet the biodiversity net gain condition for habitats because 10% net gain cannot be achieved onsite due to space restrictions. Therefore the 10% net gain of 0.17 units deficient would be purchased offsite.

The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain requires an offsite Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) to be submitted and approved by the planning authority to discharge the biodiversity gain condition prior to the commencement of development. The BGP should detail the measures undertaken to achieve the required 10% net gain in the metric tool offsite within the NCA.

SBC Tree Officer:

No representation received

District Newt Officer:

We are satisfied with the ecological report submitted with this application and recommend a compliance condition is used to secure the measures are complied with:

The development hereby approved shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the recommendations/measures stated in the supporting document Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement (Adapt Environment Ltd, Dec 2025).

Informative requested.

Regulatory Services:

The proposed development is in an area with sensitive receptors nearby. To protect the amenity for these sensitive receptors, this unit recommends that:

Hours of construction - No development, including demolition and/or construction works shall take place outside 08.00 hours to 18.00 hours Mondays to Fridays; 08.00 hours to 13.00 hours on Saturdays or at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Any variation to the hours of operation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any agreed change being implemented.

Reason - To ensure that the residential amenities that occupiers can reasonably expect to enjoy are adequately protected.

EPCD02 Delivery Hours - No deliveries shall be taken at or despatched from the site outside 08.00 hours to 18.00 hours Mondays to Fridays; 08.00 hours to 13.00 hours on Saturdays or at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Any variation to the hours of operation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any agreed change being implemented.

Reason - To ensure that the residential amenities that occupiers can reasonably expect to enjoy are adequately protected.

This unit also recommends that, if, during the course of development, any contamination is found which has not been identified in the site investigation, additional measures for the remediation of this source of contamination shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The remediation of the site shall incorporate the approved additional measures.

Lead Local Flood Authority:

The LLFA would advise that inclusion of a swale feature and the measures indicated in the Flood Risk Assessment are acceptable measures to mitigate against identified risks of surface water flooding to the property and to 3rd parties.

As such, the LLFA would have no objections to the proposals and recommend that the following documents be listed upon any decision notice:

- Flood Risk Assessment (245326-F01, 31 March 2026); and
- Sustainable Drainage Strategy (JOFO214-RP-SWD-001, March 2026)

Informative

Due to the scale and nature of the application, the LLFA would not usually comment upon the drainage system for the proposed development. However, the LLFA does note that surface water is to be discharged into the foul sewer at a rate of 0.2 l/s.

The LLFA highly recommends that the applicant seeks approval for this point (and rate) of connection by means of a pre-development enquiry as the local sewerage authority may not grant a point of connection to the foul sewerage network.

Severn Trent Water:

No representation received

Publicity

Site notice expiry: 11 February 2026

Advert expiry: 4 February 2026

Relevant Planning History

20/33078/OUT - Erection of residential dwelling, detached garage and new access - Refused 8 September 2021 - Appeal dismissed 5 October 2022

98/36123/FUL - New Dwelling - Refused 15 July 1998 - Appeal dismissed 19 January 1999

Recommendation

Approve, subject to the following conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.

2. This permission relates to the following drawings, except where indicated otherwise by a condition attached to this consent, in which case the condition shall take precedence:-

   Drawing No 001 Rev 3D Site Location Plan

   Drawing No 001 Rev 3B Proposed Layouts

   Drawing No 001 Rev 3B Proposed Elevations

   Drawing No 001 Rev 3A Details

   Drawing No 001 Rev 3A Proposed Roof Plan

   Drawing No 002 Rev 3A Building Heights Elevation

   Drawing No 003 Rev 3D Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No 004 Rev 3D Proposed Site Plan - GF Layout

Drawing No 006 Rev 3B Site Plan - St. John's Close

3. Prior to the commencement of development, to include construction activity and the delivery to site of any materials or equipment, an arboricultural method statement detailing the type and location of protection measures for retained hedgerows shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the local planning authority. The protection measures shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details and adhered throughout the construction phase of development.

4. Notwithstanding any detail/description within the application documents, a detailed landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority to include hard surfacing details, a planting scheme to include planting specifications, boundary treatments and means of enclosure. The scheme shall also include provision of 1x Schwegler 1B bird box in an appropriate location on site. The landscaping of the site shall be completed in accordance with the approved details within three months of the development first being brought into use.

5. Pursuant to the above condition, any plants, hedges or trees that are removed, die or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of 5 years from the date of planting shall be replaced with others of similar size and species in the next planting season, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

6. Notwithstanding any description/details of external materials in the application documents, no construction works above ground shall be commenced until precise details or samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external wall(s) and roof(s) of the building(s) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

7. Notwithstanding any description/details in the application documents, before the development is first occupied the west-facing, first-floor windows serving the en-suite bathrooms as shown on drawings 001 3B (proposed layouts) and 001 3B (proposed elevations) shall be obscure glazed and non-opening up to 1.7m in height above floor level and shall thereafter be retained as such for hte life of the development.

8. The development shall not be occupied unless and until the drainage scheme and flood mitigation measures detailed within the Sustainable Drainage Strategy report March 2026 by JOFLOWS and the Flood Risk Assessment Report Reference: 245326-F01 31 March 2026 have been provided in full. The drainage and flood mitigation measures shall thereafter maintained for the lifetime of the development.

9. All construction works, including demolition and associated deliveries to the site shall only take place between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday; 8.00am to 2.00pm Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or bank holidays.

10. The development shall not be brought into use unless and until visibility splays have been provided in accordance with drawing 003 Rev 3D (Proposed Site Plan). The visibility splays shall thereafter be kept free of all obstructions to visibility over a height of 600mm above the adjacent carriageway level.

11. The development shall not occupied unless and until the access and parking areas shown on drawing 003 3D (proposed site plan) have been provided and they shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.

12. The development hereby approved shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the recommendations/measures stated in the supporting document Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement (Adapt Environment Ltd, Dec 2025).

13. The development hereby approved shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the Passive house planning report by Locke Passive House Consultants (18 August 2025).

14. The solar panels to be installed on the roof of the development hereby permitted, as detailed on drawing precise details of the solar panels indicated on drawing 001 Rev 3B (proposed elevations) shall be installed in accordance with details to include their design, appearance, siting, and any necessary precautions to reduce the impact from glare, and which shall first have been submitted to, and approved, in writing by, the local planning authority.

The reasons for the Council's decision to approve the development subject to the above conditions are:

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. To define the permission.

3. To ensure adequate protection measures for retained hedgerows (Policy N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

4. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development and enhance the natural environment (Policy N1 and N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

5. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development and enhance the natural environment (Policy N1 and N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

6. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

7. To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

8. To ensure adequate mitigation against flood risk (Policy N2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

9. To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

10. In the interests of highway safety (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

11. To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in accordance with Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough.

12. To ensure adequate mitigation in respect of protected species (Policy N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

13. To ensure that the development is of an outstanding or innovative design which promotes high levels of sustainability and/or helps to raise the standard of design in the area. (Paragraph 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

14. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development (Policies N1 g and h of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

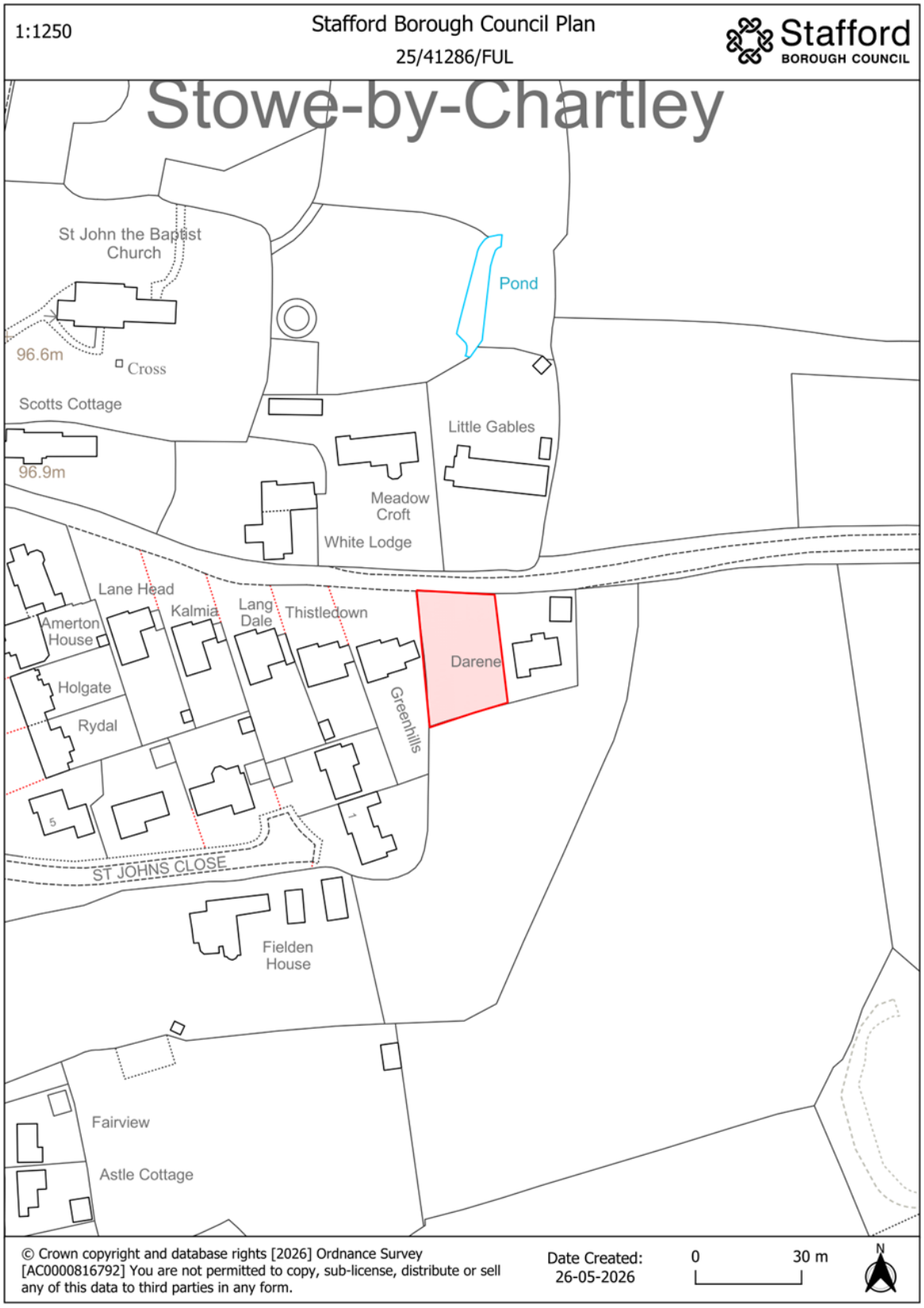
Informatives

1 In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Order) 2015, as amended, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, the Council has worked in a positive and proactive way in determining the application and has granted planning permission.

2 The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments of the lead local flood authority with regard to the recommendation that approval is sought from the local sewerage authority for the proposed point (and rate) of connection by means of a pre-development enquiry. All comments can be viewed online through the planning public access pages of the Council's website (www.staffordbc.gov.uk).

3 The applicant's attention is drawn to Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

25/41286/FUL
Land Adjacent To Acorn Cottage
Drointon Lane
Stowe By Chartley



Application:	25/40919/PIP
Case Officer:	Emma Bailey
Date Registered:	4 August 2025
Target Decision Date: **Extended To:**	8 September 2025 12 June 2026
Address:	Land West of Old Road, Barlaston, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire
Ward:	Barlaston
Parish:	Barlaston
Proposal:	Residential development for up to 5 dwellings
Applicant:	Inglewood Investment Company Limited
Recommendation:	Approve

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application has been called in by Councillor G Jones, Ward Member for Barlaston, for the following reason:

"Development on green field designated land."

1.0 Site and Surroundings

1.1 The application site forms an irregular shaped parcel of land to the west and rear of 9-19 Old Road in Barlaston. The site is accessed from Old Road via an existing lane that includes a Public Right of Way between 19-21 Old Road. Agricultural fields are located to the west and existing residential dwellings are located to the north, east and south.

1.2 The site is located outside but directly adjacent to the settlement boundary of Barlaston and is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

2.0 The Proposal

2.1 The application seeks Permission in Principle for the construction of up to 5 dwellings.

2.2 The applicant is not required or expected at permission in principle stage to supply any detailed plans in regard to proposal. However, the planning statement has advised that the proposed dwellings would be bungalows, utilising a design and materials which would be compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, but reserved to the Technical Details Consent stage.

2.3 All details relating to the external appearance, design, access, landscaping, siting, drainage and other technical / environmental matters are not relevant under the assessment of a permission in principle application and will be dealt with by a second application for approval of technical details under a Technical Details Consent.

3.0 Supporting Information

3.1 To support the application the following documents have been submitted:

- Planning statement

4.0 Relevant Planning Policy

4.1 Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, require decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031 provide the policy framework against which the development proposal will be assessed.

4.3 **National Policies**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 11 - Making effective use of land
Section 12 - Achieving well designed places
Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

4.4 **Local Policies**

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031

SP1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SP2 - Stafford Borough Housing and Employment Requirements

SP3 - Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy
SP4 - Stafford Borough Housing Growth Distribution
SP6 – Achieving rural sustainability
SP7 - Supporting the Location of New Development
E2 - Sustainable rural development
T1 - Transport
T2 - Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities
C1 - Dwelling Types and Sizes
C2 - Affordable housing
C5 - Residential proposals outside the settlement hierarchy
C7 - Open space, sport and recreation
N1 - Design
N2 - Climate change
N4 - The natural environment and green infrastructure
N5 - Sites of European, National and Local Nature Conservation Importance
N8 - Landscape character

The Plan for Stafford Borough: Part 2 (TPSB) 2011-2031

SP3 - Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy
SP4 - Stafford Borough Housing Growth Distribution
SP7 - Supporting the Local of New Development
SB1 - Settlement Boundaries

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Design

Barlaston Neighbourhood Plan

H1 - Site allocation
D1 - Design of new development
LNE1 - Natural environment
BE1 - High speed connectivity

5.0 Permission in Principle Context

What is the permission in principle consent route?

5.1 The permission in principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical details of development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

What matters are within the scope of a decision on whether to grant permission in principle?

5.2 The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. The determination of the application must be made in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan unless there are material considerations, such as those in the National Planning Policy Framework and national guidance, which indicate otherwise.

5.3 Local authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for planning permission. It is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of permission in principle nor can planning obligations be secured.

Exemption of certain developments

5.4 The Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017, along with the Planning Practice Guidance confirms that applications for permission in principle cannot be made for the following types of development:

a) Major development

b) Habitats development

c) Householder development

d) EIA Schedule 1 development

5.5 The 2017 Order provides the following definition of major development when assessing applications for permission in principle:

"major development" means development involving any one or more of the following:

a) The provision of dwellings where the number of houses to be provided is 10 or more;

b) The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created is 1,000 square meters or more; or

c) Development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more;

Habitats development is defined as:

"development which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site."

5.6 This application seeks development of up to 5 dwellings and has a site area of approx. 0.99 hectares. The development is therefore not a major development as defined by the Town and Country Planning Order nor is it a householder application. The development would not have a significant effect on a European site and as such is not habitats development. Due to the size, scale, location and the characteristics of the site, the proposal would not comprise EIA development.

5.7 Therefore, taking account of the above considerations against the legislation and PPG, the principle of the development can be considered under the permission in principle route.

Consultation before applying for permission in principle

5.8 The proposal does not include development specified in Article 5C, therefore no consultation is required prior to submitting the permission in principle application.

6.0 Officer Assessment

6.1 The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters will be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters will be considered at the technical consent stage.

6.2 **Location of Development**

Policy Context

6.3 Policy SP3 (Sustainable settlement hierarchy) of TPSB sets out the settlement hierarchy for the borough. The policy seeks to provide the majority of future development through the sustainable settlement hierarchy which directs development towards the towns of Stafford (1) and Stone (2) and the defined Key Service Villages (3). Policy SP4 (housing growth distribution) then apportions a sustainable spatial distribution of future development at Stafford (70%), Stone (10%), Key Service Villages (12%) and the rest of the Borough (8%).

6.4 SP6 (achieving rural sustainability) supports appropriate rural housing schemes to achieve sustainable communities. SP7 (supporting the location of new development) establishes the settlement boundaries for the Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy defined in SP3. It also sets out four criteria which development in the countryside must adhere to. Criterion i) requires Green Belt development to adhere with national policy. Criterion ii) requires development to be compliant with SP6, E2 and C5 in supporting rural sustainability; criterion iii) requires development not to conflict with environmental protection and nature conservation policies and criterion iv) requires any necessary mitigation or compensation to be provided.

6.5 Policy E2 (sustainable rural development) of TPSB advises that for those rural areas outside the settlements within the Green Belt, development is controlled in accordance with national guidance and policy E5.

6.6 C5 (Residential proposals outside the settlement hierarchy) requires residential development outside of the settlement boundaries to adhere to SP7 and the following 3 criteria:

1. It is demonstrated that provision cannot be accommodated within the Settlement Hierarchy (SP3)

2. A Parish based local housing need assessment, and an appraisal of the scheme shall accompany any planning application, proving that it will meet the defined needs

3. The development is of a high quality design that reflects the setting, form and character of the locality and the surrounding landscape

This policy also states that affordable housing will be permitted on rural exception sites.

6.7 The application site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary identified within Policy SP3 and is, therefore, in strict policy terms, located within open countryside for the purposes of planning assessment. As outlined above policies SP6 and C5 of TPSB support, under certain criteria, the principle of rural housing.

6.8 With regards to C5, the submission fails to provide any justification as to why the proposed dwellings could not be accommodated within the settlement hierarchy. Furthermore, the submission does not include a Parish based Local Housing Needs Assessment to demonstrate that the development would meet a defined need. The third criterion of policy C5 would be assessed at technical details consent stage. The proposed dwellings would not be affordable housing and therefore wouldn’t qualify as a rural exception site. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with the requirements of Policies SP3, SP6 and C5 of TPSB.

The 'Tilted Balance'

6.9 On 12 December 2024 the NPPF was updated and forms a material consideration of significant weight in determining planning applications. As a consequence of the updated NPPF the policies within the TPSB carry less weight. However, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as outlined in policies SP3, SP6 parts of SP7, E2, C5 and N6 remain the established thrust of both national and local policy.

6.10 Following the update of the NPPF a new standard methodology is now being used to calculate the local housing need. This new methodology has resulted in the Local Housing Need target for Stafford Borough increasing from 358 dwellings per year to 749 dwellings per year, and the housing provision of the adopted Plan's Spatial Principle 2 for 500 dwellings per year suspended. This increase has resulted in a reduction of the 5 year land supply to 3.37 years, based on year end data at 31 March 2025.

6.11 As the Council can no longer demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, paragraph 11 of the NPPF now applies, that being the presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision taking. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision taking, with the following national planning policy context to be considered:

'Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date8, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance7 provides a strong reason for refusing the proposed development; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land. Securing well designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Footnote 7 *The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.*

Footnote 8 *This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where; the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous there years. See also paragraph 232.*

6.12 In the absence of a five-year housing land supply and with housing policies out of date, the 'tilted balance' outlined with Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged. As a result, reduced weight is afforded to Local Plan (TPSB) housing policies, and this proposal should be assessed against paragraph 11 of the NPPF, with the presumption in favour of sustainable development applied.

6.13 As outlined above, paragraph 11 d) requires authorities to grant permission in sustainable locations unless the application of policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance, such as the Green Belt and heritage assets, provides a strong reason for refusing development proposed. These matters will be assessed throughout the body of this report and a conclusion and planning balance drawn in the final paragraphs.

Is the proposal an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt?

6.14 The site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt. Policy E2 of TPSB directs the decision maker to consider proposals falling within the Green Belt against national planning policy within the Framework.

6.15 The NPPF identifies that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristic of Green Belts are their openness and permeance (para 142, NPPF).

6.16 Furthermore paragraph 143 of the NPPF sets out that:

'Green Belt serves five purposes:

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

b) Prevent neighbouring town merging into one another;

c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and;

e) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'

6.17 The NPPF advises, in paragraph 153, that 'inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.'

6.18 The framework advises at paragraph 154 that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the specified exceptions applies. None of the exceptions listed apply in this case. However, Paragraph 155 goes on to set out circumstances where development on 'Grey Belt' land is 'not inappropriate'.

6.19 Paragraph 155 of the Framework advises that where development meet all of the criteria listed, development should not be regarded as inappropriate. Para 155 states:

The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;

c) The development would be in a sustainable location with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this framework; and

d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157.

6.20 The Applicant asserts that the application site comprises Grey Belt land. An assessment of the application against Paragraph 155 of the Framework is contained below.

NPPF Paragraph 155 criterion (a) - Does the site comprise Grey Belt land

6.21 Annex 2 of the Framework provides the following definition of Grey Belt land:

"For the purposes of plan making and decision making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in Paragraph 143. 'Grey Belt' excludes land where land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development."

6.22 The site is not previously developed land, so the first question is whether the site strongly contributes to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143 of the Framework. Those purposes are:

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;

b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

c) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

6.23 Barlaston is defined as a Key Service Village. It is not large by comparison to the County Town of Stafford or the Market Town of Stone. The recently updated Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this purpose of including land within the Green Belt does not apply to villages. The site is located to the rear of properties on Old Road to the east and part of a larger agricultural field to the north, south, east and west without any definable boundaries. The proposal would therefore not result in the unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up areas.

6.24 Owing to the above, it is not considered that the application site makes a strong contribution towards restricting the sprawl of large urban areas and does not make a strong contribution to purpose a).

a) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

6.25 The site does not adjoin the urban areas of a town, and again, the recently updated PPG confirms that this criterion applies to towns, not villages. The site is not near any town. The site therefore does not make a strong contribution to purpose b).

b) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

6.26 The application site does not adjoin a historic town, and again, the PPG states that this applies to towns, not other locations (i.e. villages). The site therefore does not make a strong contribution to purpose d).

6.27 In light of the above assessment, the site does not strongly contribute to purposes a), b) or d) set out at paragraph 143 of the Framework. The proposals would also not fundamentally undermine the purpose (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.

6.28 Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposed development does comprise Grey Belt land and would also not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan and therefore the proposed development accords with paragraph 155 criteria a) of the Framework.

NPPF Paragraph 155 criterion (b) – Is there a demonstrable need for the development?

6.29 Footnote 56 to the criteria sets out that in the case of applications involving the provision of housing, means the lack of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, including the relevant buffer where applicable. In this regard the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with appropriate buffer. The Council has published a statement confirming that the supply stands at 3.37 years. There is, therefore, a demonstrable unmet need for the development proposed.

6.30 In light of the above, it is concluded that currently there is a demonstrable need for development in Stafford Borough and therefore the proposed development accords with paragraph 155 criteria b) of the Framework.

NPPF Paragraph 155 criterion (c) - Would the development be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the Framework?

6.31 Paragraph 155 c) of the Framework seeks that development would be in a sustainable location and refers to paragraph 110 and 115 that in turn seek the limiting of the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes, while acknowledging transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and other specific criteria including the design of streets are to reflect national guidance and ensure highway safety.

6.32 Policy SP3 of TPSB confirms that the majority of future development in the Borough will be delivered through the sustainable settlement hierarchy, based on the County Town of Stafford, Market Town of Stone, and a number of named Key Service Villages. Barlaston is listed as one of the Key Service Villages and is therefore inherently acknowledged as a sustainable location for new development, including housing. Part of the application site (red edge) lies directly adjacent to the settlement boundary with the access and a slither to the east being within it. The majority of the site is located directly adjacent to the settlement boundary and would, in reality, be as equally sustainable as those areas immediately adjacent to it that are within the settlement boundary.

6.33 The settlement of Barlaston has a number of services and facilities such as shops, schools, medical centre, churches and also public transport links which provide access to larger settlements with a greater offer of services. The proposed access road to the development site leads directly onto Old Road which has a footpath and street lighting. Future occupants of the site would be able to access these facilities either on foot, cycle or via sustainable transport modes and would not be solely reliant on private vehicles to access facilities.

6.34 The fact that the site comprises land designated as Green Belt does not automatically make it an unsustainable location and each site must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In this instance, given the nature of the site as a logical extension opportunity using Grey Belt Land, and its position abutting the settlement boundary, it is a sustainable location for a small scale new residential development. This would in turn deliver material planning benefits relating to the delivery of new housing in accordance with the Sustainable Development Hierarchy in the adopted development plan.

6.35 In light of the above assessment it is concluded that currently Barlaston, and in turn the application site, is a sustainable location for the scale of development proposed and therefore the development accords with the criterion c) of Framework Paragraph 155.

NPPF Paragraph 155 criterion (d) – Does the proposed development meet the 'Golden Rules' requirement set out in paragraph 156-157, where applicable

6.36 The golden rules cited in criterion d) of Paragraph 155 relate to major development, which is defined in the Framework as a site where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.

6.37 It is important to note that the definition of major development is different in the Framework than it is within the 2017 Order. Within the 2017 Order, major development is defined as a site which has an area of one hectare or more.

6.38 The proposed development is for up to 5 dwellings on a site area of 0.99ha.

6.39 Therefore, for the purposes of the 2017 Order, which determines whether Permission in Principle can be made or not, the proposed development is not major development. However, for the purposes of the Framework and consideration of the 'Golden Rules', the proposed development is major development as a result of the site area being over 0.5ha. Accordingly, an assessment against each of the 3 Golden Rules as defined by the Framework Paragraph 156 is undertaken below.

6.40 Paragraph 156 and 157 of the Framework state:

Para 156 *Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:*

a. Affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 below;

b. Necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and

c. The provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

Para 157 *Before development plan policies for affordable housing are updated in line with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework, the affordable housing contribution required to satisfy the Golden Rules is 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of 50%. In the absence of a preexisting requirement for affordable housing, a 50% affordable housing contribution should apply by default. The use of site-specific viability assessment for land within or released form the Green Blet should be subject to the approach set out in national planning practice guidance on viability.*

Golden Rule a - affordable housing

6.41 Paragraph 156 criteria a) of the NPPF requires that affordable housing should be delivered either through development plan policies in accordance with paragraph 67-68 of this Framework, or until such policies are in place, in accordance with paragraph 157 of the NPPF. The adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (June 2014) Policy C2 (affordable housing) does not accord with paragraphs 67-68 as set out below and therefore the affordable housing requirement in paragraph 157 of 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of 50% should be applied. Policy C2 of the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough sets out an affordable housing threshold for this site within the Barlaston Area category of 40%. Therefore, applying paragraph 157 of the NPPF means that the proposed development should provide 50% affordable housing based on this associated cap, which is the equivalent of up to 2.5 out of the 5 homes being proposed.

6.42 As conditions or legal agreements cannot be imposed at the Permission in Principle stage, affordable housing will be secured through an informative and considered fully at the Technical Details Consent Stage, where a legal agreement would be required.

6.43 There is no evidence at the Permission in Principle stage to indicate that the proposed level of affordable housing could not be delivered through the Technical Details Consent Stage. Accordingly, it is considered feasible that part a) of the "Golden Rule" set out in Paragraph 156 of the Framework can be satisfied.

Golden Rule b - improvement to local or national infrastructure

6.44 It is highly unlikely that a scheme with a maximum quantum of 5 dwellings would have an impact on any national infrastructure. There is, however, the opportunity at the Technical Details Consent Stage to address specific infrastructure requirements, such as education provision, highways improvements including vehicular access requirements, and drainage matters at that point.

6.45 Under the Technical Details Stage the relevant consultations with appropriate bodies will take place and any required improvements to local or national infrastructure secured. Again, there is no evidence before the Council at the Permission in Principle stage to suggest that any necessary improvements cannot be delivered through the Technical Details Consent Stage. Accordingly, it is considered feasible that part b) of the "Golden Rule" set out in Paragraph 156 of the Framework can be satisfied.

Golden Rule c – green space

6.46 Paragraph 156 criteria c) of the NPPF refers to provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces. Furthermore paragraph 159 of the NPPF sets out further requirements concerning improvements to green spaces contributing positively to the landscape setting of the development, supporting nature recovery and meeting local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. National standards should be met, including Natural England standards on accessible green space and urban greening factors and Green Flag criteria where no locally specific standards exist.

6.47 The site area measures 0.99ha and the proposed development is for up to 5 dwellings. Owing to the shape of the site, it may be unlikely that any meaningful provision of on site green space could be accommodated and a financial contribution to upgrade existing facilities in the local area may be required.

6.48 At Technical Details Consent Stage, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that either suitable levels of onsite green space, that will be accessible to the public, can be provided. Or, provide financial contributions to provide improvements to existing green spaces off site having regard to Policy C7 appendix G of TPSB. Any financial contributions will be secured via a legal agreement at the TDC stage.

6.49 It will be for the applicant to demonstrate that paragraph 156 criteria c) can be met through evidence provided alongside the Technical Details Consent Stage. However, there is no reason at Permission in Principle stage to suggest that this cannot be met.

Conclusion on Location

6.50 It is found that the site is grey belt for the context of the NPPF as it does not make a significant contribution to purposes a) b) and d) of paragraph 143 and complies with parts a) - c) of paragraph 155.

6.51 In applying criterion d) of paragraph 155, the proposal is classed as major development as the site area exceeds 0.5 ha. The development is therefore required to demonstrate compliance with the ‘Golden Rules’.

6.52 As set out above, the Council considers that there is no reason at the Permission in Principle stage to conclude that the ‘Golden Rules’ cannot be met. The evidence before the Council indicates that the requirements of the Golden Rules could be delivered either through on-site provision or, where appropriate, through financial contributions. There is no clear impediment to delivery that would justify refusal at this stage.

6.53 The assessment of the Golden Rules at Permission in Principle stage is necessarily high level and proportionate, reflecting the limited scope of matters to be determined. The purpose of this stage is not to require full quantification, detailed layout, or the securing of obligations, but to establish whether there are any fundamental constraints that would prevent the Golden Rules from being complied with. The Council is satisfied that no such constraints have been identified.

6.54 Full demonstration of compliance with the Golden Rules would therefore be required at the Technical Details Consent stage, at which point the precise mechanisms for delivery would be assessed and, where necessary, secured through planning conditions and/or a legal agreement.

6.55 On this basis, and subject to full compliance with the Golden Rules being demonstrated at the Technical Details Consent stage, the proposal is not considered to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The site is consequently regarded as an appropriate and sustainable location for new residential development.

Impact on the Openness of the Green Belt

6.56 It has already been established that the site lies within North Staffordshire Green Belt. It has also been concluded that, having regard to paragraph 155 of the NPPF, the proposed development would not constitute inappropriate development in Green Belt terms.

6.57 Footnote 55 of the NPPF clarifies that development on previously developed land or grey belt is not inappropriate. It therefore follows that development which is not inappropriate cannot harm the openness of the Green Belt as set down by Hon Mr Justice Choudhury in Mole Valley DC v SSHCLG [2025] EWHC 2127 (Admin).

6.58 **Land Use**

6.59 The existing site is greenfield and is in agricultural use. The proposal would result in a loss of this agricultural land.

6.60 The Natural England Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) dataset identifies the site as Grade 3 which is known as good to moderate quality. Without the benefit of a bespoke ALC survey it is not possible to determine if the land is Grade 3a (good quality agricultural land) or Grade 3b (moderate quality agricultural land).

6.61 National policy seeks to protect the “Best and Most Versatile” land (Grades 1, 2, and 3a), and while Grade 3b is not afforded the same level of protection, the principle of safeguarding agricultural resources remains important. Regardless of the omission of an ALC survey, the loss of the agricultural land weighs marginally against the proposed development.

6.62 In terms of compatible land uses, the application site lies directly adjacent to the settlement boundary of Barlaston and consequently adjacent to a built-up area of residential dwellings. In this context, Class C3 residential development is considered to represent an appropriate land use in principle.

6.63 Although agricultural fields and ongoing arable operations are present adjacent to the site, it is not considered that these activities would prejudice residential development in this location. Equally, the proposed residential use would not unduly constrain the continued operation of surrounding agricultural land.

6.64 Overall, the proposed land use would sit comfortably within the prevailing pattern of development and would not undermine the existing mix of residential and agricultural character in the area. The proposal would not introduce a form of development that would be inappropriate in principle or detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

6.65 **Amount of Development**

6.66 TPSB Policy N1 sets out design criteria including the requirement for design and layout to take account of residential amenity and local context and have high design standards. Policy N8 states that new development should respect the character of the landscape setting through layout. Policy C1 advises that new development should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes.

6.67 The application seeks Permission in Principle for up to 5 dwellings on a site area measuring 0.99ha. The proposal would therefore result in a density of about 5 dwellings per hectare which is considered to be relatively low density and appropriate for this area.

6.68 Whilst being an irregular shape it is considered reasonable that the site could accommodate up to 5 dwellings along with the necessary supporting infrastructure such as front and rear gardens, internal access and off-street parking. Any development would be required to assimilate into the established pattern of development within the area.

6.69 Dwellings fronting onto Old Road directly adjacent to the site are made up of detached bungalow dwellings. The supporting planning statement does infer that the end house type would be bungalow dwellings for the proposed development. Whilst there are examples of two storey dwellings in the wider area, this would not be considered acceptable on the development site, as the development would be back land development, and two storey dwellings in this location would be readily visible from the street scene. It would be expected that development at the application site should be designed around similar characteristics to assimilate into the area. Full details of design and scale etc will be submitted and confirmed at the TDC Stage.

6.70 For the purposes of the Permission in Principle application, up to 5 dwellings appear to be an acceptable quantum of development. The details of design, scale, layout and access would be considered at the Technical Details Consent stage (TDC).

6.71 Whilst it is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of Permission in Principle the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that local planning authorities can inform applicants about what they expect to see at the technical details consent stage (TDC). The PPG further states that local planning authorities should take a proportionate approach to any information requested in support of applications for TDC, which should be relevant, necessary and material to the application in question.

6.72 To ensure the development is appropriate in the context of the site, the TDC would need to include an analysis of the existing character and appearance of the area and the design and scale of the proposed development would need to be sensitive to the relationship of the site to neighbouring properties to ensure existing levels of privacy and amenity are not adversely impacted. Any new or retained access would need to comply with the requirements of the highways authority who will provide clarity at the TDC stage. In addition, it would be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate how surface water will be managed for the lifetime of the development without increasing flood risk elsewhere. These expectations can reasonably form part of an informative.

6.73 In light of the above, and for the purposes of the Permission in Principle, it is considered that the quantum of development proposed would be appropriate for its location.

Other matters

Flood Risk / Drainage

6.74 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. lowest risk of flooding), which is compatible with this type of development/use.

6.75 At Technical Details Consent Stage the applicant should provide details of how foul and surface water drainage will be managed on the site. Any surface water drainage strategy should follow the hierarchy as outlined in the NPPF, prioritising infiltration, then discharge to watercourse, and only where demonstrated to be unfeasible, connection to a sewer. The strategy should be informed by site specific ground conditions and where infiltration is proposed, include the results of a percolation test.

6.76 The submitted details should demonstrate that surface water will be managed sustainably, will not increase flood risk on or off site, and will be capable of being maintained for the lifetime of the development.

6.77 Flood risk and drainage will be fully assessed at the TDC stage.

Highways

6.78 Limited details have been submitted at this stage in regard to highways however noting the application route (permission in Principle) this is to be expected.

6.79 The submitted site plan does indicate that the proposed development would be accessed via the existing gated field access onto Old Road. This access also serves as a Public Right of Way (PROW) and as such any future application would have to demonstrate that no obstruction or closure of this PROW either during construction or during the life of the development results.

6.80 No comments have been received from the Highways Authority at this stage but full details of a safe and suitable access including suitable visibility splays and sufficient on-site parking in accordance with Stafford Borough Councils parking standards is required to be demonstrated at the TDC stage.

6.81 Highways matters will be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Ecology

6.82 No ecology information has been submitted at this stage. The site is located within a Green risk zone for Great Crested Newts and there are mature trees and hedges on some site boundaries which may house species of ecological importance.

6.83 To inform the TDC application it is expected that a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) be submitted to assess the surrounding land, trees and hedgerows for protected and other species. The results of this survey and any necessary mitigation should be presented at the TDC stage.

6.84 Ecology matters will be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Biodiversity Net Gain

6.85 At TDC stage a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment report and BNG metric will be required. Any onsite BNG provision will be required to be provided within the red edge. A legal agreement at TDC stage may be required to secure any BNG.

6.86 BNG matters will be fully assessed at the TDC stage.

Neighbouring representations received

6.87 Numerous neighbouring objections have been received which raise issues that are not appropriate to consider at this stage, through the Permission in Principle application route the Applicant has submitted. Most of the issues raised would be considered at the second, Technical Details Consent stage, if the scheme progresses to that stage. At that stage neighbours would be consulted again, and those issues would be considered during the determination of the Technical Details Consent application. Only those objections which relate to location, land use and amount of development can be considered at this stage.

What is expected at TDC stage

6.88 It is not possible for the council to attach conditions to Permission in Principle applications however informatives can be added which direct the applicant to the level of detail that is required to be provided at TDC stage. Below is a list of information and supporting documentation that should be submitted as part of any application made at the TDC stage.

6.89 Compliance with 'Golden Rules' (informed by pre discussions and evidence with the necessary bodies):

- Provision of 50% affordable housing (paragraph 156a and paragraph 157)
- Provision of necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure – highways, education or utilities (paragraph 156b).
- Provision of new or improved green spaces accessible to the public. (paragraph 156c)
    - Details of on site public open space provision and accessibility or
    - Details of financial contributions towards off site green space provision

6.90 Design, Layout and Access:

- Detailed site layout showing siting, scale and height of all dwellings

- Detailed access arrangements and internal road layout
- Parking and turning provision in accordance with highway standards
- Finished floor levels and site levels

6.91 Landscape and Visual Matters:

- Detailed landscaping scheme, including boundary treatments and screening
- Hard and soft landscaping details

6.92 Ecology and Biodiversity:

- Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)
- Any required protected species surveys
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and BNG metric

6.93 Drainage and Flood Risk:

- Foul and surface water drainage strategy
- Evidence of compliance with the NPPF drainage hierarchy
- Percolation testing where infiltration is proposed
- Long term maintenance arrangements for drainage infrastructure

7.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

7.1 In determining a Permission in Principle application, the Council is required to consider whether the site is suitable for development in terms of its location, land use and amount of development, having regard to the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations.

7.2 The site is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and outside any defined settlement boundary. However, having regard to the updated NPPF, it has been assessed as Grey Belt land, as it does not make a strong contribution to the Green Belt purposes set out in paragraph 143a, b or d, and the proposal would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt. In this context, and subject to meeting the requirements of paragraph 155 of the Framework, the proposed development would not constitute inappropriate development in Green Belt terms.

7.3 The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11d) is engaged, and significant weight must be afforded to the delivery of new housing. The site is considered to be in a sustainable location, with good access on foot and by public transport to services and facilities within Barlaston and is capable of accommodating residential development of the scale proposed without resulting in unacceptable harm in principle.

7.4 The proposed amount of development up to 5 dwellings on a site of approximately 0.99 hectares would represent a low density form of development that is not intrinsically incompatible with the character of the area. There is no evidence at this stage to indicate that the scale of development could not be accommodated on the site alongside the necessary supporting infrastructure, access arrangements, open space provision and landscaping, all of which will be assessed in detail at the Technical Details Consent stage.

7.5 The provision of 5 dwellings within a sustainable location, which is not considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt weighs significantly in favour in the planning balance.

7.6 The proposed development would also provide some economic benefits both during the construction phase and once the development is complete. In the construction phase there would be the creation of jobs and also the potential for the workforce to support local shops and facilities. It is noted however that these benefits are time limited. Future occupants of the site however would support local facilities and services both in Barlaston and in the wider Stafford Borough area. These impacts would be of a longer term and have a greater reach. These economic benefits weigh in favour of the planning balance.

7.7 The proposal would result in the loss of agricultural land and some harm to the openness of the Green Belt arising from the introduction of built development. These impacts weigh marginally against the proposal. However, the harm is localised and modest in scale, the site has been assessed as Grey Belt land, and national policy confirms that substantial weight should not be attributed to Green Belt harm in such circumstances. When weighed against the demonstrable housing need, the sustainable location of the site, and the absence of any fundamental constraints preventing the delivery of an acceptable scheme, the adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

7.8 Overall, having regard to the development plan, the National Planning Policy Framework, consultee responses and other material considerations, it is concluded that the site is suitable for residential development in principle. The application is therefore considered acceptable for approval at the Permission in Principle stage, subject to full assessment and demonstration of compliance with policy requirements at the Technical Details Consent stage.

8.0 Consultations

8.1 Barlaston Parish Council

Response received 26 August 2025

Objection on the following grounds

The proposed development lies on agricultural land within the Green Belt and outside the settlement boundary as defined in the current, made Barlaston Neighbourhood Plan (2019–2031). The Neighbourhood Plan remains valid and is presently under review, with consultation due to commence shortly. Development on this site would therefore be in direct conflict with both Green Belt policy and the established settlement boundary.

The Barlaston Housing Needs Assessment (2024) identifies a Housing Need Figure of 30 dwellings between 2024 and 2031 (equivalent to 4.3 per year), or a residual requirement of 23 dwellings once commitments are taken into account. This need has already been met by sites identified for development within the settlement boundary. The specific requirement for housing for the 55+ age group has also been addressed through land at Barlaston Park, held by Homes Plus and awaiting development.

The proposed site plan shows the access road designed in a way that could serve further future development on the site. Furthermore, a screenshot from the applicant's client's website on 13 August 2025 (attached) depicts the entire field outlined in red and labelled as 'the proposed development'. This raises significant concern that the current application for five dwellings is intended as the first stage of a much larger scheme.

Should permission nevertheless be granted by Planning Officers, it is essential that robust landscaping and defensible boundaries are secured to prevent urban sprawl into the Green Belt.

In terms of design, any approved dwellings should comply with the Barlaston Design Codes (Final Report 2024) and reflect the character of nearby properties on Old Road (nos. 11–19), which are predominantly single-storey. Rooflines and building scales should therefore be limited accordingly. If development is permitted contrary to these material objections, the dwellings should be restricted in size and tenure to meet the needs of the 75+ age group, supporting downsizing opportunities and releasing existing family homes back into the parish housing stock.

In conclusion, Barlaston Parish Council strongly objects to this application on the grounds of Green Belt encroachment, conflict with the settlement boundary and Neighbourhood Plan, and the fact that identified housing needs have already been fully met.

8.2 Planning Policy

Response received 6 February 2026

- The site is considered acceptable in principle as grey belt development.
- There is a clear housing need, and the location is sustainable.
- The proposal could comply with the NPPF and Local Plan subject to addressing:
    - Affordable housing
    - Education contributions
    - Highway impacts
    - Open space provision
- Application for up to 5 dwellings on land west of Old Road, Barlaston.
- Site is greenfield and lies largely within the North Staffordshire Green Belt, adjacent to the Barlaston settlement boundary.
- Site area is 0.99 hectares, meaning it qualifies as “major development” under the NPPF.
- Must be determined in accordance with the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011–2031, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- The NPPF (updated December 2024) is a significant material consideration.
- Stafford Borough cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply (currently 3.37 years), triggering the paragraph 11 presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- New buildings are normally inappropriate in the Green Belt unless policy tests are met.
- The site is assessed as ‘grey belt’ land because it:
    - Is not previously developed, but

- Does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes:
  - Checking sprawl of large built up areas (Barlaston is a village, not a town)
  - Preventing towns from merging
  - Preserving the setting of historic towns

- Development would not fundamentally undermine the wider purposes of the Green Belt.
- NPPF paragraph 155 tests
  - (a) Grey belt: Site meets the definition.
  - (b) Demonstrable need: Lack of a 5 year housing land supply demonstrates unmet housing need.
  - (c) Sustainable location: Barlaston is a Key Service Village; the site is a logical, sustainable extension.
  - (d) Golden Rules: Apply because the scheme is major development.
- Golden Rules requirements (NPPF paras 156–157)
  - Affordable housing: 50% required (cap applied), equating to up to 2.5 of 5 dwellings.
  - Infrastructure: Education and highway impacts must be addressed, informed by county council evidence.
  - Green space: Provision or enhancement of accessible public green space required, meeting national and local standards.
- Schemes meeting the Golden Rules should be given significant weight in favour of approval.
- Development must achieve high quality design in line with:
  - Local Plan Policy N1
  - Stafford Borough Design SPD
  - National Design Guide

8.3 Neighbours (104 consulted):

68 responses received raising the following objections:

- Barlaston is a village and no new homes are needed.
- Traffic on Old Road is already bad.
- Impact on infrastructure such as water, electricity, school places, doctors, dentists, etc.
- Brownfield land should be prioritised.
- Should not develop Green Belt land.
- Encroach into open countryside, harming the openness and character of the area.
- Set a precedent for further unsustainable development outside the settlement boundary.
- Contradict the aims of the Barlaston Neighbourhood Plan, which does not allocate this land for housing. Other areas for development have been identified.
- Impact on wildlife.
- The site is not Grey Belt.
- Flooding concerns.

8.4 Letter from County Councillor for Stone Rural North Division, Councillor Sean Bagguley

- Aware of substantial objections to the proposal.
- Would like to add strong objections and fully support the references made by Barlaston Parish Council

9.0 Publicity

9.1 Site Notice expiry date: 10 September 2025

10.0 Relevant Planning History

87/20166/OUT - Erection Of Detached Dwelling - Refused 18 December 1987

96/33207/OUT - Erection Of One Detached Dwelling - Appeal dismissed 23 December 1996

04/03056/FUL - Erection of a detached one and a half storey dwelling and detached garage with ancillary access and garden space. - Appeal dismissed 13 July 2005

15/22414/FUL - Detached bungalow and access - Appeal dismissed 25 January 2016

Recommendation

Approve

Informatives

This permission in principle (PIP) shall cease to have effect three years after the date of this Decision Notice. The technical details consent (TDC) relating to the proposed development must be granted prior to the expiration of the PIP.

The plans relevant to this Permission in Principle decision are indicative only and are limited to the following:

UG_3022_URB_DRW_100_01 - Development framework plan
UG_3022_UD_DRG_100_01 Rev X01 - Location plan

For the avoidance of doubt, this Permission in Principle does not approve the detailed layout, design, access or scale of development, which will be considered as part of any subsequent application for Technical Details Consent.

This Permission in Principle establishes the acceptability of the proposed development in terms of location, land use and amount only. It does not approve the detailed design, layout, access, or technical matters associated with the development.

In accordance with national guidance, the Local Planning Authority advises that any subsequent application for Technical Details Consent (TDC) should be supported by sufficient information to enable a full assessment of the proposal. The information is expected to include, but is not limited to, the following matters:

Design, Layout and Access

- A proportionate assessment of the character and appearance of the area and the relationship of the scheme to neighbouring properties;

- Detailed site layout showing the siting, scale and height of dwellings;

- Access, parking and internal layout details in accordance with Highway Authority standards;

- Finished floor levels and site levels.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- A foul and surface water drainage strategy demonstrating compliance with the NPPF drainage hierarchy, including percolation testing where infiltration is proposed and details of long term maintenance arrangements.

Trees

- A tree survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, including protection measures;

Ecology and Biodiversity

- A Preliminary Ecological Assessment, together with any required protected species surveys:
    - A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)
    - A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, including submission of the Statutory Metric.

Green Belt "Golden Rules"

The applicant is advised that the TDC application will need to demonstrate compliance with the 'Golden Rules' set out in paragraphs 156-157 of the NPPF, informed by engagement with relevant bodies, including:

- Provision of 50% affordable housing;

- Provision of any necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure, including highways, education and utilities;

- Provision of new or improved green spaces accessible to the public, either through:
    - On site public open space provision and accessibility; or
    - Financial contributions toward off site green space provision.

The above matters will be fully assessed at the Technical Details Consent stage. The inclusion of this informative does not prejudice the outcome of any future application for Technical Details Consent.

25/40919/PIP
Land West Of Old Road
Barlaston
Stoke-On-Trent

ITEM NO 6 ITEM NO 6

PLANNING COMMITTEE - 10 JUNE 2026

Ward Interest - Nil

Planning Appeals

Report of Head of Economic Development and Planning

Purpose of Report

Notification of new appeals and consideration of appeal decisions. Copies of any decision letters are attached as an **APPENDIX**.

Notified Appeals

Application Reference	Location	Proposal
25/41421/FUL **Non Determination**	1-3 Radford Street	Change of use from a drinking establishment/restaurant (Use Class E(b)) to an education and examination centre for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and home-schooled (F1)
25/41298/FUL **Delegated Refusal**	The Ferns	Replacement of existing stables with new building and construction of vehicular access
26/41736/POTH **Delegated Refusal**	Land at Mill Lane	Prior Approval - 60-day temporary recreational camp site

Decided Appeals

Application Reference	Location	Proposal
24/39877/OUT **Appeal Allowed**	The Mount, Hixon	Outline Application - Erection of two dwellings (access only)

Application Reference	Location	Proposal
24/39049/FUL **Appeal Allowed**	Land Opposite Beech Tree Farm	Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 3 gypsy families each with one mobile home, one touring caravan and one day room and stable block, car parking, foul drainage, landscaping and hardscaping
25/41048/HOU **Appeal Dismissed**	Littledean Barn	Replacement Outbuilding
25/40597/HOU **Appeal Dismissed**	5 Groundslow Mews	Proposed detached garage and extended driveway
25/41367/PAR **Appeal Allowed** **Costs Refused**	Barns Bridge Farm Buildings	Prior Approval Change of Use of Agricultural Building to form Two Dwellings
25/40604/HOU **Appeal Dismissed**	New House	Outbuilding

Previous Consideration

Nil

Background Papers

File available in the Development Management Section

Officer Contact

Sushil Birdi, Development and Policy Manager, 01543 464326

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 April 2026

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 May 2026

Appeal Ref: 6004546
The Mount, Stowe Lane, Hixon, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0NB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Andrew Dangerfield of Moreton Developments Limited against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 24/39877/OUT.
- The development proposed is the erection of two dwellings.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of two dwellings at The Mount, Stowe Lane, Hixon, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0NB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/39877/OUT, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. Outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved except access. I have had regard to the other details on the submitted plans but have treated them as illustrative other than for access.

3. The appellant's appeal statement included plans showing different options for the available sight lines at the access depending on the set back and where they were measured in relation to the carriageway. These were provided at the outset of the appeal, and all parties have therefore had opportunity to comment on them. Given this and that they do not fundamentally change the proposal, no one would be prejudice by my taking them into account.

4. I have taken the address and description of development from the application form as they are sufficiently precise.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

6. Other than the initial part of the access there would be limited opportunity for vehicles to be able to pass along the private road. However, there is relatively good visibility along what is a mostly straight section of private road from the entrance to the appeal site. Therefore, drivers and other road users would be able to see each other over some distance. The wide entrance and initial part of the private road would provide sufficient space to allow vehicles to pass with the one entering the site being off the carriageway and not needing to reverse back on to

it. Similarly, other road users would be able to see vehicles approaching and ensure they or the vehicle waited to allow them to pass. The width of the private road, and that it is a shared surface means that vehicle speeds would likely be low, giving sufficient time to prevent conflicts, something I observed during my visit.

7. If parking for one of the existing properties were to take place on the side of the private road as suggested, this would be at the rear part of it where it widens near the entrance to that dwelling. Again, there would be sufficient space to pass the parked vehicle even if there were a slight overhang onto the private road. In addition, in the absence of any clear evidence to the contrary sufficient space would be left for the turning of vehicles for that property. Given the distances involved, any waiting would not be for a substantial period or have any significant effect on the flow of traffic along the public road.

8. At the time of my site visit, there was good visibility at the access back towards the village over the wide pavement, driveway and verge to the front of the existing corner property. To the other side, the verge in front of the set back fence was somewhat overgrown and reduced visibility, as did the hedgerow beyond. From the evidence before me, much of this area is part of the highway and within a visibility splay subject to a condition on a previous planning permission using this access. The number of additional vehicle movements and therefore increase in potential conflicts would also not be significant.

9. The plans show a splay of 2m by 49m can be achieved solely within the highway authority land measured to 1m into the carriageway, appearing to avoid the telegraph pole. Based on the Automatic Traffic Count, the lack of compelling evidence that the road is anything other than lightly trafficked and that a 2m set back has previously been conditioned at this access, the suggested distance and set back is sufficient. The public road narrows towards and beyond the change in speed limit. Vehicles and road users would be likely to be located within the centre and/or furthest side of the road approaching the site with the road widening nearer the site. As such, measuring the splay to 1m into the carriageway would still result in vehicles and road users being seen.

10. Visibility to the other side of the private road entrance would only be obstructed by vehicles that needed to wait to allow others to pass. This would only be for a temporary and short period of time and be a relatively infrequent occurrence given the small number of properties off it. This again relates to a splay secured on a previous planning permission and is shown to be within highway land.

11. Consequently, even with the sight line going 1m into the carriageway and potentially the front part of a vehicle at the access overhanging the carriageway, there would still be sufficient visibility and time for road users to stop if needed. While not solely within the appellant's control, a condition could be imposed requiring the splay over highway authority land to be provided and retained.

12. There are also several existing access points on the opposite side of the road with far more limited visibility entering the village before getting to the appeal site. The presence of accesses and vehicles emerging is therefore not unexpected. It has not been demonstrated that the current operation of these has caused incidents or conflicts to occur.

13. The proposal would lead to an increase in the number of vehicles using that access and private road. Notwithstanding this, this is the existing situation and

arrangement. The existing access already serves several properties and has an agricultural gate access leading off the private road. There is no compelling evidence that this currently leads to, or has led to, any highways safety concerns.

14. Consequently, the proposal would not have a harmful effect on highway safety. It would accord with Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough, where it requires safe and adequate means of access and that schemes do not impair highway safety or traffic movement.

Other Matters

15. The appeal site lies within the 15km buffer of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The interest features of the SAC relate to its unique wet and dry heathland habitat with the conservation objectives to maintain these in a favourable condition.

16. The proposal would lead to additional dwellings. There is a reasonable likelihood that the SAC would be accessed for recreational purposes by future occupiers of the development. Although small, the development would lead to greater likely disturbance and nutrient enrichment from visitor use and vehicle emissions. Therefore, having taken a precautionary approach, the proposed development is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the designated site, when considered in combination.

17. In these circumstances, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) require that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is carried out. The Habitats Regulations also indicate that permission may only be granted after having ascertained that a scheme will not affect the integrity of the designated site. I may consider any conditions or other restrictions which could secure mitigation and so provide certainty that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

18. The proposal is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the SAC. To avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC appropriate mitigation needs to be secured

19. An AA was undertaken during the application by the Council and Natural England (NE) was consulted at this stage. NE have stated that if all mitigation measures are appropriately secured, they are satisfied that there would be no adverse impact on the sites from recreational pressure.

20. A Unilateral Undertaking has been provided which secures a proportional financial contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Measures (SAMMM) in line with relevant guidance[1]. The evidence indicates that the payment has already been made and the planning obligation, along with the Council's confirmation that they are satisfied with the agreement means there is sufficient guarantee that the contribution would be used for its intended purposes.

21. The information before me indicates that the impact of the development could therefore be mitigated. This would avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC and accord with the Habitats Regulations.

[1] Planning Guidance To Mitigate The Impact Of New Residential Development On Cannock Chase Special Area Of Conservation (SAC) (June 2023) and Guidance To Mitigate The Impact Of New Residential Development

22. The layout of the site, along with the scale and appearance of the dwellings is not to be considered at this stage. Due to the size of the site and number of units proposed, subject to appropriate design at reserved matters stage the living conditions of nearby residents could be protected. This is also the case for the appearance of the dwelling and any effects on the character and appearance of the area. Any disturbance during the construction period would be temporary.

23. While the site is at the edge of the settlement, the scale of the proposal and number of nearby properties mean the scheme would not significantly increase noise, disturbance or harm the character of the area. The adoption and maintenance of the private drive is not a matter that affects my findings on the main issue.

Conditions

24. In addition to the standard time limit conditions, I have imposed one requiring submission of the remaining reserved matters as this is an outline permission. Conditions requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, so far as they relate to the elements of access where agreement is sought and showing the extent of the site are necessary for clarity and in the interest of highway safety. Conditions relating to pedestrian improvements and visibility splays are also imposed in the interest of highway safety.

25. A condition requiring final details of species mitigation measures to be agreed is imposed to protect them as details in the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are not sufficiently precise, and some elements of the scheme are not yet to be agreed. To protect the living conditions of nearby residents and prevent harm to highway safety a condition requiring agreement of a construction method statement is imposed as the one provided is not sufficiently precise. A condition requiring an arboricultural impact assessment is not necessary as this would form part of the reserved matters. Details of surface water drainage are required to prevent increased risks of flooding.

26. Due to the provisions of Schedule 7 of the 1990 Act and as none of the statutory exemptions apply in this case, the development may not be begun unless a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.

Conclusion

27. The proposal would accord with the development plan, and material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it.

28. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1) Details of the appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale, hereinafter called "the reserved matters" shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development takes place and the development shall be carried out as approved.

2) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

3) The development hereby permitted shall take place not later than 2 years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

4) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Planning 1 Site/location plan, Site plan – conditions Revision E (except in respect of the visibility splays).

5) No development shall commence until details of biodiversity measures have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority including a programme of implementation and maintenance. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

6) No development shall commence until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

7) No development shall commence until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

   The submitted details shall:

   i) provide information about the design storm period and intensity, the method employed to delay and control the surface water discharged from the site and the measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters;

   ii) include a timetable for its implementation; and,

   iii) provide, a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

   The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The sustainable drainage system shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved management and maintenance plan.

8) Prior to the occupation of any of the dwellings hereby approved, the pedestrian improvement works shall be provided in accordance with those shown on Site plan – conditions Revision E.

9) Prior to the occupation of any of the dwellings hereby approved, visibility splays of 2m x 49m measured 1m into the carriageway to the north and 2m x 29m to the south as shown on drawing SCP/250034/D01 shall be provided

free of any obstruction exceeding 0.6m in height and shall be retained as such thereafter.

10) Prior to the occupation of any of the dwellings hereby approved parking and turning space for that dwelling shall be provided in accordance with plans that have first been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority and shall thereafter be kept available at all times for those purposes.

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 28 April 2026

Site visit made on 28 April 2026

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 May 2026

Appeal Ref: 6004319
Land Opposite Beech Tree Farm, London Road, Pasturefields, Stafford ST18 0RB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr John Smith against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 24/39049/FUL.
- The development proposed is change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 3 Gypsy families each with one mobile home, one touring caravan and one day room and stable block, car parking, foul drainage, landscaping and hardscaping.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 3 Gypsy families each with one mobile home, one touring caravan and one day room and stable block, car parking, foul drainage, landscaping and hardscaping at land opposite Beech Tree Farm, Pasturefields, Stafford ST18 0RB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/39049/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. Drawing numbered TDA.2936.03 revision C was submitted after the appeal was lodged but prior to the hearing. A drawing numbered TDA.2936.05 was also provided to me at the hearing. Both drawings show slight amendments and clarifications on the proposed day room and stable block buildings. Also, they ensure consistency with the proposed site layout and outline landscape scheme drawing. Accepting these revised plans would cause no injustice to any party.

3. Furthermore, a noise assessment dated April 2026 was submitted by the appellant prior to the hearing. A diagram under paragraph 4.4.2 of this document shows the line of a proposed acoustic fence near to the front and part of the side boundaries of the site. The Council has had the opportunity to comment on the noise assessment but there is no indication that the document has been the subject of any public consultation. Even so, the inclusion of a fence as shown would represent a minor change to the appeal proposal. Again, I am satisfied no prejudice would be caused to any party by accepting the noise assessment.

4. A plan showing the extent of the appeal site by a red line has been provided. A part of the defined site encroaches beyond the proposed pitches and onto land shown on the layout plan as being retained as existing equestrian paddock. A proposed drainage system would be provided within this paddock area, hence its inclusion within the red line site. At the hearing, the appellant's agent confirmed

that the proposed residential use would be restricted to the area of the pitches between London Road and the retained paddock. I have assessed the appeal on this basis as it would be reasonable to impose a planning condition that restricts the extent of the residential use with reference to the site layout plan.

5. While not a refusal reason, the submissions indicate the development may have an effect on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (CCSAC) and the Pasturefields Salt Marsh Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest (PSMSAC). Accordingly, I have consulted Natural England (NE) for views on the effects of the development on these protected habitat sites. The main parties have had the opportunity to respond to NE's comments.

6. I have had regard to the agreement (hereafter referred to as the section 111 agreement) provided by the appellant prior to the hearing. This refers to section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 as well as the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It states that a payment has been made to the Council towards the costs of measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the CCSAC. No injustice would be caused to any party by taking the section 111 agreement into account.

Main Issues

7. The main issues are (i) the effect of the development on the CCSAC and PSMSAC, (ii) its effect on the character and appearance of the area, and (iii) the effect on the setting and the significance of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area (the CA). If any harm is identified in these respects, it follows to consider whether other factors outweigh that harm to justify allowing the appeal.

Reasons

Effect on the protected habitat sites.

8. The CCSAC is designated as it includes important and rare heath habitats. The Council and NE refer to evidence that shows visitors and recreation activities at the CCSAC cause damage to its qualifying features. Also, policy N6 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2014 (the PSB) is relevant. This indicates development that increases the number of residences within a 15km zone of influence around the CCSAC would have an adverse effect on its integrity unless avoidance and mitigation measures are in place. The proposed residential accommodation would be within the defined zone of influence and so it is likely the development, either alone or in combination with other projects, would have significant effects on the integrity of the CCSAC. Therefore, it is necessary for me to conduct an appropriate assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Regulations).

9. As part of an appropriate assessment, the Regulations require me to consider measures that could be delivered so as to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the CCSAC. The section 111 agreement explains that the financial contribution paid to the Council will be used to fund measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the protected site. Both the Council and NE accept the payment provides an appropriate level of mitigation to address the impacts of the development. I find no reason to disagree and so I conclude the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the CCSAC. Therefore, I find no conflict with PSB policy N6.

10. The PSMSAC lies near to the site albeit on the other side of the Trent and Mersey Canal. It is designated due to rare inland salt meadow and associated ecological features. NE's initial response to the planning application leading to this appeal raised concerns over the lack of information on the disposal of foul water associated with the appeal development. However, comprehensive foul drainage information has since been submitted. Both NE and the Council are satisfied the system would appropriately deal with foul water and without causing harm to the qualifying features of the protected site.

11. Therefore, I conclude the development is unlikely to have significant effects on the integrity of PSMSAC. As such, the proposal would avoid unacceptable effects on both of the protected habitat sites.

Effect on the character and appearance of the area.

12. The appeal site forms part of an open grassed field that lies between London Road and the aforementioned canal. Similar fields adjoin the site. In some of these I saw various low-level buildings and other structures, seemingly associated with equestrian or recreational uses of the land and with the canal. Directly opposite the site is a dwellinghouse at Beech Tree Farm, whilst further to the south on the other side of the road is a line of residential and commercial buildings. At the time of my visit, the road was busy and traffic noise could be heard from across the field. However, despite the nearby buildings, road and signs of human activities within adjoining fields, the pastoral nature of the site means it appears as part of the open countryside.

13. The proposed development would primarily affect the front part of the site. There would be views of the pitches from the highway through the site entrance and through gaps in the roadside hedge, particularly during times of leaf fall. It would also be seen from upper floor windows in the house opposite and from the private fields on either side through gaps in existing and proposed vegetation. The development would be set away from the canal and screened to a degree by existing and proposed hedges. Even so, it seems likely the upper parts of the buildings and caravans would be visible by people on boats travelling along the canal and from pedestrians on the towpath on the opposite side of the canal to the appeal site. Therefore, the development would be noticeable from various vantage points. However, it would not be visually prominent due to the low height of the buildings and the caravans and the screening effect of vegetation.

14. The introduction of walls at the entrance, acoustic fencing, extensive areas of hardstanding, 3 buildings as well as mobile homes, touring caravans and vehicles would lead to a significant change in the appearance of the site. The development would cause a loss of openness so as to undermine the site's contribution to the rural aspects of the area. The residential use would not be entirely unusual as the pitches would be opposite a dwellinghouse. However, the proposal would go against the local pattern of development where most residences and other notable properties lie on the opposite side of the road to the appeal site. For these reasons, the development would appear incongruous and unsympathetic.

15. The proposed dayroom/stable buildings would be of a size, form and design that reflects equestrian buildings that are typically seen in rural areas. Nonetheless, the regimented layout of the pitches plus the presence of hardstanding, mobile homes, caravans, vehicles, domestic paraphernalia and lighting would give the

development a formal residential character. In these regards, the pitches would appear different to the adjacent fields where buildings, structures and surfacing are informal in style and positioning. It is suggested that Gypsy and Traveller sites are common in the countryside but I saw no residential caravan sites similar to the appeal proposal within the surrounding area.

16. To a degree, the proposed planting would soften the visual effects of the development. Indeed, the new hedgerow along the side boundary of the field and new trees near to the canal would add to the natural aspects of the site. However, the proposal would lead to the sub-division of the field through the provision of a new hedge to the rear of the pitches. This would be at odds with the local field pattern where hedgerows tend to run in straight lines between the road and the canal rather than parallel to the road. Also, this new straight hedge across the appeal site would emphasise the shorter depth of the retained paddock area compared to the adjoining fields.

17. The acoustic fence would be along most of the front and parts of the side boundaries. Its visual effect would be softened by existing and proposed planting. The development would be served by the existing access onto the field but walls to the side of the site's entrance would be noticeable from the road. However, these would reflect similar features at the entrance to Beech Tree Farm. As such, the development would not appear enclosed by inappropriate hard landscape features.

18. To summarise, the development would not be visually prominent and it would be seen within a countryside location where the rural qualities are already affected by traffic noise and the sight of buildings. Even so, the pitches would erode the openness of the site and the pastoral feel to the field and so they would not safeguard the intrinsic qualities of the countryside. Moreover, the location of the site on the canal side of the road, the formal layout and appearance of the pitches as well as the sub-division of the appellant's land would go against the local development and field pattern. Proposed planting would contribute to the natural qualities of the area and with existing vegetation it would partially screen and soften the visual impacts of the development. However, the benefits of the proposal in these regards would not fully offset the detriment caused to the visual and rural qualities of the site and its surroundings.

19. Therefore, I conclude the development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. In these respects, it would not accord with PSB policy N1. Whilst not included in the Council's refusal reasons, it has been accepted by the appellant through the submissions that PSB policy N8 is also relevant to this issue. I find the proposal would also not accord with this policy. Policies N1 and N8 together seek to ensure development has regard to its context and is sympathetic to landscape character and quality.

20. The Council also refers to PSB policy C6 that looks for the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites to minimise the impact on the surrounding landscape rather than preserve the appearance and character of an area. The proposed planting aims to limit the visual effects of the development but the formal layout of the pitches and formal subdivision of the field would not ensure the development has the minimal effect on the landscape. As such, I also find the proposal would conflict with part (b) of PSB policy C6.

Setting and significance of the Conservation Area.

21. The CA is a long and generally narrow area based around the line of the canal. From paragraph 2.14 of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area Appraisal 2014 (the Appraisal) it is apparent that the CA is significant as it includes an early narrow canal, engineered by James Brindley with a wealth of original associated bridges, canal features and canal side historic buildings. The Appraisal also highlights the predominantly rural setting with trees, hedgerows and meadows.

22. Existing views from the waterway and towpath across the open appeal site include the top of buildings on the opposite side of the road. Also, on my visit traffic noise could be heard from the towpath, which detracts from the tranquillity of the canal. The stretch of fields between the road and the canal are not entirely unspoilt due to the presence of buildings and other structures. Also, this area of land is no longer being used for traditional farming activities. Even so, the openness and pastoral nature of the appeal site field contributes positively to the rural setting of the canal. The current undeveloped nature of the site can be readily appreciated from the CA and it provides a sense of the original countryside setting to the waterway when it was constructed.

23. The proposed pitches would lie outside and away from the CA boundary. However, it is likely the uppermost parts of the development would be seen from the canal and the towpath, notwithstanding the screening effects of the proposed planting. Also, the sub-division of the field and signs of residential activities would be appreciated from the canal. As such, the development would affect the setting of the CA.

24. A significant part of the field would be unaffected by the proposal and the additional tree and hedge planting would reinforce the natural aspects of the locality. Even so, the development would be read as a visual intrusion into the rural setting of the canal, particularly by those looking out from the CA towards the site.

25. I am referred to other appeal decisions where planning permission has been granted for Gypsy and Traveller sites in the setting of heritage assets. However, none of these relate to the appeal site and so they do not affect my views on the appeal proposal.

26. For the above reasons, I conclude the development would have a detrimental effect on the setting and the significance of the CA. In these regards, it would not accord with PSB policies N1, N9 and C6, which together look to ensure development preserves and has regard to heritage assets. Only a small part of the overall CA would be affected by the proposal. Also, the impact would be on the setting rather than the character and appearance of the CA itself. As such, the proposal would cause a limited level of harm to the significance of the CA. Having regard to phraseology used in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the CA. As such, paragraph 215 of the Framework dictates the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The heritage balance exercise is covered later in this decision.

Concerns raised by interested parties.

27. Interested parties have raised a number of different objections to the proposal. The development would be outside any defined settlement boundary and on land that

forms open countryside. Even so, it would be close to, rather than set away from, the villages of Pasturefields and Hixon. Residents may rely on private car travel to get to and from the villages due to separation distances. However, drive journey times would be short and so the development would allow residents to support the facilities within the nearest rural communities. Like the Council, I consider the development would be in a suitable location having regard to accessibility to services as well as relevant local and national planning policies.

28. During my visit, I saw London Road was busy with traffic. However, there is satisfactory visibility in both directions from the access and the submitted drawings indicate splays could be retained without significant works to roadside vegetation. The pitches would generate a fairly modest level of vehicular movements and so associated traffic would not pose an unacceptable risk to highway safety. I see no reason why waste could not be safely collected from the site.

29. Full details of the proposed private foul drainage system have been provided. There is little evidence to suggest that this would cause problems due to odours or that it would lead to pollution of the water environment. Also, a residential use is unlikely to cause excessive noise. The development would be visible from the dwelling opposite but it would avoid unacceptable harm to the living conditions at this or any other residence.

30. The site would include suitable parking and turning facilities. Also, a condition could be imposed to ensure noise mitigation measures are provided and retained to ensure the development provides a satisfactory living environment.

31. Whilst I have found the development would cause a minor level of harm to the significance and setting of the CA, it does not follow that the proposal would dissuade people from using the canal and the towpath. Also, there is little information before me to indicate that additional similar residential caravan site developments would be proposed on the remainder of the field or anywhere else in the locality. In any event, such proposals would need to be considered on their own merits. A decision to allow this appeal would not set an irresistible precedent that would have to be followed in the consideration of any future schemes.

32. The above factors do not justify the refusal of planning permission. As such, they fail to affect my overall conclusion.

General need and supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

33. Paragraph 4e of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) states the government's aim is to promote more private Gypsy and Traveller site provision. The appeal development would contribute towards meeting that aim.

34. Furthermore, the PPTS says local authorities should set pitch targets that would address the local accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Also, they should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against these targets.

35. The Council has submitted a Position Statement as of 31 March 2026 (the Position Statement). Table 1 of this statement includes pitch requirement figures taken from the Council's Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment 2022 (the GTAA). At the hearing, the officers confirmed that the requirement figures as set out in Table 1 represent the Council's pitch targets.

These indicate a requirement of 9.95 new pitches for the 5 year period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031, including a small uplift to address an under supply from previous years. The Position Statement also identifies a supply of 22 pitches that have planning permission but are not yet completed. As such, the Council claims it can demonstrate in excess of a 5 years' worth supply of deliverable sites.

36. I have a number of concerns over the Council's claims in terms of the need and supply of pitches. Firstly, since the GTAA was published a revised version of the PPTS has been issued. This includes a widened definition of Gypsies and Travellers compared to the previous version of the same document. At the hearing, the author of the GTAA accepted it did not address the needs of "all other persons with a cultural tradition of … living in a caravan". As such, the GTAA does not address the accommodation needs of all persons defined as Gypsies and Travellers in the PPTS.

37. Secondly, the GTAA assesses the demand and supply of pitches in the short term period 2021/22 to 2025/26 separately from the longer term period from 2026/27 to 2039/40. It is clear looking at Table 7.1 of the GTAA that the established short term pitch requirement takes account of needs deriving from in-migration into the Borough as well as from Gypsy and Traveller households living in conventional housing that wish to move to a residential caravan site. However, it was confirmed at the hearing that the only factor considered in the GTAA in predicting the longer term need is emerging households from those already living on pitches within the Borough. Factors such as in-migration and movement from conventional housing to pitches have not been considered in assessing the longer term need. As such, the GTAA is likely to under-estimate the longer term need for pitches. This is particularly relevant at the current time as the pitch requirement for the next 5 years as set out in the Position Statement relies heavily upon the longer term need figures from the GTAA.

38. Thirdly, in arriving at the level of need, the GTAA takes into account future supply factors such as turnover on public Gypsy and Traveller sites and the potential of an unnamed new site development providing 25 pitches. This approach creates a difficulty as it deflates the real level of need or demand for pitches. Moreover, footnote 4 of the PPTS states that for a site to be deliverable and counted towards future supply it should be available now. There is no information before me to show that any public pitches are currently available be it through turnover or any other manner. Also, the officers at the hearing confirmed that the potential 25 pitch site referred to in the GTAA does not benefit from planning permission. The figures in Table ES1 of the GTAA demonstrate the level of need for new pitches would be much higher without the claimed supply through turnover and the potential site.

39. Finally, Table 7.1 of the GTAA includes a figure of 20 at row 6b for current authorised pitches which are vacant. These pitches are counted as current supply in the table and reduce the figure for short term need of pitches to 26. It is evident from Table 4.6 of the GTAA and confirmed at the hearing that 17 of these vacant authorised pitches are at Blakedown Meadows, St Albans Road in Stafford. However, it is also evident that 14 of the same 17 pitches are included in Table 2 of the Position Statement that lists sites that contribute towards future supply. The Council's representatives at the hearing accepted that this represents double counting of vacant authorised pitches as they are included in both current supply in Table 7.1 of the GTAA and future supply in Table 2 of the Position Statement. As

such, it is unreasonable to treat the committed and yet to be developed pitches at St Albans Road as contributing towards supply for the next 5 years.

40. If the 14 pitches at the St Albans Road site as referred to in Table 2 of the Position Statement are discounted, the supply of deliverable pitches as of 31 March 2026 falls to just 8 in number. This figure is below the 5 year requirement of 9.95 pitches as set out in row G of Table 1 of the Position Statement. As such, even if using the requirement targets derived from the GTAA, I find the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5 years' supply of deliverable Gypsy and Travellers sites. The shortcomings of the GTAA I have identified indicate a higher level of need for pitches and so a more significant shortfall in supply.

41. The appeal development would help address the local need for more pitches. The public benefit in helping to address a shortfall in Gypsy and Traveller site provision attracts very significant weight in my assessment.

Other public benefits.

42. The reinstatement of the field boundary hedge and the provision of the proposed planting could be secured through the imposition of a planning condition if the appeal is allowed. These would not only add to the natural appearance of the site but they would also enhance its biodiversity value. The level of enhancement would be fairly modest but it represents an environmental and public benefit.

43. The development of the site would support construction employment and related services. Also, it is likely residents would contribute to local businesses and the vitality of Pasturefields and Hixon. These economic benefits attract modest weight.

44. It is evident from the discussions at the hearing that the proposal would be highly beneficial to the intended occupants for personal reasons. However, there is a general public benefit in ensuring people have an appropriate place to live that allows regular access to facilities such as schools and medical facilities. Also, the provision of authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites reduces the likelihood of unauthorised encampments. In these regards, the proposal would accord with the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in terms of fostering good relationships between those of a Gypsy and Traveller ethnic group and those who do not shared this protected characteristic. The benefits in these regards attract moderate weight in my assessment of the appeal.

Heritage and Planning Balances.

45. Paragraph 212 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, even when a development would cause less than substantial harm to their significance. In this case, only a limited level of harm would be cause to the significance of the CA through the proposal's effect on its rural setting. The main parties agree the development would avoid harm to the significance of any other heritage asset.

46. Overall, I find the public benefits of the development are of considerable weight. They provide clear and convincing justification to allow the development, notwithstanding the great weight to be attached to the harm that would be caused to the setting and significance of the CA. Therefore, in applying the heritage

balance, I find the development would have an acceptable effect on the CA, despite the identified harm to its setting and significance.

47. I have found the Council is unable to demonstrate a supply of 5 years' worth of deliverable Gypsy and Traveller sites against its own targets. As such, paragraph 28 of the PPTS says paragraph 11(d) of the Framework should be applied. This states that planning permission should be granted unless the circumstances as laid out in sub-paragraphs 11(d)(i) or (ii) exist. In light of my heritage balance conclusion above, the policies of the Framework that protect heritage assets do not provide strong reason to refuse the proposal. Accordingly, sub-paragraph 11(d)(i) is not engaged. It follows to consider sub-paragraph 11(d)(ii) and to weigh the benefits of the proposal against the harm it would cause in light of the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

48. The development would help meet a local need for more Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in line with the government's objective set out in paragraph 61 of the Framework. In light of the current shortfall in supply, this attracts very significant weight in support of allowing the appeal.

49. To allow the proposal would go against the advice at paragraph 187 of the Framework for planning decisions to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. However, the visual effects of the development would be fairly localised, particularly once the proposed planting has matured. Therefore, I attach moderate weight to the harm that would be caused in these regards.

50. Even when considering the sensitivity of the site due to its relationship with the canal and the CA, I find the adverse impacts of allowing the development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The circumstances as set out under sub-paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework do not exist. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development and granting planning permission as laid out under paragraph 11 of the Framework is engaged.

51. I have found the proposal would not accord with PSB policies when read as a whole. However, the support from the Framework for allowing the development justifies granting planning permission contrary to development plan policies.

Other Matters

52. The appellant has forwarded a number of other points in support of allowing the appeal, including factors relating to the personal circumstances of the occupants and a contention that there has been a local failure of policy. These points are noted but I have found sufficient justification to grant planning permission in any event. As such, there is no need for me to consider these other matters any further.

Conditions

53. I have considered the list of planning conditions provided by the main parties. Where appropriate I have made amendments to the wording for reasons of precision and to remove unnecessary pre-commencement requirements.

54. I have included condition 2 on the approved plans for reasons of clarity. I have amended the condition to require the mobile homes to be laid out as shown on the plans so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.

55. Condition 3 seeks to minimise the effects of construction works on the environment, the road and nearby residences. Condition 4 is imposed to ensure a satisfactory living environment at the development. Condition 5 is required to protect the integrity of the PSMSAC. Conditions 6 and 7 are imposed in the interests of highway safety and to ensure the development includes a safe access. As no gates are proposed the suggested condition on gates being set back from the road is not needed.

56. Conditions 8, 9, 10 and 11 are included to limit the visual effects of the development on the landscape and the setting of the CA. Whilst not a suggested condition, I impose condition 12 for the same reason and for clarity purposes. I have considered the proposal on the basis the residential caravan site would be occupied by Gypsies and Travellers. There is no evidence before me on the acceptability of the site being occupied by other persons. Therefore, I have included condition 13.

57. There was a discussion at the hearing on potential conditions that would limit the appeal development for a temporary period or to restrict occupancy to the persons identified in the appellant's submissions. However, I find sufficient justification to grant permanent planning permission and the personal circumstances of the occupants have not been determinative in reaching my decision. Therefore, such conditions are unnecessary.

Conclusion

58. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be allowed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Dr Angus Murdoch	Chartered Town Planner
Mrs Nichola Burley	Heritage Vision Ltd
John Smith	Appellant
Bob Watton	Intended occupier of one of the proposed pitches

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Tom Cannon	Interim Principal Planning Officer
Hannah Cross	Senior Planning Officer
Samantha Moss	Planning and Conservation Officer
Dr Michael Bullock	Arc4
Cllr Brendon McKeown	Local Councillor
Alex Yendole	Planning Policy Manager

INTERESTED PARTIES

Tony Smith	Supporter

LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE HEARING:

1. Letter from S Renshaw, Behaviour and Inclusion Manager, Marshlands School.
2. Drawing number TDA.2936.05 and titled Proposed Day Room and Stable Block – Pitch 2 (Plans and Elevations).
3. Flume Consulting Engineers Construction Environmental Management Plan November 2024.

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out, and the mobile homes and touring caravans allowed shall be positioned, in accordance with drawing nos TDA.2936.01 revision B, TDA.2936.02 revision D, TDA.2936.03 revision C, TDA.2936.04, TDA.2936.05 and CIV 001 revision 2.

3) The construction of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the Flume Consulting Engineers Construction Environmental Management Plan November 2024.

4) The residential use of the site hereby permitted shall not commence until details of the position and specification of a 2m high acoustic barrier/fence near the front and side boundaries of the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved acoustic barrier/fence shall be installed prior to the first occupation of the development and thereafter it shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details for the lifetime of the development.

5) The residential use of the site hereby permitted shall not commence until foul and surface water management arrangements have been implemented in accordance with the schemes as detailed in the Flume Consulting Engineers Drainage Strategy (Job Number 1537 and dated November 2024) and the enclosed drawing number CIV 001 revision 2. The drainage systems shall thereafter be maintained and retained for the lifetime of the development.

6) The residential use hereby permitted shall not commence until visibility splays as shown on the approved drawing numbered TDA.2936.04 have been provided. The visibility splays shall thereafter be kept free of all obstructions over a height of 600mm above the adjacent carriageway level.

7) The residential use hereby permitted shall not commence until the access to the site within the limits of the public highway and the parking, servicing and turning areas as shown on the approved plans have been provided. Thereafter these areas shall be retained and they shall only be used for the purpose of parking and turning of vehicles.

8) The residential use of the site hereby permitted shall not commence until the following have been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority:-

    (i) a detailed landscaping and planting plan specifying the location, species, stock size, planting centres and quantities of all proposed native tree and hedgerow planting;

    (ii) details of all proposed boundary and hard landscape surface treatments including proposed levels and soil retention/retaining walls that may be required;

    (iii) a timetable for the implementation of the proposed landscaping and planting; and

    (iv) a 5 year landscape maintenance schedule covering the establishment of all new planting (including watering).

The provision and maintenance of landscaping and planting shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

9) No external lighting shall be installed on the residential caravan site hereby permitted until details of the lighting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Only external lighting that has been approved by the local planning authority shall be installed on the site.

10) There shall be no more than 3 pitches on the land subject of this permission and within each individual pitch no more than one mobile home and one touring caravan (as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968 as amended) shall be stationed at any one time.

11) No commercial activities shall take place on the residential caravan site hereby permitted, including the storage of materials, a livery, a riding school or any other business.

12) The residential caravan site use hereby permitted shall be limited to the part of the site between the road and the line of proposed native hedgerow planting running across the site as shown on the approved drawing number TDA.2936.02 revision D. No part of the land shown on this drawing as being “existing equestrian paddock retained” or the strip of land between this paddock and the canal shall be used for residential purposes.

13) The residential caravan site hereby permitted shall not be occupied by any persons other than Gypsies and Travellers, defined as persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 March 2026

by H Wilkinson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 April 2026

Appeal Ref: 6005820
Littledean Barn, Ankerton Lane, Sturbridge, Stafford, Staffordshire ST21 6LZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs J. & W. Mercer against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 25/41048/HOU.
- The development proposed is described as 'a replacement outbuilding to form new garage and store with WC'.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. While the proposal has been presented as a replacement building, the Council indicates that the existing outbuilding does not benefit from planning permission. This is not disputed by the appellant. Even if I were to accept the proposal as a replacement, the existing structure is significantly smaller in scale and of a simpler design than the appeal proposal. Consequently, it is not directly comparable to the scheme before me. It therefore carries limited weight in the consideration of the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property comprises a modest former agricultural building and forms part of a small cluster of dwellings. Outbuildings associated with neighbouring properties are subservient in scale to their respective host dwellings, thereby preserving the prominence of the principal buildings and maintaining a clear and legible building hierarchy. Despite its proximity to the nearby industrial estate and the planned extension, the site's immediate setting is characterised by open fields which contribute to a distinctly rural character, and it is within this context that the proposal would be experienced.

5. Although the conversion has retained much of the building's traditional agricultural character, domestic additions including the gravel driveway, patio, and formalised lawn have eroded its purely agrarian qualities. The proposed use of timber cladding, Staffordshire blue tiles, and the overall design approach would not appear discordant with the traditional character of the host building and its rural

context. Furthermore, the siting and building arrangement would broadly reflect the pattern of traditional agricultural complexes in the countryside.

6. However, the footprint of the proposal would be excessive in comparison to the host property, and the roof form, while reflecting the existing pitch would not be subservient in height. Consequently, its overall scale and massing would compete with, rather than defer to, the host property, resulting in a dominant and intrusive form of development. Although public views of the proposal would be limited, its unduly dominant and disproportionate scale in relation to the host property would be visible from the lane on the approach to the site.

7. For these reasons, I find that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies E2 and N1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031. Amongst other aspects, these policies seek to secure a high standard of design which takes account of local character and context.

Other Matters

8. The appeal site is not within or near designated heritage assets. However, this is a neutral factor and does not weigh in favour of the proposal.

9. The appeal site lies within 5km of the Cop Mere (Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase II) Ramsar Site. This comprises a diverse range of habitats and supports several rare species of plants associated with wetlands, invertebrates and insects. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on other grounds, it is not necessary for me to assess the effect of the proposal on the designated site.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

H Wilkinson

INSPECTOR

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 April 2026

by P Barton BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 April 2026.

Appeal Ref: 6005927
5 Groundslow Mews, Winghouse Lane, Tittensor, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST12 9HL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Graham James against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 25/40597/HOU.
- The development proposed is detached garage and extended driveway.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:

    - whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
    - the effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt;
    - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
    - whether other considerations clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm as to amount to very special circumstances.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt

3. The appeal site is located within the Green Belt. The Framework identifies that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

4. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless specified exceptions apply. This includes, as contended by the appellant, paragraph 154 c), which relates to the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The

Courts[1] have confirmed that paragraph 154 c) 'is not to be interpreted as being confined to physically attached structures but that an extension for the purposes of that provision can include structures which are physically detached from the building of which they are an extension'.

5. Spatial Principle 7 (SP7) of The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (PSB) identifies that development will be supported if, amongst other things, it is located within the Green Belt and is consistent with national policies for the control of development. As such there is consistency with the Framework. The PSB does not set out the circumstances in which an outbuilding ought to be treated as an extension to a building.

6. The proposed development seeks the erection of a detached garage to the southeast corner of the garden to 5 Groundslow Mews, which forms part of a converted farmhouse. The main dwelling is positioned to the western edge of the appeal site with the remainder of the site forming its garden.

7. Broad agreement exists between the main parties that there would be an intervening distance of some 20m between the proposed garage and the main dwelling. I observed that views of the site are possible from Groundslow Mews where a driveway leads to it as well as above a boundary hedgerow. This allows for a full appreciation of the depth of the garden in relation to the main dwelling and thereby the resulting gap between the proposed garage and the main dwelling.

8. Although the garage would be located where there are currently above ground tanks within an enclosure, the garage would be a sizeable structure with regard to its width, depth and height. By reason of its size, siting and detached appearance, I find that, as a matter of fact and degree, the proposed garage cannot be regarded as a normal domestic adjunct. Therefore, it does not constitute an extension to a building but represents a separate building.

9. For these reasons, the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt in terms of the Framework and PSB Policy SP7.

Openness

10. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and broadly has visual and spatial dimensions. The proposal would introduce additional built form to the garden, where there is currently only very low-level development and it would be visible from Groundslow Mews across the driveway. Consequently, the proposal would have a greater impact, albeit limited, on openness than the existing situation, which weighs against the proposal.

Character and appearance

11. Nestled against the backdrop of established vegetation, the proposal would not erode the significant landscaped buffer between the appeal site and the nearby residential development to the south and southeast. Moreover, due to the distance of the proposed garage to the main dwelling and its positioning in the corner of the garden, as well as the variety of buildings within the locality, it would not result in a discordant feature within, or dominate, the wider conversion complex.

[1] Warwick DC v SSLUHC, Mr J Stoner & Mrs A Lowe [2022] EWHC 2145 (Admin)

12. In conclusion, the proposed development would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. I have found no conflict with PSB Policy N1, which seeks, amongst other things, a high design standard that takes into account the local character, context, density and landscape.

Other considerations

13. The appellant has not provided evidence of any other considerations that amount to very special circumstances to outweigh the harm identified.

14. I acknowledge the support from a neighbour and that a condition could be utilised to control external materials in the event the appeal was allowed. However, I attribute limited weight to these matters.

Planning Balance

15. Paragraph 153 of the Framework is clear that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. I have found there would be harm to the Green Belt by reason of the proposed development's inappropriateness and its effect on openness.

16. The Framework states that the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the development must be clearly outweighed by other considerations for planning permission to be granted. The other considerations in this case, as detailed above, are not sufficient to comprise the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal. This would be contrary to the Framework and PSB Policy SP7.

Conclusion

17. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

P Barton

INSPECTOR

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 April 2026

by P Barton BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 April 2026

Appeal Ref: 6005179
Barns Bridge Farm Buildings, Norbury Road, Gnosall ST20 0PP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (the GPDO).
- The appeal is made by Mr Roe of RD & A Roe against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 25/41367/PAR.
- The development proposed is change of use of agricultural building to form two dwellings.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and prior approval is granted under the provisions of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for change of use of agricultural building to form two dwellings at Barns Bridge Farm Buildings, Norbury Road, Gnosall ST20 0PP in accordance with the application 25/41367/PAR and the details submitted with it and subject to the conditions in the schedule below.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Roe of RD & A Roe against Stafford Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appellant has submitted the results of a 7-day automatic traffic count and speed survey (speed survey) that was undertaken on Norbury Road after the decision notice was issued, as well as a visibility splay drawing. Due to the nature of these, and that the Council has had the opportunity to review them, I am satisfied that taking them into account would not cause procedural unfairness to anyone involved in the appeal. As such, I have accepted them.

Main Issues

4. In its role as local planning authority, the Council may refuse a prior approval application where it considers that the proposed development does not comply with, or that the developer has provided insufficient information to enable it to establish whether the proposed development complies with, the conditions, limitations or restrictions set out in paragraphs Q1 and Q2 of the GPDO.

5. Paragraph Q1 sets out a series of criteria that must be met for a proposal to be considered permitted development and paragraph Q2(1) requires that an application is made for a determination as to whether prior approval is required for the proposal as to various matters listed (a) to (g).

6. The area of dispute centres on paragraphs Q1(p) and Q2(1)(a), and there is no dispute between the parties relating to the other conditions, limitation or restrictions. Based on the evidence before me, I see no reason to reach a different conclusion. As such there is no reason to give them further consideration in this decision.

7. The main issues are therefore whether the appeal proposal would be permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 3 Class Q of the GPDO with particular regard to whether the building has a suitable existing access to a public highway; and if found to constitute permitted development, whether prior approval should be granted with particular regard to transport and highways impacts.

Reasons

8. Consisting of a steel portal frame agricultural structure with metal cladding, timber boarding and concrete panels, the appeal building would be converted into 2 dwellings, each with 3-bedrooms and 2 parking spaces.

9. Fronting the appeal building is an existing area of hardstanding and access onto Norbury Road, which also serves an adjacent agricultural building that has consent[1] for its conversion into 2 dwellings. The existing access radii is wide and partly surfaced. Consequently, I have found that the building does have a suitable existing access to a public highway, thereby complying with paragraph Q1(p) and constituting permitted development.

10. Norbury Road is subject to a 60mph national speed limit and flanked by established hedgerows set back behind shallow verges. The speed survey found that the average speeds were approximately 30mph and the 85th percentile speeds were some 36-37mph. Under such circumstances, the Highway Authority is willing to accept a reduced visibility splay to that given in Manual for Streets. The appellant indicates that visibility splays of 2.4m x 88m and 2.4m x 91m are required and this is shown on the submitted visibility splay drawing.

11. On the basis of these findings, which have not been challenged by the Council, and from my own observations, I am satisfied that with the provision of these improved visibility splays, which affect land within the control of the appellant, the proposal would have acceptable transport and highways impacts, including in relation to the risk of conflict between highway users. Due to the nature and location of the improvements to the visibility splays, they reasonably relate to the subject matter of the prior approval, and, as per Paragraph W(13) of the GPDO, can be covered by a condition.

12. Therefore, for the above reasons, with particular regard to the matter stated at condition Q2(1)(a), prior approval should be granted.

Other Matters

13. Whilst the development is within the Impact Risk Zones and 5km buffers of 3 sites of special scientific interest (SSSI), which fall within the Midland Meres and Mosses Ramsar, the Council states that it is unlikely there would be an impact on these aquatic designated sites. Limited details of these designations are before me and there is no reference to them in the Council's case.

[1] Planning Permission Ref: 24/39613/FUL

14. The grant of planning permission under Article 3(1) of the GPDO is subject to the provisions of the GPDO for each class of development and compliance with Regulations 75 to 78 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations). Effectively, Article 3(1) provides a pre-commencement condition which must be met, where development would affect a European protected habitat, such as a Ramsar site, before the works can be undertaken as permitted development. This includes a separate application to the Council under Regulation 77 of the Habitats Regulations to allow the Council to undertake an Appropriate Assessment (AA). Depending on the outcome, this would determine whether, in terms of that matter, the scheme could be undertaken as permitted development under the GPDO.

15. Article 3(1) and Regulations 75-78 secure a separate process by which development only proceeds where it has been confirmed via a Regulation 77 approval from the Council that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of designated sites. Therefore, it is not necessary for me to consider whether there would be any likely significant effect on the integrity of the Ramsar site or undertake an AA.

16. The Council did not refuse the application on the proposal's impact on an SSSI. There is no convincing evidence before me that the development would be likely to have an adverse effect on them, either individually or in combination with other developments.

17. Although representation has been made that the site falls outside a settlement boundary, this falls outside the scope of matters that can be considered under Class Q.

Conditions

18. I have had regard to the conditions put forward by the Council and have amended the wording where necessary in the interests of clarity. I have also had regard to the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Planning Practice Guidance and the GPDO.

19. I have attached a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, in the interests of certainty.

20. A condition is reasonable and necessary in order to protect the health of occupiers of the proposal and to ensure that any contamination risks are mitigated.

21. I have attached conditions relating to visibility splays, the surfacing of the access, any gates crossing the access, and the provision of electric vehicle charging points in the interests of transport and highway impacts of the development.

22. A condition has not been attached requiring the provision of the access, parking and turning areas as these are shown on the approved plans.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be allowed and prior approval is granted.

P Barton INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos. 1257-001 Rev. A Location Plan, 1257-002 Rev A Block Plan and 1257-004 Rev B Proposed Elevations, Floor Plans and Cross Section.

2) No development shall take place until an assessment of the risks posed by any contamination, carried out in accordance with British Standard BS 10175: Investigation of potentially contaminated sites - Code of Practice and the Environment Agency, Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) (or equivalent British Standard and Model Procedures if replaced), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. If any contamination is found, no development shall take place until:

   i) a report specifying the measures to be taken, including the timescale, to remediate the site to render it suitable for the development hereby permitted has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority;

   ii) the site has been remediated in accordance with the approved measures and timescale; and

   iii) a verification report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

   If, during the course of development, any contamination is found which has not been previously identified, work shall be suspended until:

   i) additional measures for the remediation of the site have been carried out in accordance with details that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority; and

   ii) a verification report for all the remediation works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

3) The development shall not be occupied until visibility splays have been provided to the vehicular access to the site with a 2.4m by 88m visibility splay in a northern direction and a 2.4m by 91m visibility splay in a southern direction as shown on drawing no. SCP/260071/D01. The visibility splays shall be retained as such thereafter and no structure, tree or shrub shall be erected, planted or retained within the splays exceeding, or likely to exceed at maturity, a height of 0.6m above the level of the public highway carriageway.

4) The development shall not be occupied until the existing vehicular access has been resurfaced with a bound material for its full width for a minimum of 5m as measured from the near edge of the public highway carriageway.

5) The development shall not be occupied until each dwelling has been provided with an electric vehicle charging point in an accessible location.

6) Any gates to be erected across the access shall be setback a minimum of 5m from the highway boundary and shall open inwards away from the highway.

****END OF SCHEDULE****

Planning Inspectorate

Costs Decision

Site visit made on 14 April 2026

by P Barton BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 April 2026

Costs application in relation to Appeal Ref: 6005179
Barns Bridge Farm Buildings, Norbury Road, Gnosall ST20 0PP

- The application is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sections 78, 322 and Schedule 6, and the Local Government Act 1972, section 250(5).
- The application is made by Mr Roe of RD & A Roe for a full award of costs against Stafford Borough Council.
- The appeal was against the refusal to grant approval for change of use of agricultural building to form two dwellings.

Decision

1. The application for an award of costs is refused.

Reasons

2. Parties in planning appeals normally meet their own expenses. However, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that costs may be awarded against a party who has behaved unreasonably and thereby caused the party applying for costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process.

3. The applicant contends that the Council has: relied on the highway conditions of Radmore Lane, rather than Norbury Road; failed to engage with the evidence presented in support of the proposals; and undertaken inconsistent decision making.

4. The officer report refers to the existing vehicular access off Norbury Road, incorporating the planning history relating to the adjoining building that is subject to an extant consent for its conversion to 2 dwellings. Whilst elements of the consultation responses from the Highway Authority refer to Radmore Lane, it also refers to Norbury Road. However, on the basis of the evidence before me, including the Highway Authority's account attached to the Council's Statement of Case and the specific nature of the comments made, I am satisfied that reference to Radmore Lane was in error and that the correct road and access were appraised in regard to the proposed development.

5. Although I have come to a different conclusion to the Council on the transport and highways impacts of the development, this is based on the findings of the 7-day speed survey that was undertaken after the application was determined and prior to the submission of the appeal. This survey demonstrates that reduced visibility splays, to that given in Manual for Streets (MFS), is justified and the land affected falls within the control of the applicant. In the absence of this data, it was reasonable for the Council to apply the relevant visibility splay distances given in MFS to reflect the speed limit of the road, part of which would fall on land outside of the applicant's control. The Council made reasoned conclusions based on a clear

analysis and, without the benefit of the additional information submitted with the appeal, it was not capable of being dealt with by condition. I do not consider that the Council acted unreasonably in refusing permission.

6. The Council's case, including the Officer Report, articulates the material differences between the current proposal and the full planning permission for the conversion of the adjoining building, which was subject to a deemed consent. This represented a strong fallback position that the current appeal scheme does not benefit from, and therefore the cases are not similar.

7. I am also mindful that the PPG[1] is clear that accepting any amendments on an application after it has been submitted is at the discretion of the local planning authority, as well as the time sensitive nature of determining such applications. Therefore, and despite the applicant's willingness to make improvements and undertake a speed survey, the Council acted reasonably in refusing the application based on the submitted details before them.

Conclusion

8. Therefore, unreasonable behaviour resulting in unnecessary or wasted expense has not occurred and an award of costs is not warranted.

P Barton

INSPECTOR

[1] Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 061 Reference ID: 14-061-20140306

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 March 2026 by Kim Vo MPLAN

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 April 2026

Appeal Ref: 6003859
New House, High Street, Church Eaton, Stafford, Staffordshire ST20 0AG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr. Andrew Liddle against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 25/40604/HOU.
- The development proposed is described as "the proposed works consist of a new outbuilding."

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The appellant indicates discrepancies with the Council's measurements of the appeal scheme. As the submitted plans clearly set out the dimensions, I have determined the appeal based on them.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area, and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Church Eaton Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a two storey detached cottage dating from the late 19th century, occupying a prominent and tight position along the edge of High Street. There is also a public footpath running adjacent its rear boundary. The appeal property, together with surrounding dwellings, is set within long, narrow plots of even length. These run at right angles to High Street and stretch back to the hedgerows that define the CA boundary. This historic plot pattern is characteristic of burgage tenements found within medieval towns, suggesting that the village once functioned as a market centre. The retention of this layout therefore makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.

6. Nonetheless, a number of modern interventions are evident at the rear of the appeal site. These include a two storey extension, resulting in an 'M' shaped roof, a

flat roof single storey extension and rear dormers, all of which are visible from High Street. Collectively, these additions have significantly altered the side profile of the cottage and substantially increased its depth. The rear garden also contains a detached garage, as well as other garden and storage buildings. Incremental development is apparent on nearby plots, where similar structures and backland development have taken place within the long rear gardens. Taken together, these changes have contributed to an erosion of the legibility of the historic burgage plot pattern. Despite this, the buildings in the area generally display a hierarchy, with outbuildings subordinate to their host. This is a positive and consistent aspect of the CA's traditional significance.

7. Planning permission has been granted for a further outbuilding under Ref. 22/36389/HOU. As such, the siting of the proposal deeper within the rear of the plot, would not result in a significantly different situation, from that which has already been approved. Its positioning would therefore be suitable, particularly given that the Council has established that an outbuilding in this location would be acceptable. The proposal's siting would also be consistent with the pattern of rear development that has already extended well into the depth of the gardens.

8. That said, it would be of a much larger scale than that approved. The total footprint of the existing and proposed buildings would be limited when assessed against the overall plot size. However, this comparison relates to surface area only. Although it would be set back from the host property and would have a lower ridgeline than the host dwelling and Tanglewood, it would not be seen as a clearly subservient structure due to its significant height. The proposal would therefore fail to respect the established and characteristic hierarchy within the CA, where outbuildings are subordinate to host dwellings, and would instead appear as a competing and disproportionate addition. It would be obscured by the existing garage from High Street. However, views of it would still be possible through the side gaps. Even if the proposal were not obvious in the public realm, its scale and design would remain inappropriate to both the character and appearance of the CA.

9. The appellant states the proposal would be of a comparable scale to the existing garage, but there is no information before me as to whether this relates to a greater or lesser height. In any case, the existing garage is already a tall building, and the introduction of an additional structure of a significant height and larger dimensions, would only further exaggerate the dominance of the outbuildings, in relation to the host dwelling. A substantial cowshed was historically located at the rear and reflects the site's previous function for a cowhouse and shop. Nonetheless, this structure did not appear to have any heritage significance and has since been removed. It also did not set any positive design precedent, nor does it justify the appeal scheme.

10. The proposal includes the use of black timber cladding to the external walls and grey clay roof tiles. This combination would result in a stark and uniformly dark appearance, which would jar against the predominantly earthy toned material palette of the surrounding buildings and the more conventional and traditional brick of the CA. Whilst timber is a material commonly used in rural and agricultural contexts, a finishing in black would not acceptably integrate it within the residential setting of the appeal site. Within the CA, black architectural features are present but are typically broken up with other materials and colours. They do not feature as a primary finish.

11. The appellant is willing to accept a condition to secure an alternative external colour and material. A different exterior finish, such as brick, could be more reflective of the largely red bricked built forms that characterise the area and the older buildings in the CA, as well as some extensions thereto. However, in the absence of any details or plans, it is not possible to assess whether such an approach would be acceptable. In any case, as the external treatment is integral to the proposal's design, I would be reluctant to seek this as a condition, particularly given that such changes could significantly alter the scheme. Furthermore, my concerns do not relate solely to the choice of materials, but also to the scale, which would be unaffected by such a change.

12. The proposal would appear as a conspicuous and discordant structure from the footpath, which affords public access and views of the site from the rear. The appellant suggests that the footpath runs through the centre of the field to the rear of the appeal site. However, on my site visit, it was clear from the signage available and the worn tracks, that it begins at the stile and immediately follows the southern edge of the field, along the rear boundaries of the appeal site and adjacent dwellings. Given its siting, the proposed building would be positioned in the foreground of views, where its scale and solid black external treatment would draw immediate attention. This perspective would cause the building to be seen as the principal structure of the appeal site. A similar effect is already apparent with the existing garage, which is read as a dominant form in rearward views of the appeal site.

13. For these reasons, the appeal scheme would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area, and would neither preserve, nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Given its localised effect, the harm would be at the lower end of less than substantial for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Even so, I am mindful that the conservation of the CA is a matter of considerable importance and weight. In such circumstances, the harm should be weighed against the proposal's public benefits.

14. The appellant states the appeal scheme is required to provide a safe indoor space in which to undertake their personal hobbies, as well as to accommodate the storage of associated equipment and tools. Ultimately, the appellant's stated benefits are private and there is insufficient evidence to suggest why they could not be achieved by other potentially less harmful means. In this instance therefore, the public benefits carry only very limited weight that would be insufficient to outweigh the harm to the CA.

15. Therefore, the proposal would conflict with Policies N1 Design and N9 Historic Environment of The Plan for Stafford Borough 2014 and the Framework. Together, and amongst other things, these ensure developments have regard to the local context and sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting.

Other Matter

16. Delays and the lack of discussion from the Council should be taken up with them directly and are not for me to resolve here.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance therewith. I therefore recommend the appeal is dismissed.

Kim Vo

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR