

Dear Members

Planning Committee

A meeting of the Planning Committee will be held on **Wednesday 28 October 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 - 28 OCTOBER 2026

Chairman - Councillor B McKeown

Vice-Chairman - Councillor S N Spencer

AGENDA

- 1 **Minutes**
- 2 **Apologies**
- 3 **Declaration of Member's Interests/Lobbying**
- 4 **Delegated Applications**

Details of Delegated applications will be circulated separately to Members.

	Page Nos
5 Planning Applications	3 - 120
6 Planning Appeals	121 - 131
7 Enforcement Matters	-

MEMBERSHIP

Chairman - Councillor B McKeown

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

PLANNING COMMITTEE - 28 OCTOBER 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
25/41476/PIP	Land West of Old House Farm. Lodge Lane, Woodseaves	5 - 26
The application was called in by Councillor M J Winnington and Councillor S N Spencer		
Officer Contact - Leon Carroll, Interim Deputy Development Manager Telephone 01785 619184		
25/41031/PIP	Land Off Milford Road, Walton On The Hill	27 - 58
The application was called in by Councillor P C Edgeller		
Officer Contact - Elaine Harvey, Planning Validation Officer Telephone 01785 619537		
25/40960/OUT	Land Off Green Road, Weston	59 - 120
The application was called in by Councillor F Beatty		
Officer Contact - Elaine Harvey, Planning Validation Officer Telephone 01785 619537		

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: 25/41476/PIP
Case Officer: Emma Bailey
Date Registered: 20 November 2025
Target Decision Date: 5 January 2026
Extended To: 30 October 2026
Address: Land West of Old House Farm, Lodge Lane, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NZ
Ward: Gnosall and Woodseaves
Parish: High Offley
Proposal: Permission in Principle - Not more than two dwellings and access point
Applicant: Nigel Talbot
Recommendation: Refuse

Pre-commencement conditions required:	Pre-commencement conditions Agreed
No	

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application has been called in by Councillor M J Winnington (Ward Member for Seighford and Church Eaton) for the following reason:

“Affect on streetscene, massing of proposed homes in Woodseaves and negative impact on creaking infrastructure.”

This application has been called in by Councillor S N Spencer (Ward Member for Gnosall and Woodseaves) for the following reason(s):

“Highway safety and sustainability Cumulative Impact to Woodseaves and surroundings”

Committee update following deferral

This application was reported to Planning Committee in July 2026, where Members resolved to defer determination of the application to allow officers to undertake further consideration of the potential effects of the proposed development on the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase II RAMSAR site and the implications of the Habitats Regulations.

Following this review, the Council has reassessed the proposal against the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended) and its duties as the competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The Council's updated position is that the proposal constitutes Habitats Development for the purposes of Article 5B of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended). As such, Permission in Principle cannot lawfully be granted. Officers have concluded that sufficient information is not available to rule out the likelihood of significant effects on the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase II RAMSAR site and that any necessary mitigation measures cannot be secured through a Permission in Principle consent, as planning conditions and planning obligations cannot be attached at this stage.

Accordingly, officers now recommend that the application be refused as Permission in Principle cannot be granted for development that falls within the definition of Habitats Development.

Officers acknowledge that earlier reports advised that habitats matters could be addressed at the Technical Details Consent stage. Following further review of the legislative requirements, it is now considered that this approach would not be lawful in the circumstances of this case.

CONTEXT

Proposed development

This application seeks permission in principle for the erection of up to two dwellings at the site.

The applicant is not required or expected at permission in principle stage to supply any detailed plans in regard to the proposal. However, the submitted site location plan indicates that a new access would be created centrally within the plot egressing onto Lodge Lane. It is unknown at this time if the existing egress to the south of the site is to be retained or be permanently closed. These matters would however be assessed at the Technical Details Consent stage.

The application is supported by the following technical reports:

Document	
Biodiversity net gain assessment / metric	☐
Design and access statement	☒
Ecological report	☐
Flood risk assessment	☐
Great crested newt assessment	☐
Heritage statement	☐
Land contamination assessment	☐
Planning statement	☐
Preliminary ecological assessment	☐
Transport statement	☐
Tree survey / assessment	☐
Other:	

Site and surroundings

The application site comprises a rectangular parcel of land measuring about 0.165ha located to the north eastern side of Lodge Lane in Woodseaves. The site slopes gently from north west to south east. Directly to the north west boundary of the site is the dwelling of 'The New Grange' with all other boundaries being to agricultural land.

The site benefits from a field access at the southern part of the site giving access onto Lodge Lane. Post and rail fencing makes up the boundaries within the site, with the road boundary and north boundary with the dwelling of 'The New Grange' being hedge.

The site is located outside of the defined settlement boundary of Woodseaves but is located directly adjacent to it on the northern aspect.

Constraints

Site constraints:

- Outside of the settlement boundary
- Green Impact Zone for Great Crested Newts
- Flood Zone 1

- Within 5km buffer zone of Aqualate Mere, Cop Mere SSSI, RAMSAR SITE,
- Within 5km buffer zone of Doley Common and Loynton Moss SSSI

SITE HISTORY

Planning Applications

None

Previous relevant appeals

None

Legislative 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 Parts 1 and 2.

Policy and Guidance

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (TPSB)

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

T1 - Transport

T2 - Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities

C1 - Dwelling Types and Sizes

C5 - Residential proposals outside the settlement hierarchy

C7 - Open space, sport and recreation

N1 - Design

N2 - Climate change

N3 - Low carbon sources and renewable energy

N4 - The natural environment and green infrastructure

N5 - Sites of European, National and Local Nature Conservation Importance

N8 - Landscape character

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Design SPD 2018

National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (NPPF)

S3 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

S5 – Principle of development outside settlements

GB6 – Control of development in the Green Belt

GB7 – Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt

TR3 – Locating development in sustainable locations

L2 – Making effective use of land

DP3 – Key principles for well designed places

N6 – Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity

National Planning Practice Guidance

The Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017

CONSULTATION

Site Notice Expiry	Press Notice Expiry
6 January 2026	N/A

High Offley Parish Council

December 2025

Objection

- Not an obvious extension to the village and would be an obtrusive encroachment into the rural landscape.
- It is on a road which is currently subject to the national speed limit of 60mph meaning visibility splays could not be achieved
- Application is one of two submitted by the same applicant on the same farm holding and is set at numbers that will not trigger the requirement for affordable housing
- When taken into consideration with the application for up to 100 houses behind Dickeys Lane, the consequence could be to overwhelm Woodseaves, its infrastructure and resources.

Gnosall Parish Council

12 December 2025

Objection

- Site sits outside the current settlement boundary of the parish, is on an unsuitable highway with a 60mph speed limit, no pedestrian access and no public transport facilities, has made no visible provision for adequate splays and is in unsustainable location.
- Application does not have the support of the community
- Will be the start of many smaller applications on this site, derived to avoid triggering the requirement for affordable housing and resulting in a very large development over time.

SCC - Highway Authority

9 December 2025

Objection

- The application does not provide visibility splays from an individual access or any individual access onto Lodge Lane therefore safe and suitable access/es has not been demonstrated
- The proposed development would exacerbate the risk of conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists due to no segregated facilities and no street lighting on a relatively busy rural road subject to the national speed limit and are unsuitable to cater for this proposed development leading to an increase in the likelihood of danger to highways users particularly those considered vulnerable.

- The proposed development does not constitute sustainable development in transport terms and is entirely reliant on the private car and does not enable future residents to reasonably choose a safe sustainable mode of transport to access the site as required by national and local planning policies

SBC - Biodiversity Officer

15 December 2025

Further information required to make any assessment Ecology

- No ecology information submitted therefore it is not possible to make any sound comment
- A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) will need to be undertaken to assess the ecology of the site
- Any removal of hedgerows will need to be properly assessed and compensated for, along with consideration of nesting birds
- Loynton Moss SSSI appears to be within a mile of the proposal and therefore any potential impacts should be considered during the PEA

SBC - Forward Planning

9 December 2025

No objection

- Site is on a greenfield site in close proximity to the Woodseaves settlement boundary, which is one of eleven Key Service Villages in the sustainable settlement hierarchy of TPSB.
- Development considered acceptable within the context of SP7 a) to c) but it is noted that alongside other sites the total amount would be over 36.4% increase in scale for Woodseaves.
- Stafford Borough Council does not have a 5 year housing land supply and TPSB is more than 5 years old meaning that the NPPF para 11, presumption in favour of sustainable development applies
- Taking into account NPPF para 11, 110 and 115 together with the full weight of SP7 the planning policy position is to support the proposal taking into consideration other material planning considerations

Newt Officer

3 December 2025

No objection

- Site is in the Green Impact Risk Zone and does not have any connectivity to ponds or sustainable habitats therefore it is unlikely that any impacts to great crested newts will arise from it

Contributors

6 neighbouring objections have been received and can be summarised as follows:

Combination of current applications:

- 3 applications have been submitted by the same land owner 25/40683/OUT, 25/41473/PIP and 25/41476/PIP - predatory attempt to over develop Woodseaves by stealth
- Remaining land in applicants ownership is outlined in blue for 'future development'
- Ultimate aim is for 111 new homes - a 37% increase in a village capped at 12% growth under Policy SB1 of the Local Plan
- Unlawful and catastrophic over development
- The PIP applications are an attempt to bypass the rules, constraints and requirements of a major application
- Case law and PINS appeal decisions confirm that the council must treat 25/41473/PIP and 25/41476/PIP together.
- NPPF para 111 requires decision makers to give substantial weight to the cumulative impact of development proposals

Principle of development:

- Outside of development boundary
- Direct breach of the adopted Development Plan - Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- Policy SB1 caps growth at 12% (~36 homes)
- No amount of 'tilted balance' rhetoric can override Section 38(6). Approval of the application would be unlawful

- No demonstrated local need
- Emerging local plan identifies that Woodseaves has reached its housing capacity
- Provision of 2 market houses contributes negligibly to the annual housing requirement of 786 dwellings
- Proposal fails to comply with policy C5A, SP3, SP4 and SP7 of the Local Plan
- Unsustainable location - reliant on private car, poor public transport, limited local services, away from education and health facilities

Highways:

- Lodge Lane is substandard, lacking footways, lighting, safe visibility, vehicle passing widths and pedestrian provision
- Vehicles already speed down Lodge Lane
- Proposal will create dangerous congestion and gridlock, including dangers for school children highways response for 25/40683/OUT requires a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. 700-800 extra daily vehicle movements
- Result in unsustainable car dependant sprawl
- New access cannot provide visibility splays
- Safe and suitable access has not been demonstrated

Impact upon infrastructure:

- Sewerage - Woodseaves STW is already at capacity / breaking point
- Surface water flooding - increased housing will increase surface water flooding
- Healthcare - primary care facilities are already challenged and insufficient
- Education - Woodseaves CE Primary Academy is at 70% capacity with no room to expand

Impact to neighbouring properties:

- New dwellings in direct line of sight of neighbouring dwellings
- Result in overlooking, loss of privacy and overbearing impact contrary to Policy H6 of the Local Plan and NPPF para 135(f)

- Application site is 1.7m higher than the neighbour at The New Grange and as such houses in this location would be 1 storey higher - overbearing, overlooking and oppressive Impact to the character of the village:
- Loss of prime agricultural land and open countryside
- Unresolved historical landfill contamination risks
- Irreversible loss to the character of the village
- Represents encroachment into the open countryside
- Erosion of rural setting of lodge lane

Ecology / Biodiversity:

- Inadequate ecological survey submitted
- No BNG metric has been submitted
- Loss of hedgerows and ecological corridors

Water quality / nitrates:

- Natural England have confirmed on application 25/40683/OUT that the foul water pathways lead to Aqualate Mere SSSI/Ramsar
- Natural England has confirmed that the competent authority must undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) where foul flow from a development may affect protected species
- No HRA has been undertaken
- No evidence of nutrient budget, mitigation for phosphorous, ammonia, or storm spill increase has been submitted
- Any new dwelling will add foul sewage into the same failing wastewater catchment
- As a PIP application cannot secure mitigation the LPA has no lawful way to control the downstream harm to the SSSI/ Ramsar site

Drainage:

- No drainage strategy submitted
- Site is known to contain impermeable clay soil generating fast run off
- Drains towards Lonco Brook which received frequent STW storm overflow discharges

- Site is hydrologically linked to nationally imported wetlands
- New houses will increase hydraulic load worsening ecological harm downstream

Future development:

- Concerns that the land edges in blue owned by the applicant will also be developed for housing

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE CONTEXT

What is the permission in principle consent route?

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?

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.

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

The determination of this application should be assessed firstly as to whether the proposal is an exempt development as set out in Article 5B as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017. Should the proposal fall within an exception then a permission in principle cannot be granted.

- (1) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to development which is-

- a) *Major development*

Major development is defined as involving one or more of the following: the provision of 10 or more houses; the provision of a building(s) where the floor space to be created is 1,000m² or more; the development site has an area of 1 hectare or more. This is further defined within The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, Article 2.

This application seeks the development of up to 2 dwellings and has a site area of approx. 0.165ha. The development is therefore not major development.

b) Habitats development

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”.

The application site lies around 5km from Cop Mere SSSI and approximately 4.7km from Aqualate Mere SSSI, designated as RAMSAR sites under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as Waterfowl Habitat). Both Cop Mere and Aqualate Mere are features of the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase II RAMSAR site and they were designated on 2 February 1997.

The RAMSAR is susceptible to eutrophication, the introduction of non-native plant species and pollution. To mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, there is a requirement for measures to ensure that no foul water impacts on the designated sites.

Since the local planning authority, as the competent authority under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, has not received sufficient information to determine whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the RAMSAR site the proposal represents 'habitats development' under Article 5B of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended). Consequently, under the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended), permission in principle must not be granted for habitats development. Furthermore, measures to mitigate any potential significant effects of the development either alone or in combination with other proposals on the European site's conservation objectives cannot be secured as planning obligations and conditions cannot be attached to a permission in principle.

c) Householder development

The proposal seeks to erect up to 2 dwellings and is therefore not classed as householder development.

d) Schedule 1 development

- (2) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to Schedule 2 development unless
- (a) the local planning authority has adopted a screening opinion under regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations that the development (up to and including the maximum net number of dwellings) is not EIA development;
 - (b) the Secretary of State has made a screening direction under regulation 7 of the EIA Regulations that the development is not EIA development; or
 - (c) the Secretary of State has made a direction under regulation 63 of the EIA Regulations that the development is exempted from the application of those Regulations.

The proposal is not Schedule 2 development as defined in regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations.

Consultation before applying for permission in principle

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

OFFICER ASSESSMENT

The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Conflict with TPSB Policy

Spatial Principle 3 (SP3) of The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) sets out the settlement hierarchy for the borough and directs the majority of future development towards the towns of Stafford and Stone and the defined Key Service Villages.

Spatial Principle 4 (SP4) of TPSB states that the annual targets for the distribution of housing development, supported by necessary infrastructure will be: Stafford (70%), Stone (10%), Key Service Villages (12%) and Rest of Borough Area (8%).

Woodseaves constitutes a Key Service Village as set out within SP3 of TPSB. However, the application site adjoins but is outside of the Woodseaves settlement boundary as defined within the TPSB. The development site is therefore, in policy terms, located within 'open countryside' and falls within the 'Rest of Borough Area'. Policy SP7 requires in part that development in the countryside will only be supported where it is consistent with the objectives of SP6, E2 and C5 in supporting rural sustainability. Policy E2 deals with Sustainable Rural Development and supports residential development outside of designated settlements provided this is in accordance with Policy C5.

Policy C5 (A) states that where development sits outside of the identified settlements, 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.

Overarching Policy SP1 reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The submitted application 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 any defined needs. Accordingly, the proposed development would conflict with Policies SP3, SP7, E2 and Policy C5A whose objectives have already been outlined above.

Assessment against the NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 17 August 2026 and is a material consideration to which significant weight must be afforded in the determination of planning applications. The Framework confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest. Development plans and decisions should actively guide development towards sustainable solutions whilst responding to the character, needs and opportunities of individual areas.

The 2026 NPPF introduces National Decision-Making Policies (NDMPs), which are material considerations that apply directly to planning decisions. Of particular relevance in this case are NDMP S3, which establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and NDMP S5, which relates to development proposals located outside defined settlements.

Policy S5 (1) outlines that only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the exemption list in S5. It states these should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision making policies in the Framework. Of this exemption list, criteria j is relevant to this development.

- J) Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test 27), and where the development would:

- i. Be physically well related to an existing settlement 28 (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; or
- ii. Comprises major development for freight and logistics purposes which accords with policy E3.

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply with the published statement confirming that the supply stands at 1.95 years. There is therefore a demonstrable unmet need for the proposed development.

Criterion j(ii) relates to major freight and logistics development and is not applicable in this case. The assessment therefore turns to criterion j(i), which requires the development to be physically well related to an existing settlement and of a scale capable of being accommodated having regard to available infrastructure.

The application site lies directly adjacent to, but just outside the designated settlement boundary for Woodseaves which is identified as a tier 3, Key Service Village under the sustainable settlement hierarchy (SP3) and is classed as a settlement in terms of the NPPF Glossary definition.

Within Woodseaves, a range of local services and facilities are available, including a post office/ convenience store, public house, primary school and a village hall. Collectively, these provide a basic yet adequate level of provision for future occupiers which is consistent with its designation as a key service village.

In physical terms, the site is closely related to the built form of the village. Access to Woodseaves is available via Lodge Lane, with the junction of Newport Road (A519) located approximately 100 metres from the site. Whilst it is acknowledged that Lodge Lane is narrow in places, lacks footways and street lighting, and contains sections where boundary treatments constrain pedestrian movement, these limitations occur over a relatively short distance. Beyond the junction with Newport Road, pedestrian conditions improve significantly through the provision of footways, street lighting and a reduced 30mph speed limit.

Consequently, future residents would have reasonable access to the services and facilities available within Woodseaves by walking or cycling. Whilst the route may not be attractive to all users, it nevertheless provides a practical and available means of accessing the settlement without reliance on a private vehicle for every journey.

The village also benefits from the 432 bus service, providing regular connections to Stafford and Eccleshall during the week and on Saturdays. Whilst opportunities to maximise sustainable transport options are recognised as being more limited in rural areas, the Framework acknowledges that this should be reflected in decision making. The combination of local facilities, pedestrian connectivity and access to public transport means that residents would have realistic alternatives to private car use for at least some day to day journeys.

With regard to scale, Woodseaves comprises approximately 300 dwellings. The proposal would deliver up to two additional dwellings and is therefore modest in scale when considered in isolation. It is acknowledged that there are other residential commitments within the village, including planning permissions for eight dwellings and a pending outline application for up to 100 dwellings. If all development were to come forward, the cumulative increase would be approximately 36.4% of the existing housing stock. However, the overwhelming majority of that increase would arise from the larger outline proposal rather than from the development currently under consideration.

Significantly, the site subject to the pending outline application was previously identified through the Council's Preferred Options consultation process, which recognised that area as a sustainable location capable of accommodating more substantial housing growth. Furthermore, no technical consultees have identified infrastructure constraints that would indicate that the addition of two dwellings would place unacceptable pressure on local services, facilities or infrastructure.

Having regard to its immediate relationship with the settlement, access to services and facilities, availability of public transport and the limited scale of development proposed, the Council is satisfied that the proposal is physically well related to Woodseaves and is of a scale capable of being accommodated by existing and proposed infrastructure. The proposal therefore satisfies the requirements of Policy S5(1) (j), i), which weighs in favour of the development.

LAND USE

The existing site is greenfield and appears to be in either agricultural or equestrian use. The proposal would result in a loss of this agricultural / equestrian land use.

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).

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 against the proposed development.

In terms of compatible land uses, the site lies directly adjacent to the settlement boundary and a number of residential dwellings. Whilst agricultural fields and ongoing arable agricultural operations exist adjacent to the site, it is not considered that the surrounding agricultural operations would prejudice residential development in this location.

Overall, the proposed land use would sit comfortably within the prevailing pattern of development and would not undermine the existing mix of residential, equestrian 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.

AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

Under the statutory provisions governing Permission in Principle (PiP) applications, the assessment of the amount of development is limited to whether the number of dwellings proposed is acceptable for the location, without determining detailed layout or design matters.

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.

The proposal is seeking a maximum of 2 dwellings on a site area of about 0.165ha. Given the broadly rectangular shape of the site, it is considered that there would be adequate space to provide up to 2 dwellings, including the necessary supporting development such as vehicular access to the proposed dwellings, front and rear gardens and off street parking.

It is noted that the site slopes upwards towards the south east and as such the proposed dwellings are likely to be on slightly higher ground than the adjacent neighbouring properties. Any scale, design and window orientation should be sensitively designed to neighbouring properties particularly 'The New Grange' which is located directly adjacent to the site. These matters however will be fully assessed at TDC stage.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (i.e at lowest risk of flooding), which is compatible with the vulnerability of residential development/use.

For the purposes of the Permission in Principle application, up to 2 dwellings appear to be an acceptable quantum of development. It is considered that the development could be designed to not significantly harm the amenities of neighbouring residents in respect of outlook and privacy. The details of design, scale, layout and access would be considered at the Technical Details Consent stage (TDC) should permission be granted.

Other Matters

Flood Risk / Drainage

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

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.

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.

It is noted that neighbouring representations have raised concerns that the site is known for being on impermeable clay soil generating fast run off. As such details of percolation tests and details of surface water drainage are imperative to be submitted at the TDC stage. Neighbours have also raised concerns that the Waste Water Treatment Works are currently at capacity and cannot take any additional loads from new housing. This matter is not required to be concluded at the Permission In Principle stage and could instead form part of the informed submission of the TDC application.

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

Highways

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

The submitted site location plan has indicated that a new access would be created centrally within the site giving direct access onto Lodge Lane. It is unknown at this time if the existing field access to the southern side of the site is to remain in operation.

The highways authority have recommended refusal. They note that visibility splays have not been demonstrated. Owing to the speed limit being 60mph, visibility splays of 215m x 2.4m are required in each direction from any new access. Visibility splays need to be within land under the control of the applicant or within highway land. Parking needs to be in accordance with Stafford Borough Councils parking standards (Appendix B). These matters would need to be fully demonstrated at TDC stage and are not required under the PIP application.

The highways authority comments also raise issue with the sustainability of the site and potential conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians as there are no dedicated footpaths on Lodge Lane. These matters have already been addressed above in the body of this report. The case officer disagrees with the highway authority's assessment in terms of sustainability and is satisfied that the site, being adjacent to the settlement boundary of Woodseaves, a tier three settlement is sustainable. It is acknowledged that footpaths are not present on Lodge Lane however noting the short distance (100m) to footpaths on Newport Road, this should not be prohibitive for future occupants to walk or cycle this short distance. In coming to this conclusion, the case officer has had mind to a recent appeal (APP/C3430/W/24/3355879) whereby the planning inspectorate found a site was sustainable in similar circumstances to this.

It is expected at TDC stage that visibility splays and parking will be fully demonstrated. Highway matters of providing a safe access and sufficient parking would therefore be assessed at the TDC stage.

Ecology

No ecology information has been submitted at this stage. There are mature hedges on some site boundaries which may house species of ecological importance.

The site is in the Green Impact Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts. The Newt Officer has confirmed no objection to the application stating that the site does not have any connectivity to ponds or sustainable habitats therefore it is unlikely that any impacts to great crested newts will arise from the proposed development.

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

Ecology matters would be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

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.

BNG matters would be fully assessed at the TDC stage.

Other designations - Loynton Moss and Doley Common SSSI

Loynton Moss (LM) SSSI is situated around 1km from the site. Doley Common (DC) SSSI is located about 3km from the site. Unlike Cop Mere and Aqualate Mere these are not RAMSAR sites, nor are they SAC. As such, they are not required to be included in the HRA relating to this development. However, as part of the TDC application, the impact to these designations should also form part of the submitted suite of information.

Neighbouring representations received

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.

CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE

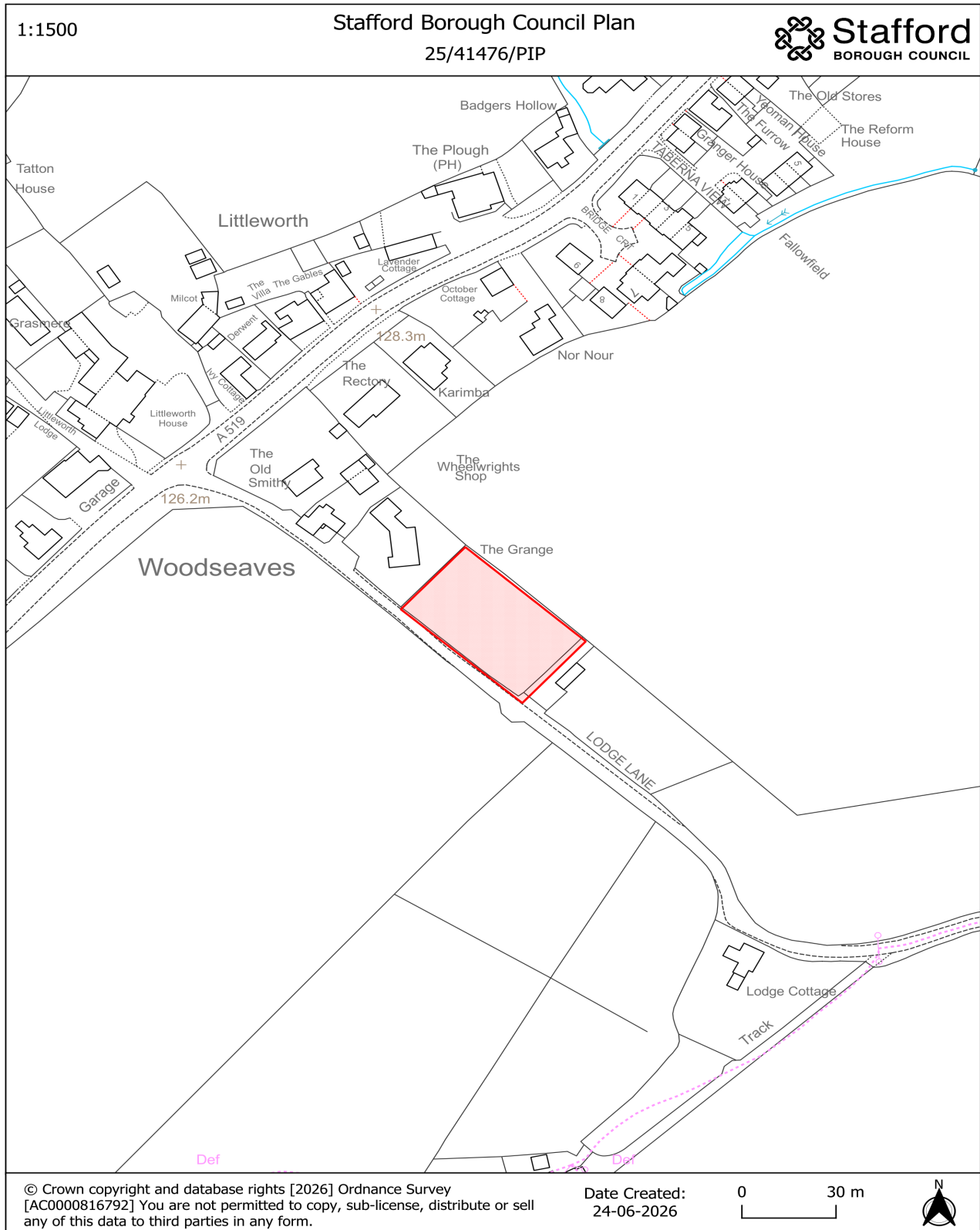
The site lies 4.7 kilometres from Aqualate Mere and 5 kilometres of the Cop Mere Midland Meres and Mosses designated European RAMSAR site. Since the local planning authority, as the competent authority under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, has not received sufficient information to determine whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the RAMSAR site the proposal represents 'habitats development' under Article 5B of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended). Consequently, under the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended), permission in principle must not be granted for habitats development. Furthermore, measures to mitigate any potential significant effects of the development either alone or in combination with other proposals on the European site's conservation objectives cannot be secured as planning obligations and conditions cannot be attached to a permission in principle.

Recommendation

As a result of the above, it is recommended that permission in principle be refused.

1. The site lies 4.7 kilometres of Aqualate Mere and 5 kilometres of the Cop Mere Midland Meres and Mosses designated European RAMSAR sites. Since the local planning authority, as the competent authority under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, has not received sufficient information to determine whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the RAMSAR site the proposal represents 'habitats development' under Article 5B of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended). Consequently, under the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended), permission in principle must not be granted for habitats development. Furthermore, measures to mitigate any potential significant effects of the development either alone or in combination with other proposals on the European site's conservation objectives cannot be secured as planning obligations and conditions cannot be attached to a permission in principle.

25/41476/PIP
Land West of Old House Farm
Lodge Lane
Woodseaves



Application:	25/41031/PIP
Case Officer:	Steven Owen
Target Decision Date:	24 September 2025
Extended To:	30 October 2026
Address:	Land Off Milford Road, Walton On The Hill, Stafford, Staffordshire
Proposal:	Permission in Principle - Erection of nine dwellings
Recommendation:	Approve

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The Application has been called-in by Councillor P C Edgeller (Milford Ward) for the following reasons:

- 1. Access to site off Milford Rd near junior school, dangerous access point.*
- 2. No local facilities, school. Doctor, food shops 1.4km away*
- 3. If passed gives way for the total field to be requested*
- 4. Near / close by Cannock Chase*

The application was previously presented to the Planning Committee on 8 July 2026, where it was resolved to defer the application to allow the applicant to amend the red edge plan taking into consideration concerns regarding the access and highway safety. This amendment has been undertaken by the applicant and extends the red line of the application site to include the highway verge which extends up to Milford Road (A513). The amended application is returned to the Planning Committee for determination.

CONTEXT

1.0 Site and surroundings

- 1.1 The amended application site comprises an agricultural field and now the adjacent highway verge. The site falls within the parish of Berkswich. The site is bound by hedgerow and Milford Road (A513). Overhead electricity lines and supporting poles cross the site.
- 1.2 The 0.99 hectare site is surrounded by agricultural fields to the south and a row of dwellinghouses to the north.

- 1.3 The Stafford Settlement Boundary ends across the street from the site. The sites position less than 12m from the boundary places it, in policy terms, within 'open countryside'.
- 1.4 The Cannock Chase National Landscape designated area begins 60m to the east of the site. The Walton on the Hill Conservation Areas begins 115m to the south west. The site falls within the Green Newt Protection Area.
- 1.5 The site falls within the 15km of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation and within 5km of the Pasturefields Salt Marsh.

2.0 Proposed development

- 2.1 The proposal seeks Permission in Principle permission for:
 - Nine dwellings.
- 2.2 An indicative proposed site plan has been provided which shows a new access onto Milford Road, ecological 'Buffer Zone', vehicle access routes and parking.
- 2.3 The application is supported by a planning statement.

3.0 Legislative 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.
- 3.3 Since the application was considered by committee in July 2026, the updated National Planning Policy Framework (2026 NPPF) has been published. This report therefore applies the latest policy guidance contained in the 2026 NPPF.

OFFICER ASSESSMENT - KEY CONSIDERATIONS

4.0 Permission in Principle Context

What is the permission in principle consent route?

- 4.1 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?

- 4.2 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.

Exemptions of Certain Development

- 4.3 The determination of this application should be assessed firstly as to whether the proposal is an exempt development as set out in Article 5B of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017. Should the proposal fall within an exception then a permission in principle cannot be granted.

- (1) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to development which is -

a) Major development;

Major development is defined as involving any one or more of the following: the provision of 10 or more houses; the provision of a building(s) where the floor space to be created is 1,000m² or more; the development site has an area of 1 hectare or more. This is further defined within The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, Article 2.

This application seeks development of up to 9 dwellings and has a site area of approx. 0.96 hectares. The development is therefore not a major development.

b) Habitats development;

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.”

The site falls within 15km of Cannock Chase SAC, however the development, subject to mitigation in the form of a financial contribution towards this SAC (which has been secured as part of this application), would not have a significant effect on a European site and as such is not habitats development.

The site is also within 5km of Pasturefields Salt Marsh. Having regard to the scale of development (9 dwellings), the absence of any direct hydrological connection to Pasturefields Salt Marsh and having considered the proposal both alone and in combination with other plans and projects, the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the designated site. Appropriate Assessment is therefore not required and as such is not habitats development.

c) Householder development;

The proposal seeks to erect 9 dwellings. The development is therefore not householder development.

d) Schedule 1 development

The proposal is not Schedule 1 development as defined in regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations.

- (2) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to Schedule 2 development unless-
- a) The local planning authority has adopted a screening opinion under regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations that the development (up to and including the maximum net number of dwellings_ is not EIA development;
 - b) The Secretary of State has made a screening direction under regulation 7 of the EIA Regulations that the development is not EIA development, or

- c) The Secretary of State has made a direction under regulation 63 of the EIA Regulations that the development is exempted from the application of those Regulations.

The proposal is not Schedule 2 development as defined in regulations 2 of the EIA Regulations.

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

5.0 Assessment of Application

- 5.1 As established above, the scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Each element will be discussed below

Location

- 5.2 Spatial Principle 3 (SP3) 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 as priority 1, Stone as priority 2 and the defined Key Service Villages as priority 3.
- 5.3 The application site falls 12m outside the settlement boundary of Stafford which sits at the top of the sustainable settlement hierarchy identified in the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011 - 2031. Stafford is located on the national road and rail network and has the highest level of services and facilities in the Borough area which means it has the greatest potential to provide for new development.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Policy E2 (sustainable rural development) of TPSB advises that residential development in the open countryside will be decided, in part, in accordance with Policy C5.
- 5.6 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.

- 5.7 The application site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary identified within Policy SP3 and is therefore 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.
- 5.8 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. 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.
- 5.9 Following the publication of the previous version of the NPPF in December 2024 this substantially increased the Borough's mandatory housing targets from 358 to 749 dwellings per year. Consequently, Stafford Borough does not currently have a 5-year housing land supply when based on the year end date of 31 March 2026 and a mandatory housing need of 760 which is calculated annually. So currently, there is a 1.95 years supply.
- 5.10 The 2026 NPPF no longer includes specific reference to the 'tilted balance' previously referred to in paragraph 11(d) of the 2024 NPPF. This has effectively been replaced by Policies S3-S5 in the 2026 NPPF which confirms that development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that Policy S4 of the NPPF should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements, with Policy S5 relevant to schemes outside settlements; and, in all locations, development proposals which accord with both an up-to-date development plan and decision making policies in the NPPF should be approved without delay.

- 5.11 The application site lies outside, albeit directly adjacent to the Stafford settlement boundary. As such, Policy S5 of the 2026 NPPF applies. This policy confirms that only certain forms of development within a set criteria should be approved outside settlements, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the 2026 NPPF.
- 5.12 Criterion (j) of Policy S5 states that development should be approved outside a settlement boundary, as is the case here, where it would address an evidenced unmet need, including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provisions of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test and:
- (i) be physically well related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and would be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure.
- 5.13 Regarding its location, as mentioned previously the site is located within open countryside but just 12m from the Stafford Settlement Boundary. The site is situated within undesignated open countryside and comprises highway verge and undeveloped agricultural land. The site is located 60m from the Cannock Chase National Landscape boundary. The site therefore forms part of the National Landscape setting but does not fall within the designation. The proposals impact upon the National Landscape would also depend upon the character and appearance of the development. These details are not required at this stage. The design of the dwellings and impact upon the National Landscape would be fully considered at the second technical stage. The proposals harm to the National Landscape designation has been afforded limited weight in considering the principle of the development. The Forward Planning response recommends refusal on the basis that the development is habitat development however, the site sits outside the Cannock Chase National Landscape boundary and mitigation is sought in respect of Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (see para 6.6)

- 5.14 On planning balance, and having regard to the Borough's lack of a five-year housing land supply and the 2026 NPPFs support for approval, it is considered that the proposal is sufficiently compliant with the 2026 NPPF when taken as a whole. This conclusion is informed by the site's location just 12m from the settlement boundary and its position on a main arterial road in close proximity to neighbouring dwellinghouses. Overall, the provision of 9 dwellings would make a modest but meaningful contribution to the Borough's housing need, and this benefit is considered to outweigh the harm arising from the site's location just outside the settlement boundary. The site's location is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to the remaining Permission in Principle considerations of land use and amount of development. At this stage, the assessment of location is limited to whether the site represents a sustainable location in principle. Technical matters, including the suitability of highways access, are reserved for stage 2: Technical Details Consent.

Land Use

- 5.15 The existing site is greenfield and is highway verge and agricultural land. The proposal would result in a loss of this agricultural land.
- 5.16 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).
- 5.17 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 relative loss of available agricultural land weighs marginally against the proposed development given its comparative size.
- 5.18 In terms of compatible land uses, the application site lies directly opposite an established cluster of residential dwellings. In this context, Class C3 residential development is considered to represent an appropriate land use in principle.
- 5.19 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.
- 5.20 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.

Amount of Development

- 5.21 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 N5 requires development to retain and integrate healthy, mature trees. Policy C1 advises that new development should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes.

- 5.22 The application seeks Permission in Principle for up to 9 dwellings on a site area measuring 9.9ha. The proposal would therefore result in a density of 10 dwellings per hectare which is considered to be relatively low density and appropriate for this rural area.

- 5.23 The details of design, scale, layout and access would be considered at the Technical Details Consent stage (TDC).

- 5.24 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.

- 5.25 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.

- 5.26 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.

6.0 Other matters

Highways

- 6.1 The application site is located on Milford Road, close to its junction with School Lane. A number of neighbour representations have raised highway safety concerns, citing the level of traffic using Milford Road.
- 6.2 Limited details have been submitted at this stage with regard to highways, given that the application is only seeking to establish 'Permission in principle' to use the site to construct 9 dwellings. While the applicant has submitted an indicative site plan showing a possible position for the site access, this is for illustrative purposes only.
- 6.3 With the site being adjacent to an A road it can be concluded that 'in principle' the site could be accessed. However, if Permission in Principle is granted a plan showing a new vehicle access and all technical details will need to be submitted at TDC stage.
- 6.4 If Permission in Principle is granted for the development, the proposal could still be refused at the next Technical Details Stage if the plans fail to demonstrate a safe and suitable access.
- 6.5 It is noted that there is no pedestrian footpath on the application side of Milford Road. At TDC stage it would be necessary to include a footpath and a safe crossing for pedestrians to gain access to the full public footpath on the northern side of Northwood Lane. Pre application discussions should be undertaken with the Highways authority prior to the submission of the TDC application in regard to these matters.
- 6.6 The Highway Authority was consulted on this application, but no comments have been received.
- 6.7 Highways matters will be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Design, Conservation and Cannock Chase National Landscape

- 6.8 The development site is located within a semi-rural location characterised by agricultural fields, and residential development. The Cannock Chase National Landscape boundary sits 60m from the site and the Walton-on-the-Hill is over 115m from the site.

6.9 The character, appearance and layout of the development is a matter reserved for the TDC stage. The overall design of the development does not fall within the limited scope of consideration at this stage (Location, Land-Use and Amount of Development). The visual impact of the development is therefore not a material consideration for 'Permission In Principle' stage.

6.10 Since the application was last considered by committee, the Conservation Officer has commented and advised the following:

'Having regard to the limited scope of Permission in Principle applications, and the findings of the Stafford Borough Historic Environment Assessment, it is not considered that the principle of up to nine dwellings on this site would result in identifiable harm to the significance of designated or non-designated heritage assets. No objection is therefore raised from a conservation perspective at this stage.'

6.11 Cannock Chase National Landscape team has also been invited to comment on the application, however no comments have been received.

Neighbouring representations received

6.12 Further representations have been received from the Parish Council, the local MP and local residents since the application was last considered by committee in July. However, these representations raise issues that are not appropriate to consider at this stage. Most of the issues raised would be considered at the second, Technical Details Consent 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.

Ecology

6.13 The developer has made a financial conservation contribution via a Section 111 Agreement as mitigation for the impact of the development on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation. The developments impact on the Pasturefields Salt Marsh has been screened out within the Habitat Regulations Assessment. The application therefore does not constitute Habitats Development.

6.14 Natural England has been consulted on the Habitat Regulations Assessment undertaken to consider the development's impact on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation. Natural England have raised no objection to the development, subject to the S111 payment.

- 6.15 The Biodiversity Officer has been consulted. They have raised no objection, but they point out that at TDC stage a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site would be needed. A completed Biodiversity Net Gain matrix and report would also be needed.
- 6.16 At this stage, there is no reason to consider that ecological matters would be detrimentally impacted by the proposal. Applications for Permission in Principle are not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain condition, which applies only to the Technical Details stage.
- 6.17 The Tree Officer has been consulted, however no comments have been received. At TDC stage an Arboricultural impact assessment (AIA) and method statement is required to inform the council of any impacts and protection measures for trees. Matters relating to trees will be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Flood Risk / Drainage

- 6.18 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. lowest risk of flooding), which is compatible with this type of development/use.
- 6.19 Flood risk and drainage will be fully assessed at the TDC stage

7.0 Conclusion and planning balance

- 7.1 For the reasons set out above, it is acknowledged that the proposal conflicts with elements of the development plan by reason of its location outside the defined settlement boundary. However, this conflict must be considered in the context of the Council's current inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, which means Policy S5 (j.i) of the NPPF is engaged. In those circumstances, the proposal must be assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 7.2 Having regard to the site's position immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, its relationship to existing residential development, and the modest contribution that 9 dwellings would make towards identified housing need, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle in terms of location, land use and amount of development. The identified harms, including the site's countryside location and the limited conflict with local policy, do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole. As subsequent consideration of all detailed technical matters will be undertaken during the Technical Details Consent stage, it is recommended that Permission in Principle be granted.

CONSULTATIONS (Latest and relevant previous comments)

Member of Parliament

The site cannot properly be regarded as suitable for residential development in principle unless safe and suitable access can be demonstrated. The NPPF says that, when assessing development proposals, it should be ensured that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. It also requires pedestrian and cycle movements to receive priority.

The proposed development would place additional households in a location where everyday facilities cannot realistically be accessed safely and conveniently on foot or by cycle, resulting in substantial dependence on private vehicles.

The absence of a footway immediately alongside the site is particularly important because it isn't merely a matter of convenience; the Council itself acknowledges that a footway and safe crossing would be necessary.

The settlement-boundary conflict remains a genuine planning harm. The housing land shortfall reduces the weight of the policy but does not erase the conflict or automatically make every site outside the settlement boundary sustainable. The site's immediate proximity to the National Landscape means its suitability for residential development cannot be divorced from its effect on the setting of the designated landscape. The absence of detailed house designs at PIP does not remove the need to consider whether residential development of the proposed quantum is appropriate in this sensitive location.

Biodiversity Officer

At the Technical Details (TD) stage a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal must be submitted that will need to be undertaken to assess the ecology of the site, along with any subsequent surveys triggered by the PEA.

At TD stage completed statutory BNG Metric will need to be submitted along with a BNG Assessment Report, explaining how the required net gain will be achieved and managed. There may be the requirement for a S.106 and a Management and Monitoring Agreement - dependent on the findings of the BNG assessment.

Each house should be fitted with 2x swift nesting bricks, not facing south and away from windows.

Tree Officer:

No comments received.

Design Advisor:

No comments received.

Highway Authority:

No comments received.

Cannock Chase National Landscape:

No comments received.

Conservation Officer:

'The application site lies outside the Walton-on-the-Hill Conservation Area and contains no designated heritage assets. The site forms part of HECZ 21 and an area of historic agricultural landscape identified as Early Reorganised Piecemeal Enclosure.

Having regard to the limited scope of Permission in Principle applications, and the findings of the Stafford Borough Historic Environment Assessment, it is not considered that the principle of up to nine dwellings on this site would result in identifiable harm to the significance of designated or non-designated heritage assets. No objection is therefore raised from a conservation perspective at this stage. However, in recognition of the site's proximity to the Cannock Chase National Landscape and its location within an area of identified historic landscape character, the Local Planning Authority may wish to consult Natural England, the Cannock Chase National Landscape Team and Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Team, if it has not already done so.'

Forward Planning:

'After assessing this application against paragraph 11 of NPPF and the PPG which states that Permission in Principle must not be granted for development within the context of the Habitat Regulations it is considered that planning consent should be refused based on national policy and the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough.'

Berkswich Parish Council:

1. *'The site is outside the existing RDB for Walton on the Hill and its development and proposed form would not be in conformity with Policy C5 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.'*
2. *The application site lies close to the boundary of the Cannock Chase National Landscape. Its development would be visually intrusive and harmful to the setting of the NL. It would not be compliant with policy N7 (a), (b), and (c) of the PFSB.*

3. *Notwithstanding the assertions in the applicants' Planning Statement this is not a sustainable location such as to warrant granting planning permission on unallocated sites to address a claimed shortfall in housing land delivery in the Borough. As the crow flies it is 1.4km to the nearest shops; there is no pedestrian footway adjacent to the application site nor a segregated cycle path; public transport is very limited and existing public facilities (doctors, schools etc) are all at or above capacity.*
4. *The site access presents a highway safety risk because of its close proximity to the junction with School Lane.*
5. *The suggested geometric housing layout, limited landscaping provision and, by inference from the drawings, the house types and massing proposed are unimaginative and unsympathetic failing to integrate with or respond to the sensitivity of their location adjacent to Cannock Chase National Landscape. This is contrary to PFSB Policy C5 A*
6. *The application site occupies part of SHLAA site BER05. Although not an adopted site for local plan purposes the Parish Council is concerned that this proposal may represent the first phase of an unannounced and unwelcome scheme for the further development of the SHLAA land.*

Neighbours:

177 Objections received (comments summarised):

- The development would have a negative visual impact upon the area, including the National Landscape and Conservation Area.
- Public services such as schools and GPs are unable to meet the demand.
- The development would have an unsafe access onto Milford Road and would result in an adverse increase in traffic.
- The development would establish a precedent for future large development.
- The development would result in adverse noise and light pollution.
- Habitat loss detrimental to wildlife.
- Brownfield land should be prioritised first.
- Site lies within the 15km Special Area of Conservation buffer zone.
- No drainage strategy or risk assessment has been provided.
- The development conflicts with planning policy.

- The development infringes on the green space surrounding Walton.
- No landscape and visual impact assessment has been provided.
- No ecological appraisal or BNG metric has been submitted.
- No traffic survey, visibility splay or swept path analysis has been provided.
- The development is located outside of Stafford's defined settlement boundary.
- The submission lacks a Agricultural land classification.
- There is a lack of employment opportunities.
- Adverse impacts on amenity arising from construction phase activity.

1 in Supportive comment received:

- A new build welcomed in a semi-rural location.

1 Neutral comment received:

- An alternative access point should be considered.

Site Notice expiry date:

24 October 2025

Relevant Planning History

None.

Recommendation

That permission in principle should be GRANTED subject to advisory notes to inform the applicant of what is expected at the Technical Details Consent Stage.

Informatives

- 1 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.
- 2 The technical details consent should include the following:
 - i) an analysis of the existing character and appearance of the area:
 - ii) an analysis of the relationship of the site to neighbouring properties.

- iii) a tree survey of all existing trees to be removed or retained.
- iv) access and parking in compliance with the standards of the highway authority.
- v) details of how surface water will be managed for the lifetime of the development without increasing flood risk on or off site.
- vi) A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Statutory Metric.

Previous committee report 8 July 2026

Application:	25/41031/PIP
Case Officer:	Steven Owen
Target Decision Date:	24 September 2025
Extended To:	-
Address:	Land Off Milford Road, Walton On The Hill, Stafford, Staffordshire
Proposal:	Permission in Principle - Erection of nine dwellings
Recommendation:	Approve

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The Application has been called-in by Councillor P Edgeller (Milford Ward) for the following reasons:

- 1. Access to site off Milford Rd near junior school, dangerous access point.*
- 2. No local facilities, school. Doctor, food shops 1.4km away*
- 3. If passed gives way for the total field to be requested*
- 4. Near / close by Cannock Chase*

CONTEXT**1.0 Site and surroundings**

- 1.1 The application site comprises an agricultural field within the parish of Berkswich. The site is bound by hedgerow and trees on three sides. Overhead electricity lines and supporting poles cross the site.
- 1.2 The 0.96 hectare site is surrounded by agricultural fields to the south and a row of dwellinghouses to the north.
- 1.3 The Stafford Settlement Boundary ends across the street from the site. The sites position 12m from the boundary places it, in policy terms, within 'open countryside'.
- 1.4 The Cannock Chase National Landscape designated area begins 60m to the east of the site. The Walton on the Hill Conservation Areas begins 115m to the south west. The site falls within the Green Newt Protection Area.

- 1.5 The site falls within the 15km of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation and within 5km of the Pasturefields Salt Marsh.

2.0 Proposed development

- 2.1 The proposal seeks Permission in Principle permission for:
- Nine dwellings.
- 2.2 An indicative proposed site plan has been provided which shows a new access onto Milford Road, ecological 'Buffer Zone', vehicle access routes and parking.
- 2.3 The application is supported by a planning statement.

3.0 Legislative 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.

OFFICER ASSESSMENT - KEY CONSIDERATIONS

4.0 Permission in Principle Context

What is the permission in principle consent route?

- 4.1 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?

- 4.2 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.

Exemptions of Certain Development

- 4.3 The determination of this application should be assessed firstly as to whether the proposal is an exempt development as set out in Article 5B of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017. Should the proposal fall within an exception then a permission in principle cannot be granted.

- (1) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to development which is -

a) Major development;

Major development is defined as involving any one or more of the following: the provision of 10 or more houses; the provision of a building(s) where the floor space to be created is 1,000m² or more; the development site has an area of 1 hectare or more. This is further defined within The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, Article 2.

This application seeks development of up to 9 dwellings and has a site area of approx. 0.96 hectares. The development is therefore not a major development.

b) Habitats development;

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."

The site falls within 15km of Cannock Chase SAC, however the development, subject to mitigation in the form of a financial contribution towards this SAC (which has been secured as part of this application), would not have a significant effect on a European site and as such is not habitats development.

c) Householder development;

The proposal seeks to erect 9 dwellings. The development is therefore not householder development.

d) Schedule 1 development

The proposal is not Schedule 1 development as defined in regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations.

- (2) A local planning authority may not grant permission in principle, on an application to the authority, in relation to Schedule 2 development unless--
- a) The local planning authority has adopted a screening opinion under regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations that the development (up to and including the maximum net number of dwellings_ is not EIA development;
 - b) The Secretary of State has made a screening direction under regulation 7 of the EIA Regulations that the development is not EIA development, or
 - c) The Secretary of State has made a direction under regulation 63 of the EIA Regulations that the development is exempted from the application of those Regulations.

The proposal is not Schedule 2 development as defined in regulations 2 of the EIA Regulations.

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

5.0 Assessment of Application

- 5.1 As established above, the scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Each element will be discussed below

Location

- 5.2 Spatial Principle 3 (SP3) 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 as priority 1, Stone as priority 2 and the defined Key Service Villages as priority 3.

- 5.3 The application site falls 12m outside the settlement boundary of Stafford which sits at the top of the sustainable settlement hierarchy identified in the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011 - 2031. Stafford is located on the national road and rail network and has the highest level of services and facilities in the Borough area which means it has the greatest potential to provide for new development.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Policy E2 (sustainable rural development) of TPSB advises that residential development in the open countryside will be decided, in part, in accordance with Policy C5.
- 5.6 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.

- 5.7 The application site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary identified within Policy SP3 and is therefore 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.

- 5.8 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. 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.
- 5.9 On the 12 December 2024 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated and 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.
- 5.10 Due to the loss of 5 year land supply, paragraph 11 of the NPPF now applies alongside the adopted TPSB, that being the presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision taking. Therefore, within the context of TPSB, Spatial Principle 7 criteria a) to e), delivery of the spatial strategy continues to be applied through Spatial Principle 3 as this sets out the sustainable settlement hierarchy of Stafford, Stone and the Key Service Villages. Spatial Principle 4 then apportions a sustainable spatial distribution at Stafford (70%), Stone (10%), Key Service Villages (12%), and the rest of the Borough (8%).
- 5.11 However, 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:

- a) approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay; or*
- b) 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 three years. See also paragraph 232.
- Footnote 9 The policies referred to are those in paragraphs 66 and 84 of chapter 5; 91 of chapter 7; 110 and 115 of chapter 9; 129 of chapter 11; and 135 and 139 of chapter 12.

- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 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, provides a strong reason for refusing development proposed or the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. These matters will be assessed throughout the body of this report and a conclusion and planning balance drawn in the final paragraphs.

- 5.14 Regarding its location, as mentioned previously the site is located within open countryside but just 12m from the Stafford Settlement Boundary. The site is situated within undesignated open countryside and comprises undeveloped agricultural land. The site is located 60m from the Cannock Chase National Landscape boundary. The site therefore forms part of the National Landscape setting but does not fall within the designation. The proposals impact upon the National Landscape would also depend upon the character and appearance of the development. These details are not required at this stage. The design of the dwellings and impact upon the National Landscape would be fully considered at the second technical stage. The proposals harm to the National Landscape designation has been afforded limited weight in considering the principle of the development. The Forward Planning response recommends refusal on the basis that the development is habitat development however, the site sits outside the Cannock Chase National Landscape boundary and mitigation is sought in respect of Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (see para 6.6)
- 5.15 On planning balance, and having regard to the Borough's lack of a five-year housing land supply and the resulting 'tilted balance' in favour of approval, it is considered that the proposal is sufficiently compliant with the NPPF when taken as a whole. This conclusion is informed by the site's location just 12m from the settlement boundary and its position on a main arterial road in close proximity to neighbouring dwellinghouses. Overall, the provision of 9 dwellings would make a modest but meaningful contribution to the Borough's housing need, and this benefit is considered to outweigh the harm arising from the site's location just outside the settlement boundary. The site's location is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to the remaining Permission in Principle considerations of land use and amount of development. At this stage, the assessment of location is limited to whether the site represents a sustainable location in principle. Technical matters, including the suitability of highways access, are reserved for stage 2: Technical Details Consent.

Land Use

- 5.16 The existing site is greenfield and is in agricultural use. The proposal would result in a loss of this agricultural land.
- 5.17 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).

- 5.18 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 relative loss of available agricultural land weighs marginally against the proposed development given its comparative size.
- 5.19 In terms of compatible land uses, the application site lies directly opposite an established cluster of residential dwellings. In this context, Class C3 residential development is considered to represent an appropriate land use in principle.
- 5.20 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.
- 5.21 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.

Amount of Development

- 5.22 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 N5 requires development to retain and integrate healthy, mature trees. Policy C1 advises that new development should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes.
- 5.23 The application seeks Permission in Principle for up to 9 dwellings on a site area measuring 9.6ha. The proposal would therefore result in a density of 10 dwellings per hectare which is considered to be relatively low density and appropriate for this rural area.
- 5.24 The details of design, scale, layout and access would be considered at the Technical Details Consent stage (TDC).
- 5.25 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.

- 5.26 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.
- 5.27 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.

6.0 Other matters

Highways

- 6.1 Limited details have been submitted at this stage in regard to highways however the submitted site plan does indicate that a new access is proposed for the site.
- 6.2 Further information will need to be submitted at TDC stage. Suitable visibility splays would be required as well as parking provisions which align with Stafford Borough Council's parking standards.
- 6.3 It is noted that there is no pedestrian footpath on the application side of Milford Road. It would be necessary to include a footpath and a safe crossing for pedestrians to gain access to the full public footpath on the northern side of Northwood Lane. Pre application discussions should be undertaken with the Highways authority prior to the submission of the TDC application in regard to these matters.
- 6.4 Highways matters will be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Neighbouring representations received

- 6.5 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.

Ecology

- 6.6 The developer has made a financial conservation contribution via a Section 111 Agreement as mitigation for the impact of the development on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation. The developments impact on the Pasturefields Salt Marsh has been screened out within the Habitat Regulations Assessment. The application therefore does not constitute Habitats Development.
- 6.7 Natural England has been consulted on the Habitat Regulations Assessment undertaken to consider the development's impact on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation. At the time of writing, no response has been received, although Natural England's consultation deadline is the 26th of June. Nevertheless, mitigation of the development's impact through a Section 111 Agreement is the agreed procedure within the department. It is therefore considered acceptable to determine the application on the basis of the paid conservation contribution and completed Section 111 Agreement, subject to Natural England raising no objection.
- 6.8 At this stage, there is no reason to consider that ecological matters would be detrimentally impacted by the proposal. Applications for Permission in Principle are not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain condition, which applies only to the Technical Details stage.
- 6.9 At TDC stage an Arboricultural impact assessment (AIA) and method statement is required to inform the council of any impacts and protection measures for trees.
- 6.10 Matters relating to trees will be fully addressed at the TDC stage.

Flood Risk / Drainage

- 6.11 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. lowest risk of flooding), which is compatible with this type of development/use.
- 6.12 Flood risk and drainage will be fully assessed at the TDC stage

7.0 Conclusion and planning balance

- 7.1 For the reasons set out above, it is acknowledged that the proposal conflicts with elements of the development plan by reason of its location outside the defined settlement boundary. However, this conflict must be considered in the context of the Council's current inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, which means the tilted balance in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged. In those circumstances, the proposal must be assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

- 7.2 Having regard to the site's position immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, its relationship to existing residential development, and the modest contribution that 9 dwellings would make towards identified housing need, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle in terms of location, land use and amount of development. The identified harms, including the site's countryside location and the limited conflict with local policy, do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole. As subsequent consideration of all detailed technical matters will be undertaken during the Technical Details Consent stage, it is recommended that Permission in Principle be granted, subject to Natural England raising no objection to the completed Habitat Regulations Assessment.

CONSULTATIONS (Latest and relevant previous comments)

Forward Planning:

'After assessing this application against paragraph 11 of NPPF and the PPG which states that Permission in Principle must not be granted for development within the context of the Habitat Regulations it is considered that planning consent should be refused based on national policy and the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough.'

Berkswich Parish Council:

1. *'The site is outside the existing RDB for Walton on the Hill and its development and proposed form would not be in conformity with Policy C5 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.'*
2. *The application site lies close to the boundary of the Cannock Chase National Landscape. Its development would be visually intrusive and harmful to the setting of the NL. It would not be compliant with policy N7 (a), (b), and (c) of the PFSB.*
3. *Notwithstanding the assertions in the applicants' Planning Statement this is not a sustainable location such as to warrant granting planning permission on unallocated sites to address a claimed shortfall in housing land delivery in the Borough. As the crow flies it is 1.4km to the nearest shops; there is no pedestrian footway adjacent to the application site nor a segregated cycle path; public transport is very limited and existing public facilities (doctors, schools etc) are all at or above capacity.*
4. *The site access presents a highway safety risk because of its close proximity to the junction with School Lane.*
5. *The suggested geometric housing layout, limited landscaping provision and, by inference from the drawings, the house types and massing proposed are unimaginative and unsympathetic failing to integrate with or respond to the*

sensitivity of their location adjacent to Cannock Chase National Landscape. This is contrary to PFSB Policy C5 A

6. *The application site occupies part of SHLAA site BER05. Although not an adopted site for local plan purposes the Parish Council is concerned that this proposal may represent the first phase of an unannounced and unwelcome scheme for the further development of the SHLAA land.*

Neighbours

139 Objections received (comments summarised):

- The development would have a negative visual impact upon the area, including the National Landscape and Conservation Area.
- Public services such as schools and GPs are unable to meet the demand.
- The development would have an unsafe access onto Milford Road and would result in an adverse increase in traffic.
- The development would establish a precedent for future large development.
- The development would result in adverse noise and light pollution.
- Habitat loss detrimental to wildlife.
- Brownfield land should be prioritised first.
- Site lies within the 15km Special Area of Conservation buffer zone
- No drainage strategy or risk assessment has been provided.
- The development conflicts with planning policy.
- The development infringes on the green space surrounding Walton.
- No landscape and visual impact assessment has been provided.
- No ecological appraisal or BNG metric has been submitted.
- No traffic survey, visibility splay or swept path analysis has been provided.
- The development is located outside of Stafford's defined settlement boundary.
- The submission lacks a Agricultural land classification.
- There is a lack of employment opportunities.
- Adverse impacts on amenity arising from construction phase activity.

1 in Supportive comment received:

- A new build welcomed in a semi-rural location.

1 Neutral comment received:

- An alternative access point should be considered.

Site Notice expiry date:

24 October 2025

Relevant Planning History

None.

Recommendation

Approve subject to informatives

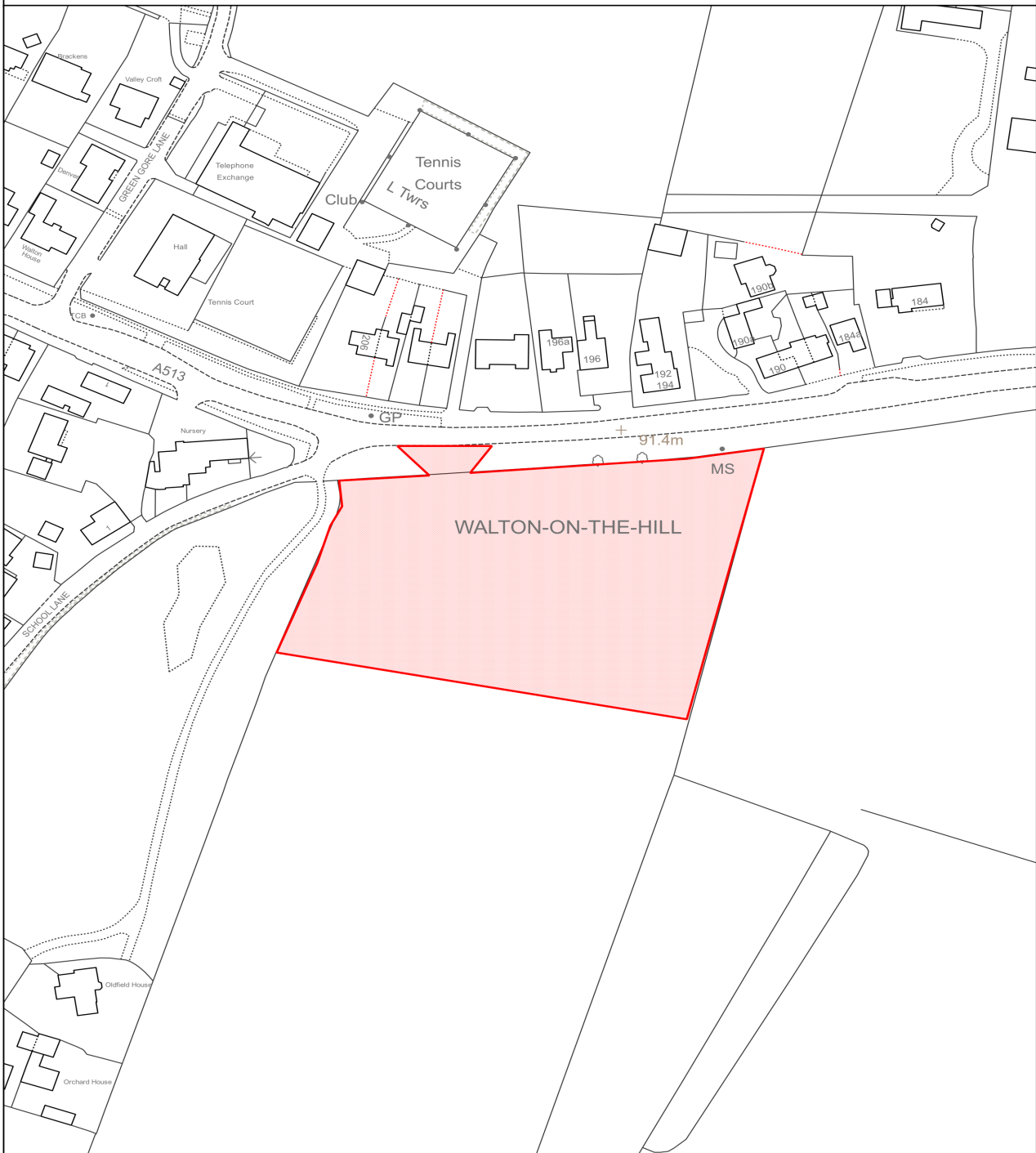
Informatives

- 1 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.
- 2 The technical details consent should include the following:
 - i) an analysis of the existing character and appearance of the area:
 - ii) an analysis of the relationship of the site to neighbouring properties.
 - iii) a tree survey of all existing trees to be removed or retained.
 - iv) access and parking in compliance with the standards of the highway authority.
 - v) details of how surface water will be managed for the lifetime of the development without increasing flood risk on or off site.
 - vi) A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Statutory Metric.

25/41031/PIP
Land Off Milford Road
Walton On The Hill

1:1500

Stafford Borough Council Plan
 25/41031/PIP



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Date Created:
 24-06-2026

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Application:	25/40960/OUT
Case Officer:	Hannah Cross
Date Registered:	1 August 2025
Target Decision Date:	31 October 2025
Extended To:	4 September 2026
Address:	Land Off Green Road, Weston
Ward:	Milwich
Parish:	Weston
Proposal:	The erection of 150 residential dwellings, with associated infrastructure works, including access (vehicular, pedestrian and cycle), drainage, public open space and landscape. All matters reserved except for access
Applicant:	Richborough
Recommendation:	Approve, subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure affordable housing provision and off-site highway works together with financial contributions towards secondary education, Cannock Chase SAC, travel plan monitoring, bus service improvements, bus stop improvements and BNG monitoring

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application has been called in by Councillor F Beatty (Ward Member for Milwich) for the following reasons:-

- “1. *Inappropriate in scale. This application would result in a 32.4% increase in the size of Weston village.*
2. *Inappropriate location at the busy heart of the village - risks pedestrian accidents, particularly children using Green Road and adjacent routes to school; and to the highly popular activities on the Green, including the dog walking, play area and sports matches.*
3. *Insufficient places at Weston Road senior school; and added pressure of numbers on the primary school.”*

CONTEXT

1.0 The application site

- 1.1 This application relates to a greenfield site covering approximately 8.36 hectares located outside of, but adjacent to the designated settlement boundary of Weston. The submitted agricultural quality report indicates that 95% of the land constitutes best and most versatile agricultural land (2% Grade 2 and 93% Grade 3a) and 5% non-agricultural land.
- 1.2 In terms of the immediate surroundings, Green Road and a community green (The Green) sits to the north, with residential development to the west, open fields and the A51 highway to its east, and The Trent and Mersey Canal and Conservation Area to the immediate south.
- 1.3 The site falls within Flood Zone 1, within 8km of Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and within 5km of Pasturefields SAC and West Midlands Meres and Mosses RAMSAR site.

2.0 The proposal

- 2.1 This application seeks outline planning permission for the development of 150 dwellings with associated infrastructure works, including access, drainage, public open space and landscape. All matters except for access are reserved for subsequent approval.
- 2.2 The development would have a singular vehicle/pedestrian access point off Green Road, and includes the following highway works within the red edge of the application site:
 - A new zebra crossing to connect access with the existing footway along Green Road;
 - Widening of footway between Ferrers Road East and Ferrers Road West to 2m; and
 - New tactile paving on both sides of Green Road.
- 2.3 The highway works would require the removal of a section of hedgerow along the main road frontage off Green Road to provide the necessary visibility splays. Although an illustrative layout plan has been submitted, details relating to the internal road layout and pedestrian connections, would be reserved for future approval.

- 2.4 Whilst details of the appearance, scale, layout and landscaping of the development are to be determined at reserved matters stage an indicative masterplan, illustrative framework plan and land use parameters plan have been provided. These indicate that areas of open space would be located to the south of the site adjacent to the canal, with a central green towards the north of the site and the main drainage attenuation area being located along the eastern boundary of the site with an ecologic corridor running along the western boundary.

OFFICER ASSESSMENT - KEY CONSIDERATIONS

3.0 Principle of Development

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 ("the NPPF") sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It advises the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental) which are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways.
- 3.2 National legislation requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with an adopted Local Plan:
- "If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise." (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, 38(6))."*
- 3.3 The NPPF, published on 17 August 2026, is a material consideration of significant weight in determining planning applications. On the basis of NPPF paragraph 3 Stafford Borough Council can use its adopted local plan for decision-making purposes. For the purposes of this application the adopted local plan comprises:
- The Plan for Stafford Borough Part 1 (2011-2031) - adopted June 2014
 - The Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 (2011-2031) - adopted January 2017. (Hereafter referred to as TPSB)
- 3.4 It should be noted that the adopted TPSB has 5 years remaining through to 2031. The court of appeal in Peel Investments v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government [2020] EWCA Civ 1175 confirmed that the expiry of a local plan period does not automatically render the policies of a plan out-of-date. Therefore, Stafford Borough's adopted Plan policies, including the Borough's development strategy, must continue to be used for decision-taking.

Emerging policy

- 3.5 The Plan for Stafford Borough 2020-2040 had reached the Preferred Options Stage in 2022 with some advanced draft policies. As part of the New Local Plan 2020-2040 Preferred Option stage the Council published a Site Assessment Profiles document which included site reference WES02 and WES03 encompassing the current planning application location as a potential site option, however the application site was not included in the Council's Preferred Options document published in October 2022. The reason for this was, at that time, access, ecology, water and education capacity issues needed to be resolved. The current position with these technical matters are considered in chapters 4, 7, 9 and 11 of this report.
- 3.6 Notwithstanding the above, the Council decided on 6 March 2025 to stop work on the emerging Local Plan 2020-2040 and begin a new plan-making process in the context of the current NPPF. The Council is currently in the early stages of preparing the new Local Plan 2025 - 2045, having completed a Scoping and Participation consultation in June and July 2026 whilst continuing to develop its evidence base.

Application of TPSB Policy

- 3.7 Spatial Principle (SP) 4 of TPSB states that the annual targets for the distribution of housing development, supported by necessary infrastructure will be: Stafford (70%), Stone (10%), Key Service Villages (12%) and Rest of Borough Area (8%).
- 3.8 Weston constitutes a Key Service Village as set out within SP3 however the application site adjoins but is outside of Weston's settlement boundary, which was established under the current Development Plan. The development is therefore, in policy terms, located outside of a settlement boundary in the context of Policy SP7 and Policy C5.
- 3.9 Policy C5 (A) states that where development sits outside of the identified settlements, 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.
- 3.10 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 nor an appraisal showing that it meets the defined needs. Accordingly, the proposed development would conflict with Policies SP3, SP7, E2 and C5A whose objectives have already been outlined above.

5-year housing land supply position

- 3.11 Following the publication of the previous version of the NPPF in December 2024 this substantially increased the Borough's mandatory housing targets from 358 to 749 dwellings per year. Consequently, Stafford Borough does not currently have a 5-year housing land supply when based on the year end date of 31 March 2026 and a mandatory housing need of 760 which is calculated annually. So currently, there is a 1.95 years supply.

The 2026 NPPF and housing land supply

- 3.12 The 2026 NPPF no longer includes specific reference to the 'tilted balance' previously referred to in paragraph 11(d) of the 2024 NPPF. This has effectively been replaced by Policies S3-S5 in the 2026 NPPF which confirms that development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that Policy S4 of the NPPF should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements, with Policy S5 relevant to schemes outside settlements; and, in all locations, development proposals which accord with both an up-to-date development plan and decision making policies in the NPPF should be approved without delay.
- 3.13 The application site lies outside, albeit directly adjacent to the Weston settlement boundary. As such, Policy S5 of the 2026 NPPF applies. This policy confirms that only certain forms of development within a set criteria should be approved outside settlements, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the 2026 NPPF.
- 3.14 Criterion (j) of Policy S5 states that development should be approved outside a settlement boundary, as is the case here, where it would address an evidenced unmet need, including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provisions of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test and:
- (i) be physically well related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and would be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure.
- 3.15 As set out in paragraph 3.11 of this report the Council cannot provide a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites and criterion j of Policy S5 is therefore engaged. An assessment of the relationship between the proposed development and the existing settlement and its scale, taking account of the existing/proposed availability of infrastructure in Weston is made in paragraphs 3.19-3.29.

- 3.16 Chapter 12 of the 2026 NPPF also seeks to make effective use of land and achieve appropriate densities. Policy L3 (1) stating that development proposals should take into account the identified need for different types of housing and other development, local market conditions, the availability of infrastructure (including that supporting sustainable transport modes) and its scope for improvement, a site's connectivity and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
- 3.17 Policy L3 (2b) goes on to state that to contribute to making efficient use of land outside settlements, and on land at the edge of existing built-up areas which is allocated or has permission for development and so will form part of a settlement (as defined in the glossary at Annex B), development footprints should make the best use of a site's development potential, taking into account the policies in the Framework. Policy L3 (4) also confirms that development proposals which do not make efficient use of land should be refused.
- 3.18 The indicative layout plan shows a number of residential parcels, interspersed with pockets of open space, drainage basins, play areas and new landscaping. The submitted D&A statement states that the density of development across the site would result in a gross average density of approximately 18 density per hectare (dph), and a net average density of 34dph. This net density would be comparable with existing modern development in the settlement and is considered to make efficient use of land in accordance with Policy L3 of the 2026 NPPF.
- 3.19 Although the site lies outside the settlement of Weston, Annex B of the 2026 NPPF defines a settlement as:
- “...cities, towns, villages and other predominantly built-up areas, including land which is allocated or has permission for development which will form part of the built-up area once the development is complete (officer emphasis). This includes areas defined as a settlement in the development plan (whether using defined settlement boundaries or equivalent terms, or criteria for identifying settlement extents where boundaries have yet to be defined). Settlements do not include hamlets and scattered groups of houses located outside predominantly built-up areas, unless specifically defined as a settlement in the development plan.”*
- 3.20 Given that the site immediately adjoins the settlement and would form part of the built-up area of the village once the development is complete, should the current outline application be approved, the site would represent a 'settlement' in Annex B terms.

3.21 Within settlements, Policy L3 confirms that:

“...development proposals for residential and mixed-use development should contribute to an increase in the density of the area in which they are situated. The only exception is where there is a clear justification that this is either inappropriate or not possible (for example, where the prevailing density is already very high, the nature of the accommodation required precludes higher densities, or where it would conflict with other policies in this Framework). In considering the potential to increase densities, the existing character of an area should be taken into account, in accordance with policy DP3, but should not preclude development which makes the most of an area's potential.”

- 3.22 In terms of proposed density, the development would result in a gross average density of approx. 18dph, and a net average density of approx. 34dph (dwellings per hectare). Weston contains a mix of housing typologies, with varying densities. Whilst the proposals would be of an increased density compared to more historic development in the village such as those north of The Green (identified on pages 22 and 23 of the submitted D&A statement) which take a density of approximately 16-24dph, the proposed development would be of a comparable density to more modern development in the village such as those at Salt Works Lane/ Brandwood Drive/ Castlemill Close to the west of the site (identified on pages 26-27 of the D&A statement), which have a density of between 30 and 40dph. Furthermore, given the requirement for public open space, sustainable drainage systems and a suitable road network, together with the need to consider the existing character of the area, this density is considered to be appropriate and would accord with Policy L3 of the NPPF.
- 3.23 Given the above conclusions, the first paragraph of SP 7 from Part 1 and Policy SB1 from Part 2 of the TPSB carry less weight in relation to new housing development, concerning settlement boundaries including at Weston.

Sustainability of location, physical relationship to settlement, density and infrastructure

- 3.24 The proposal for up to 150 dwellings represents a significant uplift to the size of Weston, equating to approximately a 32.4% increase over the existing settlement. The Borough's Planning Policy Manager considers that the proposals are disproportionate in their scale to the size of the settlement and therefore conflicts with Policy SP7 (b) of TPSB and refers to the evidence base formed as part of the 2020-2040 local plan. However, in the context of the Borough not having a 5 year housing land supply and TPSB policies for new residential redevelopment consequently carrying less weight it is considered appropriate to defer to the provisions of the new NPPF in respect of directing development to sustainable locations as set out under Policy S5 (j) and which includes providing an appropriate density of development through Policy L3. The NPPF also provides further clarity on transport infrastructure and sustainable development as set out below.
- 3.25 Policy TR3 of the 2026 NPPF states that to ensure that development is situated in sustainable locations, development proposals which generate a significant amount of movement in the context of the area within which they would be situated, should be in locations that are sustainable (or which can be made so, taking into account planned improvements, including any provided for as part of the development itself). This means the location should limit the need to travel, particularly by private car, and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and users, unless the nature of the development would make this impractical.
- 3.26 Policy TR3 also directs that opportunities should be taken to utilise existing or proposed transport infrastructure in optimising the amount or density of development which can be accommodated in different locations, especially where this can support more walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use.
- 3.27 The settlement of Weston is identified as a Key Service Village within TPSB and is therefore considered a sustainable location. Although the application site is outside of the settlement boundary of Weston, it is immediately adjacent to and within walking distance of this Key Service Village, where occupiers would be able to access a number of services by walking or cycling. Moreover, Weston Village Hall, St Andrew's C of E Primary School and two public houses 'The Woolpack' and 'The Saracen's Head' are all within walking distance of the site.

- 3.28 It is acknowledged that Weston does not benefit from amenities such as a grocery store, its own GP surgery or a secondary school. The site is however within walking distance of a bus stop served by the 841-bus service which offers hourly services to both Stafford and Hixon (buses towards Uttoxeter) Monday to Friday and roughly every 1.5 to 2 hours on a Saturday where these amenities are available. An additional hourly Monday - Saturday bus service has also recently been introduced (Route 151) and is on an initial 12 month trial period, which runs between Stone and Rugeley, passing through Aston Lodge, Burston, Sandon, Weston, Hixon, Great Haywood, Little Haywood, and Colwich. Officers regard these bus services to provide a viable alternative to the private car for residents to access employment, health and a wider range of retail offerings in these nearby settlements/towns. Stafford Railway Station which offers wider regional/national connections is approximately 10km away and can be accessed via the aforementioned bus service.
- 3.29 For the above reasons, the development is considered acceptable within the context of Policies S4, S5, TR3 and L3 of the 2026 NPPF and the overall strategy for new housing development in TPSB in that it is directly adjacent to a Key Service Village and is of an appropriate scale to the existing settlement, taking account the existing availability of infrastructure in the village and the local area. In addition, the site is located in a sustainable location in terms of accessibility, with services and facilities in the village and a regular bus services to access those located further afield.
- 3.30 It now turns to assess whether any adverse impacts of the proposed development would significantly outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF, taken as a whole, with the 'Planning balance' section of this report providing a conclusion on this assessment.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 4: Achieving sustainable development

Section 6: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 12: Making effective use of land

Section 14: Achieving well-designed places

Section 15: Promoting sustainable transport

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), SP2 (Stafford Borough Housing and Employment Requirements), SP3 (Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy), SP4 (Stafford Borough Housing Growth Distribution), SP7 (Supporting the Location of New Development), C1 (Dwelling Types and Sizes)

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

SB1 (Settlement Boundaries)

4.0 Highway Safety, Access, Parking

- 4.1 TPSB 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.
- 4.2 Policy TR6 of the 2026 NPPF confirms that in assessing movement patterns and potential impacts, including whether they are considered to be severe, reasonable future scenarios should be considered, taking into account impacts at relevant times of the day, potential cumulative impacts, multimodal trip generation and the promotion of sustainable modes of travel, and realising the transport vision for the development itself. Development proposals should also be considered having regard to these potential impacts and the other policies in this Framework which are relevant (including TR3, TR4 and DP3(2)(d)).
- 4.3 Policy TR6 sets out how development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.

Access arrangements/geometry

- 4.4 This application seeks outline permission including the means of access to the site from Green Road. Drawing T25532.001 revision A shows a visibility splay of 32m to the west and 34m to east. On site highways works (i.e. within the submitted red edge) also include:
 - a new zebra crossing to the west of the site access to cross onto the footway running along the north of Green Road,

- 2.0m footways to be provided on both sides of the site access and the existing footway running along the northern verge of Green Road is proposed to be widened to 2.0m between Ferrers Road East and Ferrers Road.

4.5 The Highway Authority (HA) agrees that the proposed visibility splays which are large enough to accommodate larger vehicles (i.e. refuse/delivery vehicles) are appropriate in this location and can be secured via condition. The submitted transport assessment states that:

“...the proposed site access junction has been assessed using PICADY for a 2025, 2030 and 2030 + Proposed Development scenario. The site access junction is forecast to operate with negligible queues and delays, and with significant spare capacity in both peak hours.”

Highway capacity/increased vehicle movements

4.6 The application is supported by a detailed Transport Assessment (TA), which assesses the impacts of the development across the local highway network and concludes that the development would have a negligible impact upon highway safety. The HA initially requested that an audit to show that walking routes to local amenities, in particular the local school are safe and suitable. An addendum to the TA has since been submitted which includes an active travel route audit for Ferrers Road and sets out recommendations for off-site highway works. This includes:

- a zebra and footways extension on Green Lane,
- an uncontrolled crossing point with tactile paving across the Ferrers Road/The Green (east) priority junction,
- a new uncontrolled crossing point within the vicinity of the primary school on Ferrers Road, and
- wayfinding signage at both Green Road/Ferrers Road priority junctions to direct users to the primary school, local amenities, bus stops on Old Road and the Trent and Mersey Canal.

4.7 The submitted TA includes Personal Injury Accident (PIA) data within the vicinity of the site for the latest available five year period, which identified two PIAs across this period. During the specified period, there were two PIAs recorded, which were both recorded as ‘slight’ accidents (as opposed to serious or fatal) occurred during daylight hours and were located at the A51/A518 staggered signalised crossroads and on the A51 c.30m north of Weston Methodist Church. No PIAs involved pedestrians or cyclists.

4.8 The potential / likely causation factors for these accidents were recorded as follows:

- Failed to look properly;
- Slippery road (due to weather); and
- Driver/rider overshoot junction or poor turn/manoeuvre.

4.9 The submitted TA concludes that:

“...although all PIAs are regrettable, given the contributory factors for the PIAs above, the proposed development would not exacerbate existing road safety issues, and that the proposal will have a negligible impact upon highway safety.”

4.10 In respect of vehicle movements, the submitted TA states that using TRICs analysis, the proposed residential dwellings would generate up to 40 two-way vehicle trips travelling to/from the west of the site access, and up to 36 two-way vehicle trips travelling to/from the east of the site access during any peak hour. The submitted TA includes forecasts in respect of a 2030 post-development scenario, and concludes that both the A51 and A518 priority junctions would operate with significant spare capacity in both peak hours in the future (with and without development).

4.11 The HA do not dispute the results of this data or otherwise raise any concerns in respect of the capacity of the highway network or highway safety.

4.12 Given the above, it is considered that the vehicle movements associated with the development can be safely accommodated on the surrounding highway network without having a significant adverse impact on highway safety. As such, the scheme would accord with Policies TR3, TR4 and TR6 of the 2026 NPPF which, amongst other things, requires that development does not have a severe adverse impact on the transport network or an unacceptable impact on highway safety, taking account of any mitigation measures.

Other highway matters

4.13 The HA raise no objection to the proposals subject to conditions securing details surrounding internal road layout, parking provision etc to be submitted at reserved matters stage, the implementation of the proposed access arrangements, travel plan details, a CEMP, and for further off-site highways works to be provided as recommended by the submitted active travel audit. It is considered off-site highway works would be better secured via a S106 legal agreement (with the details to be agreed by the HA as part of a separate 278 agreement under the Highways Act 1980). Planning conditions are recommended on all other matters.

- 4.14 The HA also require a £6,000 financial contribution towards travel plan monitoring, an £8000 contribution to provide solar real time information boards at the Old School Close bus stops, a £320,000 contribution to provide bus service improvements over a 5-year period, and a £157,205 contribution towards school transport for secondary school age children. These contributions have been agreed by the applicant and can be secured via a S106 legal agreement.
- 4.15 In respect of parking provision, any future Reserved Matters application would be expected to provide sufficient on-site parking for the proposed dwellings in accordance with the Council parking standards and Policy TR2 of the 2026 NPPF.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 4: Achieving sustainable development

Section 15: Promoting sustainable transport

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

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

5.0 Character, Appearance and Heritage

- 5.1 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 design, layout and materials.

- 5.2 Policy DP3 of the 2026 NPPF confirms that:

“Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3.”

Impact on settlement pattern / landscape character

- 5.3 Whilst matters relating to layout and design are reserved, the submission includes a detailed Design and Access Statement (D&A) alongside an indicative masterplan, illustrative framework and parameter plans, providing an indication of the potential layout of the development. These plans identify a central green to the north of the site, community allotments and ornamental planting to the north west, open space to the south eastern corner and new planting corridors along the eastern and western boundaries.
- 5.4 The proposed development would introduce built form on what is currently open pastureland and therefore is considered to have some impact upon the character and appearance of the site and wider landscape. However, whilst it is a relatively large site, it would not physically dominate the existing village envelope and provides a logical expansion to the settlement, not extending beyond the existing eastern village edge which abuts the A51 highway. Furthermore, the development would be read in the context of the existing settlement, with the areas of open space and landscaping reducing the visual impact of the proposals from the vantage points of Green Road, the A51 highway and the canal towpath over time.
- 5.5 The D&A states that the dwellings would result in a gross average density of approximately 18dph, and a net average density of 34dph. The Council's Design Advisor (DA) commented upon the original submission and raised concern that whilst this density appears to be achievable, it would be of a higher density compared with dwellings in the immediate area. A revised D&A has since been submitted providing further analysis of local context including the densities of other modern development in the village (eg. at Pellfield Court, Salt Works Lane and Castlemill Close). From this it is considered the proposals would be of a comparable density to other modern development in Weston, including development to the immediate west of the site. Furthermore, as above, should outline permission be granted, the application site would fall within a settlement where Policy L3 of the NPPF 2026 encourages higher densities. As such, the proposed densities are considered appropriate.
- 5.6 The DA also raised concerns surrounding the lack of connection between the site and the existing settlement. It is regrettable that there are no formal connection points between the site and Salt Works Lane, however the applicant has confirmed that the adjacent strip of land falls outside of their ownership and for this reason it has not been possible to secure a connection through to Salt Works Lane. The indicative masterplan has nonetheless been amended during the course of the application to demonstrate that the internal road layout and built form could be positioned to reflect that of the adjacent development. It is considered on this basis that the proposed development could be designed to complement the existing pattern of development, and that organic connections through to Salt Works Lane could, in time, be formed.

- 5.7 The Site lies within Regional Character Area (RCA) 68 'Needwood Claylands' according to the Staffordshire Planning for Landscape Change and Character Assessment (2001), which forms part of the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands national character area (NCA). The RCA is described as a rolling plateau of Triassic mudstones divided by the valley of the River Dove with the rolling landform created by streams often hiding dispersed villages and hamlets within the valleys.
- 5.8 Within RCA 68, the Site falls within the 'Settled Farmlands' landscape character type (LCT) which is broadly described as a landscape of undulating and lowland hills with the dominant land use being dairying and mixed farming. "There is a varied pattern of small to medium sized hedged fields with a scatter of small woodlands, often of ancient origin. The settlement pattern is mixed, and not distinctive."
- 5.9 The LVIA submitted finds that the residual effect of the Proposed Development on landscape character, and in particular the Needwood Claylands NCA and Settled Farmland LCT within the Staffordshire Planning for Landscape Change and Character Assessment is minor adverse on a localised scale with the effect diminishing to negligible with distance from the site given its containment and location on the edge of existing settlement. Officers concur with this assessment and consider the harm to landscape character is limited due to the location of the site adjoining the village, and the presence of the A51.

Visual impact

- 5.10 Turning to the visual impact of the development, the LVIA identifies a number of key public viewpoints/receptors from which the development would be experienced. These are identified as follows:
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| VIEWPOINT 1: | View from The Green, looking south |
| VIEWPOINT 2: | View from Green Road at the northern Site boundary, looking south. |
| VIEWPOINT 3: | View from the A51 to the east of the Site, looking north-west |
| VIEWPOINT 4: | View from Meadow Lane / PRoW ref WFP 6, looking south-west. |
| VIEWPOINT 5: | View from PRoW ref WFP 6 / the Stone to Colwich railway line, looking west. |
| VIEWPOINT 7: | View from Trent Walk within the Ingestre CA, looking north-west. |

- VIEWPOINT 8: View from the Trent and Mersey Canal Path within the CA, looking north-west.
- VIEWPOINT 9: View from the Trent and Mersey Canal Path within the CA, looking north.
- VIEWPOINT 10: View from the Trent and Mersey Canal Path within the CA, looking north-east.
- VIEWPOINT 11: View from the Trent and Mersey Canal Path within the CA, looking south-east.
- VIEWPOINT 12: View from Salt Works Lane, looking south-east.
- VIEWPOINT 13: View from Salt Works Lane, looking east.
- VIEWPOINT 14: View from PRow ref WFP 2, looking south-east.
- VIEWPOINT 15: View from Sandon and Burston FP 4 within Sandon Park Registered Park and Garden, looking south-east.
- VIEWPOINT 16: View from the Staffordshire Way/Colwich Bridleway 64 within Shugborough Registered Park and Garden and the CCNL.

- 5.11 The LVIA considers that the highest level of effect in terms of visual amenity would be experienced from the Trent and Mersey Canal and canal path (viewpoints 8, 9 and 10) where its route traverses to the south of the site boundary. It is stated that moderate, adverse effects would be experienced at year 1, reducing to moderate to minor adverse at year 15 as the proposed landscape strategy matures.
- 5.12 The LVIA also identifies at Table 4 that from The Green and Green Road (viewpoints 1 and 2) at time of construction there would be moderate adverse visual effects which would reduce to minor adverse effects at Yr1 as a result of the proposed landscaping strategy.
- 5.13 Thus, subject to conditions to secure the parameter plan submitted, it is considered that the landscape and visual effects of this outline proposal would not be significant, subject to an appropriate design coming forward at reserved matters stage which gives due consideration to scale and landscaping particularly in relation to the key vantage points of the canal tow path, Green Road and The Green.

Impact upon heritage assets

- 5.14 Policy N9 of TPSB states that development which affects the significance of a heritage asset will not be accepted, and that development is expected to sustain the significance and setting of a heritage asset. The policy also states that development should take into consideration archaeological remains and potential.
- 5.15 When considering proposals which affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area (CA) regard is to be made to Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area Act) 1990, which requires the Local Planning Authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas.
- 5.16 Furthermore HE6 (4) of the NPPF states that:
- “Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.”*
- 5.17 Whilst not located within a CA, the site is in close proximity to the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area (TMCCA) which sits immediately south of the site and therefore falls within its immediate setting.
- 5.18 The TMCCA is a long and generally narrow area based around the line of the canal. From paragraph 2.14 of the TMCCA Appraisal 2014, 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.
- 5.19 Given the scale of the development, and resultant loss of open green space within close proximity to the TMCCA, it is agreed by the applicant, the Borough’s Conservation Officer and the Canal and River Trust that the proposals would result in some harm to the setting of the TMCCA.
- 5.20 Nonetheless, in this case the proposals would affect a small part of the TMCCA when considering the CA as a whole, and the development would be read alongside the existing settlement of Weston. Furthermore, open space is proposed to the south of the site, with built form being set back from the canal. In addition, the buffer of trees/vegetation that currently exists along the southern boundary of the site is proposed to be retained. Therefore, the harm to the TMCCA is considered to be at the lower end of the scale.

- 5.21 With regards to public benefits, the proposals would deliver 150 dwellings to contribute towards the Borough's current housing shortage. This is considered a benefit which attracts significant weight and would outweigh the harm caused to the setting of the TMCCA in this case. There would also be additional economic benefits through the construction of the development itself and the subsequent benefit to local community facilities brought about by the additional residents associated with 150 dwellings. As such, it is considered that the public benefits of the scheme, clearly outweigh the less than substantial harm to the setting of the CA, in accordance with policy HE6 of the NPPF.
- 5.22 The County Archaeologist has advised that the results of the submitted geophysical survey demonstrate evidence of possible archaeological activity and whilst raising no objections, recommend that an archaeological scheme of investigation be secured via condition. A written scheme of investigation has since been submitted which the County Archaeologist considers to be acceptable. A condition is recommended to ensure this investigation is carried out and the results appropriately recorded.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 14: Achieving well-designed place. Section 20: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

N1 (Design), N8 (Landscape Character), N9 (Historic Environment)

Supplementary Planning Document - Design

6.0 Amenity

- 6.1 Policy N1 of TPSB requires the design and layout of development to take account of noise and light implications and amenity of adjacent residential areas. The Design SPD provides further guidance on amenity standards including garden sizes and separation distances between dwellings. The neighbours' concerns regarding impact upon amenity are noted.

- 6.2 The 2026 NPPF at Policy P3 also advises that:

"Development proposals should be appropriate for their location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment..."

Existing residents

- 6.3 To address any likely impacts of the development during the construction phase on surrounding residents the submission is supported by an acoustic assessment, Phase 1 contamination survey and an air quality assessment. The Council's Environmental Health Protection Lead (EHO) has advised that these reports are satisfactory and has requested a condition to secure construction phase dust mitigation measures (to include using water as a dust suppressant, and appointing a site agent to deal with any complaints) set out within the air quality assessment, as well as a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to mitigate construction noise.
- 6.4 The proposed residential use once in operation is not considered to result in detrimental noise impacts on existing residents and subject to a suitable layout and design being secured at reserved matters stage should not result in any significant overlooking or loss of privacy.

Future residents

- 6.5 Whilst the application is in outline form, the submission includes an indicative layout which demonstrates that the development of 150 dwellings could be achieved, whilst providing sufficient private amenity space, and adhere to the recommended separation standards set out in the Design SPD to provide sufficient outlook and privacy for occupiers.
- 6.6 The submission includes an acoustic report which assesses the existing noise levels. This report advises that mitigation measures will be required for those dwellings most exposed to London Road to include up-rated thermal double glazing and through wall ventilators, in order to ensure that the development provides future residents with sufficient residential amenity. The layout and design of the development should therefore be informed by the findings of this report. The EHO has recommended a condition surrounding noise mitigation measures for those properties most exposed to the (A51) London Road. This seems a reasonable approach, and a condition is therefore recommended to this effect.
- 6.7 A Phase 1 Desk Study has been provided to assess any potential contamination risk. Whilst concluding based on the desk study that the environmental risk at the site is low, to moderate with the principal risk drivers relating to the agricultural activities, the report recommends that the site be subject to further detailed assessment to confirm the underlying geology and the extent of any contamination. The EHO accepts these findings and recommends that a phase II ground investigation report is secured via a pre-commencement condition.

- 6.8 In summary, it is considered that the site could accommodate up to 150 dwellings whilst providing sufficient amenity for both existing and future residents. The proposal, subject to securing further detail at reserved matters stage and via conditions, is considered to be acceptable and adhere to the development plan and NPPF in this regard.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 14. Achieving well-designed place

National Design Guide (NDG)

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

Policy N1 (Design)

Supplementary Planning Document - Design

7.0 Flooding and Drainage

- 7.1 Policy N1 of TPSB states that development should not be located in areas of flooding or contribute to flooding elsewhere. Policy N2 requires developments to provide sustainable drainage systems.
- 7.2 The site falls within Flood Zone 1, land with a low flood risk. In such areas, the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) require new development to be safe for its lifetime, not to increase flood risk elsewhere, and to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) wherever practicable.

Surface water drainage

- 7.3 During the consideration of the application a revised drainage strategy has been provided to address the concerns of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the Canal and River Trust (CRT) with regards to surface water drainage. This specifically related to concerns raised in respect of access and maintenance to Culvert 68, which the CRT have advised is not currently accessible.
- 7.4 The drainage strategy within the Flood Risk Assessment Revision E (FRA), proposes a connection to the Severn Trent Water (STW) sewer network, at a combined rate of 4.9 l/s, which the FRA indicates has been agreed, in principle, with STW via pre-development enquiry. The northern part of the site would drain to the sewer network via gravity, but the southern part of the site would require the use of a pump to raise surface water up to the northern point of the site to connect, via gravity, into the sewer network. This arrangement is shown indicatively on Drawing No. 22111-01_230_06 - Revision A in Appendix G of the FRA.

- 7.5 The LLFA raise no objection to this strategy, subject to conditions requiring a final detailed surface water drainage design, a surface water management plan and a management and maintenance plan. The LLFA also suggest an informative regarding the original drainage strategy to state this may be acceptable, however they would need to be satisfied that Culvert 68 is in a suitable condition with suitable access to provide maintenance over the lifetime of the development.

Foul water drainage

- 7.6 The Drainage strategy drawing 22111_01_230_06 'Alternative Outfall Drainage Strategy' shows a dual pumping station to the south of the proposed attenuation basin. This dual pumping station would pump foul water flows from the proposed development to a new gravity foul water sewer prior to a connection into STW foul water sewer MH7701. A foul rising main, gravity manhole, gravity foul sewer, and connection point have been included on drawing 22111_01_230_06.
- 7.7 STW initially raised a holding objection on the basis the proposals had potential to increase flooding. However, they have subsequently removed this objection, stating that through current legislation a developer has the right to connect to the public foul network to drain foul water, and to do so at the nearest or most convenient point on the existing network. In addition, STW advise that they have a statutory duty to provide any network reinforcement that may be required to accommodate the flow generated by such a new development. Nonetheless in their latest response STW consider that further information is required in respect of foul and surface water drainage design and recommend conditions surrounding a detailed drainage plan for foul and surface drainage can secure this.
- 7.8 In summary, it is considered that, subject to conditions, the development is acceptable with regards to flooding and surface/foul drainage and adheres with the development plan and NPPF in this regard.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 17. Pollution, public protection and security

Section 18. Managing flood risk and coastal change

Section 19. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

Policies Stafford 1 (Stafford Town), N1 (Design), N2 (Climate Change), N4 (The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure)

8.0 Best and Most Versatile Agricultural land

8.1 Policy N2 of the 2026 NPPF confirms that development proposals should, amongst other things:

“b. Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible;”

8.2 Although the 2026 NPPF does not define ‘significant’, it can be noted that Natural England is a statutory consultee on development that would lead to the loss of over 20 ha of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (BMVAL).

8.3 The application site extends to around 8.4 hectares in size, of which around 8 hectares or approximately 95% is BMVAL (0.2ha Grade 2 and 7.8ha Subgrade 3a). Given that only 8 hectares of BMVAL would be lost as a consequence of the development, this loss would not be ‘significant’.

8.4 In support of this, the submitted planning statement states that 47,190ha of land across Stafford Borough comprises Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land, which represents 86% of the agricultural land in Stafford. As BMVAL comprises Grade 1, 2 and 3a land, the scheme equates to a total loss of 0.02% of BMVAL across Stafford. This also indicates opportunities for using poorer quality agricultural land in the Borough for development are limited.

8.5 In summary, whilst the loss of BMVAL may not be ‘significant’ some negative weight should be attached to this loss in the overall planning balance.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Chapter 19. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

E2: Sustainable Rural Development

9.0 Biodiversity, Ecology and Arboriculture

9.1 Policy N4 of TPSB states that the natural environment will be protected and that new development where damage to the natural environment is unavoidable must provide appropriate mitigation. Policy N1 requires development to retain significant biodiversity and landscaping features and create new biodiversity areas.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 9.2 A BNG Metric and report has been submitted to support the application which confirms that the proposals will deliver a 17.37% net increase in biodiversity on site. The standard Biodiversity Gain Plan condition would be attached to any permission granted, which would require the applicant to demonstrate how the statutory net gain of 10% will be achieved.
- 9.3 The Council's Ecology Officer is satisfied that BNG trading rules will be met on site and recommends a £4201.82 monitoring fee be secured by condition, to ensure the LPA can monitor delivery of the biodiversity enhancement.

Protected Species

- 9.4 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal recommended that further surveys for bats be undertaken due to the presence of potential roosting habitats. These surveys have since been carried out, which identified a low-to-moderate level of commuting / foraging bat activity particularly along the southern boundary of the site. The report concludes that subject to appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures it will be possible to maintain the favourable conservation status of the local bat population. The Council's Ecology Officer raises no objection subject to a Construction Environmental Management Plan to take into consideration of the mitigation measures set out in bat survey report being carried out, and appropriate level of surveying/mitigation for any proposed tree removal.
- 9.5 The development falls within an amber impact risk zone for Great Crested Newts (GCN). The District Newt Officer however considers that impacts to GCN are unlikely and raises no objection subject to a precautionary working statement including Reasonable Avoidance Measures be submitted and adhered to. It is recommended this matter be covered by condition.
- 9.6 It is noted that the Canal and River Trust (CRT) raise some concern in respect of the impact of the proposal upon soft bank habitat of the canal. However, the existing vegetation along the canal edge will be retained, and parameter plans show any built development will be set back from the canal. As such, it is considered the only potential impacts caused to canal habitat would be through pollution (eg. caused by run-off) or artificial lighting. The CRT raise no objections to the proposed drainage strategy. Furthermore, the CEMP recommended by officers will include further measures to prevent run-off at construction phase of development, and it is considered lighting proposals can be reasonably conditioned at the reserved matters stage of the application.

Arboriculture

- 9.7 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) which confirms that the indicative layout would require the loss of 2 no. Category C trees within the centre of the site (T1 and T2). Neither of these trees are protected, or based on the AIA, considered to be aged or veteran. Furthermore, the part removal of hedgerow will be required to enable the delivery of the site access and a drainage ditch.
- 9.8 The submitted AIA indicates it is possible to retain/protect all other trees, notably including those at Bridge House which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders, and recommends that full details of tree protection measures including construction methods be provided within a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement at reserved matters stage. It is recommended a condition be attached to ensure any reserved matters application is supported by an arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan.

Cannock Chase SAC

- 9.9 Policy N6 of TPSB states that 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.
- 9.10 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 150 net dwellings, as such a financial contribution is required.
- 9.11 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, due to its relative proximity on the Cannock Chase SAC. Therefore, in accordance with Regulation 63 of the aforementioned Regulations, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment (AA). The Council's AA concludes that the mitigation measures identified within the Council's Development Plan for windfall housing sites, will address any harm arising from this development to the SAC. The applicant has agreed to the financial contribution should the application be approved and which can be secured via a planning obligation.

- 9.12 Natural England are a statutory consultee on the AA stage of the Habitats Regulations process and have therefore been duly consulted. Natural England concur with the conclusions of the LPA's AA and therefore they have offered no objections to the proposal, subject to appropriate mitigation being provided.
- 9.13 On this basis, it is concluded that the LPA have met its requirements as the competent authority, as required by the Regulations and therefore the proposal will comply with the requirements of the Development Plan and the NPPF in this regard.

Pasturefields SAC

- 9.14 The Pasturefields SAC sits approximately 1.4km from the site. The Trent and Mersey Canal which runs alongside the south-western border of the application site does provide connectivity from the site to the Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC, where it borders the eastern area of the site. Natural England advises that subject to appropriate drainage design and a CEMP (which would identify measures to prevent any run-off into the canal) that the proposals are not likely to impact upon the SAC.
- 9.15 The Council's AA concludes that the mitigation measures recommended by Natural England will address any harm arising from this development to the SAC. Both matters can be addressed via condition, and Natural England would be consulted on drainage details and the CEMP as part of the discharge of conditions process.

West Midlands Meres and Mosses RAMSAR

- 9.16 Chartley Moss which falls under West Midlands Mosses SAC and Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 RAMSAR site sits approximately 4km north east of the application site. The submitted Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) confirms that there is also no direct link between the canal and the Midland Meres and Mosses SAC and RAMSAR, therefore potential water pollution or eutrophication is highly unlikely to affect either of these sites, and no other likely significant effects are identified. Consequently, impacts upon WMM SAC and Ramsar have been screened out in the Council's HRA as no potential significant effects have been identified.
- 9.17 Overall, it is considered that the scheme, at this stage, is acceptable and adheres to the development plan and NPPF in respect of ecology and arboriculture.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 19. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

Policies N1 (Design), 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 (SAC))

10.0 Housing mix

- 10.1 Policy C1 states that new residential development is expected to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes and that the final mix should be determined by local needs, government policy and design issues.
- 10.2 As this application is in outline form the assessment of housing mix would be completed at reserved matters stage once the layout and design have been finalised. However the contribution of affordable housing will be secured at this outline stage, and the applicant has agreed to a 30% provision of affordable housing in line with Policy C2 and appropriate tenure split explained at 12.5 below.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 6. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

C1 (Housing Mix)

11.0 Infrastructure Provision and Planning Contributions

- 11.1 Under the Policy I1 of TPSB, new development which provide additional residential units should be supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure and these should be secured via legal agreement. Policy I1 also advises that in assessing such requirements the viability of developments is taken into consideration when determining the extent and priority of development contributions. The neighbours' and Parish Council comments regarding infrastructure provision are noted.
- 11.2 Under the terms of Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (Reg 122(2)), planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all the following tests:
- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - (b) directly related to the development; and
 - (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

These tests are also set out in Policies DM3 and DM6 of the 2026 NPPF.

- 11.3 Additionally Policy HC3 of the NPPF requires that proposals for housing, employment or other development which would give rise to significant numbers of additional people living in, working in or visiting an area should:
- a. Be informed by an understanding of the need for any associated improvements to community facilities and public service infrastructure, whether on or off-site; and
 - b. Provide for new or improved community facilities and public service infrastructure which are necessary for the development to be acceptable in planning terms, whether by direct provision or a contribution to off-site improvements (which may be through Community Infrastructure Levy payments, where applicable).

Affordable housing

- 11.4 Policy HO8 of the NPPF states that:

“Development proposals should meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures relevant to the location, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent.”

- 11.5 Policy C2 of TPSB sets out that residential developments of 12 or more units in Weston must provide 30% affordable housing as part of the scheme. The policy also states that developers are expected to provide an independent economic viability assessment if a lower provision of affordable housing is proposed.
- 11.6 The Council’s Housing Team have advised that 30% of the development should be affordable housing, equating to 45 units. They have also advised that the affordable homes should be split 70% social rent and 30% intermediate affordable units. The applicant has agreed to a policy compliant 30% provision of affordable housing and to the mix of affordable units suggested by the Housing Officer, and it is recommended these matters be secured via a S106 Agreement.

Education

- 11.7 Based on the location of the proposed development, Staffordshire County Council's School Organisation Team have advised that an education contribution towards primary school provision is not required. However, there is projected to be an insufficient number of school places in the local area to mitigate the impact of this development at secondary phase of education, and a financial contribution from this development of £1,274,056.00 will be required to put towards a new secondary school, mindful that the proposed 150 dwellings would be expected to generate 28 secondary aged pupils. It is considered that this obligation would meet the tests set out in the NPPF. This contribution has been agreed with the applicant, and can be secured via a S106 Agreement.

Open space and leisure

- 11.8 Policy C7 of TPSB states that new residential development is required to provide additional open space, sport and recreation provision. The policy also states that where it can be demonstrated that the provision of neither on-site nor off-site facilities is appropriate a financial contribution may be considered. The policy also states that there is a presumption that open space provision will be provided within the development site.
- 11.9 With regards to open space provision the Leisure Officer (LO) has advised that the development of 150 dwellings would require the onsite provision of 10,768sqm of open space, with areas of sustainable drainage excluded from this calculation.
- 11.10 The submitted indicative layout demonstrates that the amount of open space exceeds that requested by the LO when excluding flood attenuation areas. It has been confirmed that open space provision will be delivered by the developer. It is recommended that the submitted parameters plan be conditioned so that this quantum of open space is secured. The indicative masterplan indicates play areas would be provided on the open space. The LSO has raised concerns regarding the proximity of the play areas to the proposed pumping station. However, as the layout is only indicative, it is considered play areas could reasonably be relocated to other areas of open space on site.
- 11.11 Furthermore, it is advised that there is currently a shortfall of pool space, sports halls and artificial turf pitches within the Borough. It is recommended that the development of 150 dwellings should contribute £9,808.50 for Artificial Turf Pitches (3G); £64,863 for Sport Courts / Halls; and £71,103 for Pool provision. This has been calculated using the Sport England Facilities calculator and is based upon the Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Facilities Strategy 2019 and subsequent update in 2022, along with the annual updates from the National Governing bodies which highlight several areas where there is either a lack of available time for hire or in some cases a complete lack of a facility.

11.12 The LO has confirmed that, the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Indoor Facilities Strategy (IFS) 2019 and subsequent update in 2022, along with the annual updates from the National Governing bodies highlight several areas where there is either a lack of available time for hire or in some cases a complete lack of a facility. The report highlights the following deficiencies:

- Swimming Pool Water Space - Stafford Borough is currently a 6 lane 25m pool of water space short for residents
- Artificial Turf Pitches/3G - Stafford is 2 x 3G pitches short of demand and that Stone is 1 x 3G short for current demand
- Sport Hall/Court - Stafford is short of available court space, and several of the halls need refurbishment.

11.13 The catchment area for a sports contribution is defined as a 20-minute drive time as defined by Sports England. Weston is within a 20 minute drive time of both Stafford and Stone. The applicant has agreed to these contributions and it is recommended that they are secured through a S106 legal agreement.

Health Care

11.14 The NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) have been consulted on the application and advise that in this case the ICB is looking to support a scheme of modernisation within a practice that has a catchment covering the application site. The modernisation scheme would enhance infrastructure capacity and would be sufficient to serve this scheme therefore in this case no contribution is sought from the development at this time.

Highways Improvements

11.15 As set out in paragraph 5.6 above, off-site highway improvement works are proposed and contributions towards public transport, secondary school transport and local bus stops have been agreed. It is considered these infrastructure improvements and contributions are reasonable.

11.16 The Canal and River Trust have raised some concern in respect of increased public accessibility to the canal and public safety noting the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) outer zone adjacent to the canal. Officers are satisfied that direct access to the canal could be reasonably prevented should this be deemed necessary through appropriate boundary treatments and landscaping which the applicant will need to address at the reserved matters stage of the application. Please see below Sections 13.2 and 13.3 on the matter of the HSE outer zone.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Section 3: Decision-making policies

Section 4: Achieving sustainable development

Section 6: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 16: Promoting healthy communities

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031

I1 (Infrastructure Delivery Policy), C2 (Affordable Housing), C7 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation)

12.0 Other Matters

- 12.1 Cadent Gas have advised that they own and operate the gas infrastructure within the area of the development. No objection is raised however an informative note is requested which can be attached to any permission granted.
- 12.2 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is a statutory consultee for certain developments within the Consultation Distance of Major Hazard Sites/ pipelines. The southern most part of the site falls within the outer consultation zone of an existing pipeline. It is noted that open space/landscaping is proposed within this area of the site, and HSE do not advise against granting planning permission in this case.
- 12.3 HSE recommend consulting National Gas on the proposals, which has been undertaken however no comments have been received. It is however noted from within the submitted Utility Statement that the applicant has liaised with National Gas who state that based on the location entered into the system for assessment the area has been found to be outside the High Risk zone from National Gas Transmission plc's apparatus and can proceed.
- 12.4 The Police Liaison Officer has commented on the application to provide advisories surrounding security measures within the proposed design. The applicant is advised to consider these recommendations prior to any reserved matters. An informative can be attached to draw the applicant's attention to this.

- 12.5 Officers have considered the representations of neighbouring residents and Weston with Gayton Parish Council. The relevant material considerations are covered in the body of the report above. It is noted that the Parish's latest response refers to a potential proposal for large scale development at Hixon. There is no live application relating this proposal and as such this potential proposal has no bearing on the determination of this application.
- 12.6 It is noted that illustrative site layouts and framework plans have been submitted however at this outline stage it is only considered reasonable to condition the location plan and parameters plan in respect of further reserved matters applications, with access arrangements being secured by a separate condition.

13.0 Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 13.1 Policies S3-S5 of the 2026 NPPF confirms that development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that Policy S4 of the NPPF should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements, with Policy S5 relevant to schemes outside settlements; and, in all locations, development proposals which accord with both an up-to-date development plan and decision making policies in the NPPF should be approved without delay.
- 13.2 The application site lies outside, albeit directly adjacent to the Weston settlement boundary. As such, Policy S5 of the 2026 NPPF applies. This policy confirms that only certain forms of development within a set criteria should be approved outside settlements, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the 2026 NPPF.
- 13.3 Criterion (j) of Policy S5 states that development should be approved outside a settlement boundary, as is the case here, where it would address an evidenced unmet need, including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provisions of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test and:
- (i) be physically well related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and would be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure.

- 13.4 As set out in paragraph 4.12 of this report the Council cannot provide a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites and criterion j of Policy S5 is therefore engaged. Moreover, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 4.24-4.29 and 6.3-6.6, the proposed development would be well related to the size and structure of the existing settlement and the existing availability of infrastructure in Weston and therefore accords with Policy S5 of the 2026 NPPF, unless the benefits of granting permission would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the 2026 NPPF.
- 13.5 The proposed development is considered to result in some harm with respect to its impact upon landscape character and the setting of the TMCCA. Nevertheless, the harm in respect of landscape character is not considered to be significant when considering the location and contained nature of the site, and the harm to the setting of the CA is considered to be less than substantial. The proposal would also result in the loss of some BMVAL, however the loss is not considered to be significant and therefore this adverse impact is given limited weight. No other adverse impacts have been identified in this case.
- 13.6 In terms of the benefits of the scheme, the Borough does not have a 5 year housing land supply, and the contribution that 150 dwellings would make to the Borough's housing supply should therefore be afforded significant weight. Some additional positive weight should also be attached to the wider economic benefits associated with a development of this scale, including employment opportunities and the benefits to local services and facilities associated with the construction and subsequent occupation of 150 dwellings. Moreover, the site is located adjacent to a key service village and in a sustainable location in terms of accessibility, with a primary school, village hall and public houses within walking distance. There are also available public transport links to Stafford and other nearby towns, providing an alternative to the private motor vehicle for the potential future occupiers to access a wider range of facilities and employment opportunities nearby. These factors count in favour of the scheme.
- 13.7 It has also been demonstrated that, subject to conditions, the proposal would provide an appropriate living environment for existing and proposed residents, not have a significant impact on highway safety, enhance biodiversity/preserve designated sites, and not increase flood risk on the site or surrounding land.
- 13.8 In all, applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the NPPF as a whole, the benefits of the scheme are considered to clearly outweigh the adverse impacts, and permission should therefore be granted, subject to conditions and the necessary planning obligations.

CONSULTATIONS (Comments summarised)

Local Highway Authority:

Comments dated 3 July 2026:

Confirming condition 2 on Form X not required as technical drawings will be agreed separately with the H/A, and confirming condition to secure implementation of the access via Green Road prior to construction of further development, and on-site highway improvement works prior to first occupation of any dwelling. Informative requested re. highway works agreement with Staffordshire County Council.

Comments dated 23 January 2026:

No objections subject to conditions surrounding reserved matters detail, access off Green Road, off-site highway works and travel plan.

Contributions requested

£6000 contributions requested re. travel plan monitoring, £8000 contribution towards information boards at the Old School Close bus stops, £320,000 contribution to bus service improvements, £157,205 contribution towards school transport for secondary school age children.

Comments dated 20 November 2025:

More information is required on the pedestrian safety audits surrounding the routes from the site access to the local amenities including the local school.

However, once these concerns have been addressed and any agreed measures taken, the Highway Authority would raise no objection to the proposal subject to the following conditions, S.106 financial contributions and essential informative comments being attached to any given consent

Lead Local Flood Authority:

Comments dated 2 July 2026:

We have reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment and Water Quality Statement - 22111-FLD-0102 - Rev E - June 2026 which demonstrates that a surface water drainage system can be achieved in principle.

In terms of the drainage hierarchy, BRE-365 Infiltration Testing indicates that a discharge to ground, via infiltration, is not feasible. As part of the application, a discharge of surface water from the southern catchment to the watercourse to the south of the site has been investigated and is not considered feasible at this time.

Flows would be required to pass beneath the canal system to the south of the site via Culvert 68 which the CRT have advised is not currently accessible. As such, access to undertake management and maintenance of the asset is not confirmed and could impact upon the flow of surface water under the canal over the lifetime of the development. The LLFA have included an informative in this regard as part of the planning response.

At this time therefore, a connection to the STW sewer network is proposed at a combined rate of 4.9 l/s which has been agreed, in principle, with STW via pre-development enquiry. The northern part of the site shall drain to sewer via gravity, but the southern part of the site shall require the use of a pump to rise surface water up to the northern point of the site where it shall connect, via gravity, into the sewer network. This arrangement is shown indicatively on Drawing No. 22111-01_230_06 - Revision A in Appendix G of the FRA.

No objection to the application at this stage subject to pre-commencement conditions being attached to any planning permission, to ensure that the full detailed drainage design; management and maintenance plan and surface water management plan (SWMP) are submitted for review.

Informative: As part of the outline application, a discharge of surface water from the site's southern attenuation basin, via the strip of land connecting the site to the southernmost watercourse, has been investigated and is not considered feasible at this time. Flows would be required to pass beneath the canal system to the south of the site via Culvert 68 which the CRT have advised is not currently accessible to determine the status/ condition of the culvert. In addition, it is not clear whether access would be available to maintain the culvert over the lifetime of the development.

At the outline stage therefore, this method of discharge has been removed, however, if further surveys deem Culvert 68 to be in suitable condition to allow flows beneath the canal, and that the CRT were satisfied that suitable access and egress would be available to provide maintenance of the culvert over the lifetime of the development, a discharge surface water via this method may be acceptable.

This would be subject to written agreements between the applicant, and 3rd party landowners and the CRT at the reserved matters and/ or DCON stages.

Comments dated 15 June 2026:

Objection - Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that an acceptable drainage strategy is proposed.

Comments dated 9 April 2026:

Objection - Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that an acceptable drainage strategy is proposed. We would therefore recommend that planning permission is not granted.

The LLFA maintains its objection on the basis that surface water generated by the development site is to be conveyed underneath the canal via Culvert 68 to which the CRT have stated that they do not currently have access to in their latest response.

Comments dated 26 January 2026:

Objection - Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that an acceptable drainage strategy is proposed.

Comments dated 1 October 2025:

Objection - Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that an acceptable drainage strategy is proposed. We would therefore recommend that planning permission is not granted. The outstanding issues are as below:

A connection is proposed to the watercourse to the south of the site via a new ditch arrangement; however, it is not clear what condition the receiving watercourse is in or where it discharges to downstream (does it discharge to Canal system or pass beneath?).

Please provide further evidence of the condition of the downstream watercourse and provide evidence of its downstream connectivity to either the canal system or the River Trent within the submitted FRA.

Active Travel England:

Refer to ATE standing advice

Natural England:

Comments dated 8 April 2026:

Satisfied that the proposed drainage strategy would not result in potential impacts upon Pasturefields SAC

Comments dated 6 November 2025:

A Drainage Strategy will be produced and implemented at the site as part of a reserved matters process. Further measures to prevent any run-off into the canal will also be detailed within the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) recommended for the site. Based on the above, the proposals are considered unlikely to negatively impact the Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC provided the above features and/or strategies are produced and implemented at the site. This should be highlighted in the Appropriate Assessment and should be secured by condition.

Comments dated 29 September 2025:

Concur with the LPA's HRA that if mitigation measures set out in strategic solution are implemented, there will be no adverse impact upon Cannock Chase

Appropriate assessment required in relation to Pasturefields SAC

SBC Leisure Officer:Comments dated 3 June 2026:

The updated plans propose locating the pumping station adjacent to and within the open space that includes the play area. This arrangement would reduce the amount of usable open space in the more formal section of the open space. Additionally, there are concerns that the presence of this infrastructure could diminish the enjoyment of the space for users.

It is considered that there is alternative land available within the less formal open space that could be suitable for relocating the pumping station.

Comments dated 12 May 2026:

In accordance with the financial contributions guide for new development provision of Open Space and commuted sums, the contribution required for this development should be: £137,336.03 capital with £255,839.42 towards maintenance.

The Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment update identifies that there will be a need for an additional 6 Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) required due to an increase in the population of the Borough, and demand.

Sport England and the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment identifies there is currently a shortfall of 300 sqm of pool space, and that Stafford Leisure Centre is currently operating at capacity along with Alleyne's. Any future developments will further increase the deficiency in swimming capacity.

We have applied the current Sport England Facilities calculator to the proposed development, as there will be an impact upon facilities in the local area as residents join local sporting clubs either as adults or through schools and increased usage on swimming pools. The calculator is based upon the population of the new development and how many visits the development will generate at peak times to sport facilities.

Due to the nature of the site and its location, an onsite provision would be required.

Contributions of £71,103.00 towards pools, £64,863.00 towards sport courts/ halls and £9,808.50 towards artificial turf pitches required.

Comments noting SBC would not be seeking adoption of any footpath or cycle way and these paths should be adopted by the County Council as highway authority.

Comments noting SBC would not adopt flood attenuation areas and alternative management methods must be secured. Advise the applicant to discuss with STW.

Comments dated 12 February 2026:

Confirming capital costs on open space would not be required if this is to be delivered by the developer.

Comments dated 11 November 2025:

In accordance with the financial contributions guide for new development provision of Open Space and commuted sums, the contribution required for this development should be: £137,336.03 capital with £255,839.42 towards maintenance.

The Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment update identifies that there will be a need for an additional 6 Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) required due to an increase in the population of the Borough, and demand.

Sport England and the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment identifies there is currently as shortfall of 300 sqm of pool space, and that Stafford Leisure Centre is currently operating at capacity along with Alleyne's. Any future developments will further increase the deficiency in swimming capacity.

We have applied the current Sport England Facilities calculator to the proposed development, as there will be an impact upon facilities in the local area as residents join local sporting clubs either as adults or through schools and increased usage on swimming pools. The calculator is based upon the population of the new development and how many visits the development will generate at peak times to sport facilities.

Due to the nature of the site and its location, an onsite provision would be required.

Ideally, we would like to see the two play areas combined, into one central location. Further information is required as to what is being proposed as teenage facilities as this usually is related to wheeled sport areas, MUGA. Based upon what is proposed A degree of separation between toddler/juniors and teenagers could be required depending on what is proposed for the teenage facilities.

The proposed location for the teenage play area does not appear to have a huge amount of natural surveillance that could potentially lead to antisocial behaviour.

Contributions of £71,103.00 towards pools, £64,863.00 towards sport courts/ halls and £9,808.50 towards artificial turf pitches required.

Comments noting SBC would not be seeking adoption of any footpath or cycle way and these paths should be adopted by the County Council as highway authority.

Comments noting SBC would not adopt flood attenuation areas and alternative management methods must be secured. Advise the applicant to discuss with STW.

SBC Regulatory Services:

Land Contamination

Report Ref: 22111-GEO-0401 Rev A is satisfactory for our purposes, the recommendation of the report identifies that a Phase II intrusive investigation be conducted (below).

Given the findings of this Desk Study, it is recommended that a Phase II Intrusive Investigation is undertaken to confirm; the underlying geology and the extent of any contamination, the completion of a ground gas risk assessment and clarification of civil engineering design requirements. The investigation should be designed considering detailed development proposals and required performance criteria.

A planning condition to secure a Phase II intrusive investigation with remedial mitigations (if shown to be necessary) should be submitted for approval to the Planning Authority.

Air Quality

Report Ref: 22111-ENV-0402 Rev A is satisfactory for our purposes. The recommendation of the report identifies mitigation measures (construction phase) below:

It is recommended that the relevant mitigation presented in Appendix G, appropriate for a 'High Risk' site, should be routinely included in the Site's dust management plan for the relevant phase of construction. Key measures known to minimize dust emissions and represent good practice guidance are summarised Table 5.1. Table 5.1: Key Dust Mitigation Measures.

A planning condition to secure the construction phase mitigations shown in Table 5.1 of report 22111-ENV-0402 is recommended.

Noise

Report Reference 22111-ENV-0401 Rev A is satisfactory for our purposes. Mitigations are proposed (below).

Those dwellings most exposed to London Road will benefit from up-rated thermal double glazing and through wall ventilators. With regard to residential dwellings, and considering the planning guidance outlined in AVOG, an open window acoustics strategy is permissible during periods of overheating for the majority of the Site except for those most exposed to London Road. Initial investigations into the AVOG Level 1 assessment indicates that further investigations will be required into overheating at the Reserved Matters stage.

A planning condition is recommended to further assess glazing and overheating mitigation options for those properties impacted by London Road noise (once detailed development proposals are submitted) for approval by the Planning Authority.

A CEMP is recommended to be required by condition to mitigate construction noise submitted for approval to the Planning Authority.

Local Education Authority:

Comments dated 5 August 2026:

This response in respect of education contributions necessary to mitigate the impact on education from the development supersedes the previous response on 1 October 2025.

As the costs to deliver new schools have recently been uplifted from Q3 2024 to Q3 2026, this application has now been reviewed in respect of education contributions necessary to mitigate the impact on education from the development.

I would advise that the above planning application would result in an education contribution of £1,274,056.00 (index linked from the date of this response) to be sought from the developer to mitigate the impact on education from the development. This contribution is calculated in line with Staffordshire's Education Infrastructure Contribution Policy (SEICP) and would make the development acceptable from an education perspective subject to a S106 agreement which meets this requirement.

The response is based on the information contained within the outline planning application based on 150 dwellings which are expected to generate 28 secondary aged pupils. Should the number and/or mix of dwellings change we would wish to be consulted so that a revised contribution can be calculated.

The position in relation to primary school places remains unchanged from the previous response of 1 October 2025, and our analysis concluded that a contribution would not be sought towards primary school phase at this time.

The secondary school education contribution has been re-calculated as follows:

£40,951.728 (cost of a new school as at Q3 2026) / 900 (number of places it delivers to give a cost per pupil place) £45,502 x 28 (number of places required by development) = £1,274,056.00.

Please note that we reserve the right to amend the use and the amount of the requested education contributions should circumstances materially change from this analysis to the point that the use(s) of the education contributions are finalised within the S106 Agreement.

Based on an agreed set of standard triggers the size of this development will necessitate payment of the education contribution at the following point(s):

2 payments

50% on commencement of the development

50% on commencement of 50% of the development

This response may be amended prior to determination of this planning application to reflect updated demographics and/or project costs. Additional education contributions may be sought, including towards primary school places if necessary.

Comments dated 1 October 2025:

In determining whether there is a need for the developer to mitigate the impact of this development it was calculated that 150 dwellings would be expected to generate 32 primary school pupils, 23 secondary school pupils and 5 Post 16 pupils. These are based on a pupil product ratio (PPR) 0.03 per dwelling per year group and uses 7 year groups for Primary, 5 for secondary and 1 for Post 16 places.

Our analysis concluded that we would not seek an education contribution from this development for primary school provision at this time.

There are projected to be an insufficient number of school places in the local area to mitigate the impact of this development at secondary phase of education.

Our analysis concluded that we would seek an education contribution from this development for secondary school provision only (including post 16 provision).

The contribution from this development will be put towards a new secondary school and therefore has been calculated based on the most up to date cost of the project.

The secondary school education contribution has been calculated as follows:

£38,693,000 (cost of new school) / 900 (number of places it delivers) to give a cost per pupil place of £42,992

£42,992 x 28 (number of secondary and post-16 places required by development) = £1,203,776

Based on an agreed set of standard triggers the size of this development will necessitate payment of the education contribution in 2 payments:

- 50% on commencement of the development and
- 50% on commencement of 50% of the development.

Please note that we reserve the right to amend the use and the amount of the requested education contributions should circumstances materially change from this analysis to the point that the use(s) of the education contributions are finalised within the S106 Agreement.

SBC Planning Policy Manager:

Comments dated 15 January 2026:

Planning policy would not support this application solely in relation to Spatial Principle 7, criteria b

However it is noted that the applicant has raised the fact that the scale of new development added to Weston at 32.4% is similar to that with planning policy support for an application at Woodseaves for 32.5% due to the New Local Plan evidence base.

Planning policy can now support this application in the context of Spatial Principle 7, criteria a, c, d and e following consideration of the responses from SCC education and highways

Comments dated 21 November 2025:

The proposed new housing development of up to 150 new dwellings adjacent to Weston and beyond the settlement boundary is classified as 'major' development and is a 32.4% increase in scale for Weston, which is one of ten Key Service Villages in the sustainable settlement hierarchy of the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031. This is not considered acceptable or appropriate within the context of Spatial Principle 7 criteria (a) and (b). 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.

Furthermore paragraph 11 of the NPPF and the associated footnote 7 is clear that for decision making “the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance⁷ provides a strong reason for refusing the development propose” which includes Conservation Areas protected by Policy N7 of the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough. Whilst this proposal is not inside the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area there is a direct impact on its setting because of the site located overlooking the designation.

Taking into account NPPF paragraph 11 and the full weight of Spatial Principle 7 criteria (c) to (e) at this stage the planning policy position is not to support this proposal on this basis together with essential site specific requirements including education infrastructure, access issues and off-site highway matters associated with A51 and A518, 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.

Comments dated 18 September 2025:

New NPPF methodology has resulted in the Local Housing Need target for Stafford Borough increasing from 358 dwellings per year to 749 dwellings per year. 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.

Due to the loss of 5-year land supply, paragraph 11 of the NPPF now applies alongside the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031, that being the presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision taking.

Turning to information for Weston as at 31 March 2025, the existing settlement has 458 houses and 5 new homes with planning commitments. Therefore 150 new residential units would result in a 32.4% increase in the size of the settlement. It should be noted that no proposed allocations were identified for Weston by the New Local Plan 2020-2040 Preferred Option published in October 2022.

It is important to note that Stafford Borough’s adopted Plan policies, including the Borough’s development strategy, must continue to be used for decision-taking in particular policies SP3, SP6, C5, N6 and the following elements of SP7 in order to deliver sustainable development related to the latest NPPF:

The proposed new housing development of 150 new residential dwellings is classified as 'major' development and is a 32.4% increase in scale for Weston as the existing settlement. With regards to Spatial Principle 7 criteria (b) this is considered to be inappropriate in scale compared to the existing settlement of Weston as a Key Service Village. Therefore after assessing this application against paragraph 11 of NPPF and the 5 year housing land position it is considered that planning consent should be refused, subject to other material considerations including those identified in the site profiles above.

SBC Housing Officer:

This development of 150 dwellings is expected to deliver 30% affordable housing, which equates to 45 affordable homes which we are pleased to see is recognised in the Affordable Report.

The Council is satisfied that affordable housing is to be provided at a ratio of 70% social rent and 30% intermediate affordable housing, which in most cases is delivered as shared ownership. The affordable element of this development should therefore deliver 32 social rented homes and 13 intermediate affordable housing.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies an undersupply of 1 and 2 bedroom homes and an oversupply of 3 bedroom homes. A mix of these required properties would be expected on site.

SBC Ecology Officer:

Comments dated 15 January 2026:

The production of a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Land Management Plan/HMMP will need to take account of the findings of the bat surveys and respond accordingly.

There are no confirmed roosts on site but there are a number of mature trees with roosting potential. These trees should be retained but where any are planned for works/removal there should first be an appropriate level of surveying/mitigation.

The Mitigation Strategy, section 6.6 of the bat report, should be undertaken as stated.

Comments dated 25 September 2025

Recommending a Construction Environmental Management Plan surrounding protected species, and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan detailing how BNG will be delivered.

Method statement for protection / avoidance of nesting birds can be secured by condition. Further surveys required in relation to bats. Submission indicates BNG trading rules will be met and the required net gain achieved on site.

Monitoring fee of £4201.82 required via a Section 106 agreement.

Conditions requested surrounding monitoring and management of habitat enhancements.

SBC Conservation Officer:

Recommending refusal on grounds of less than substantial harm (modest) to the setting of a conservation area with insufficient information to determine the extent of that harm.

With the lack of information provided in regard to the proposed development and its scale, layout, and landscaping, the proposal has the potential to be visually intrusive and at odds with the open rural character of the area. The resulting visual encroachment would cause detriment to the setting of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area, which is characterised by a predominantly open rural landscape. The proposal can be considered therefore contrary to paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 leading to less than substantial harm to the setting of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area harm (requiring the harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal) together with Policies N8 and N9 of The Local Plan for Stafford Borough.

Conditions will need to be placed on any formal application coming forward to ensure high quality design, materials, scale etc of any development, to ensure the location of development is kept as far away from the CA as is practically possible and that before any relevant works that would directly impact the conservation area, such as boundary works etc, details in respect of said works shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The work shall be carried out in full in accordance with such approved details.

Canal and River Trust:

Comments dated 8 July 2026

Following our previous response dated 12 June 2026 (Our ref: CRTR-PLAN-2026-46870) a revised drainage strategy has been submitted showing attenuated and pumped discharge to the Severn Trent adopted sewer, which overcomes previous concerns about the impacts of discharges on Culvert 68. The revisions confirm that there are no flows to the south via Culvert 68. We note that the site area hasn't been adjusted to exclude drainage towards Culvert 68 beneath the canal.

We request that if planning permission is going to be recommended for approval conditions as requested by the LLFA be attached to such a recommendation by the LPA.

We have not been re-consulted on any additional information to overcome our objection in our response dated 21 January 2026 (Our ref: CRTR-PLAN-2026-45886) in relation to the detrimental heritage impact of the proposal on the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area, along with further comments on the ecological impact and public safety of the proposal.

Comments dated 15 April 2026

- Response to be read in conjunction with responses dated 21 January 2026 and 15 October 2025
- Concerned with the catchments that have been identified in the proposed drainage strategy and potential overall increase in the contributing catchment to Culvert 68
- CRT remain unable to inspect the condition of Culvert 68

Comments dated 21 January 2026

- Objection maintained
- We do not consider that the agents heritage or landscape responses overcome our previous comments from 15 October 2025
- We maintain our comments of 15 October 2025 with regard to the need to consider potential impacts on the soft bank habitat of the canal and public accessibility in greater detail at outline stage.
- We maintain our comments of 15 October 2025 with regard to the need to consider the change of flow resulting from the site on the culvert and the impact of the neighbouring landowner's closure of the culvert on the assumptions of the FRA.

Comments dated 15 October 2025

Planning permission should not be granted for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development due to its scale, layout, and landscaping would be visually intrusive and at odds with the open rural character of the area. The resulting visual encroachment would cause detriment to the setting of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area, which is characterised by a predominantly open rural landscape. The proposal is therefore contrary to paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 leading to less than substantial harm to the setting of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area together with Policies SPF7, N1 and N9 of The Plan for Stafford Borough.

We also advise that further information is required to clarify other impacts of the proposal prior to its determination.

Comments made in respect of the following:

- Heritage impact - Potential for significant impact on Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area in this location
- Public safety - noting HSE outer zone set out within D&A statement

- Concern raised in respect of location the play areas and natural surveillance afforded to these areas
- The proximity of the play areas to the waterspace of the canal
- Long-term maintenance and management of hedgerow H7 and supplemental planting
- The wider accessibility the development will create to the soft offside canal bank
- Disposal of Surface Water - Culvert 68 should be treated as inoperable, further inspection required on this
- Further information required to assess the ecological implications on soft canal bank habitat
- Protective measures should be implemented as per the recommendation in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for a CEMP and LEMP
- Artificial lighting should be excluded from the landscaped area adjacent to the canal

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB):

In this case the ICB is looking to support a scheme of modernisation within a practice that has a catchment covering the application site. The modernisation scheme would enhance infrastructure capacity and would be sufficient to serve this scheme therefore in this case no contribution is sought from the development at this time.

SBC Design Advisor:

Comments dated October 2025:

- Noting that comments surrounding design can only be limited given proposals are only at outline stage
- Accept that the site would be likely to accommodate the number of dwellings proposed at an approximate net density of 30dph
- Proposals appear to be of a higher density than the dwellings immediately adjacent to the site
- Concern surrounding the 'single large cul-de-sac' nature of the development and lack of connection with adjacent settlement
- Concern surrounding lack of connection with Salt Works Lane at the eastern edge
- Request that even if these points of linkage could not be delivered as full vehicular connections, the urban structure, street alignment and building lines of the proposed development should be directly aligned with the existing urban structure

- The route of the principle access road takes a somewhat tortuous route into the heart of the site rather than providing a clear vista into it
- Concern that by pushing the edge of the settlement farther eastwards and closer to the A51 corridor the development would have a significantly urbanising affect on the sense of arrival to the settlement and its relationship to its wider landscape setting
- Concern surrounding the scale of the uplift which could have a substantively transformative, and potentially negative impact on the existing character and identity of the village
- Concern surrounding the ability of the settlements existing infrastructure (highways, education, health, community) to comfortably absorb and accommodate the proposals
- Question as to what wider benefits the scheme would contribute to the settlement
- Concern surrounding precedent of the proposals on future development, noting red edge boundary for drainage purposes
- Not supporting the application at this stage

Cadent Gas:

No objection, informative note requested as follows

Cadent Gas Ltd own and operate the gas infrastructure within the area of your development. There may be a legal interest (easements and other rights) in the land that restrict activity in proximity to Cadent assets in private land. The applicant must ensure that the proposed works do not infringe on legal rights of access and or restrictive covenants that exist.

If buildings or structures are proposed directly above the apparatus the development may only take place following diversion of the apparatus. The applicant should apply online to have apparatus diverted in advance of any works, by visiting cadentgas.com/our-services/gas-diversions.

Prior to carrying out works, including the construction of access points, please register on www.linesearchbeforeudig.co.uk to submit details of the planned works for review, ensuring requirements are adhered to.

Severn Trent Water:

Comments dated 8 July 2026

Neither objecting to or supporting the Planning Application

The submitted Proposed Site Plan - 6730772 Drawing: 22111_01_230_06 does not show any proposed foul sewage. The submitted information also shows that surface water is proposed to be managed through soakaways, with no surface water connection to the public sewerage system proposed.

A suitably worded planning condition is requested surrounding a detailed drainage plan showing on both foul and surface water drainage networks with ultimate outfalls and possible connections into the public sewers.

Note that for the use or reuse of sewer connections either direct or indirect to the public sewerage system the applicant will be required to make a formal application to the Company under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

Comments dated 9 April 2026

Severn Trent has concerns regarding the impact the additional flow that this proposed development will generate, however no investment is currently planned and consequently we cannot object to approval being granted.

Under current legislation a developer has the right to connect to the public foul network to drain foul water, and to do so at the nearest or most convenient point on the existing network. In addition to this right, Severn Trent has a statutory duty to provide any network reinforcement that may be required to accommodate the flow generated by such a new development.

With a view to better understanding how our network is operating Severn Trent is undertaking a number of investigations. Once these investigations are completed, if improvements are deemed necessary, these will be undertaken in accordance with our investment plans.

Unfortunately, we are not yet able to say with any certainty what may need to be done or when any necessary works may be completed.

In light of the above, given Severn Trent is unable to object to this proposal, we would request that any approval granted by yourselves should be conditioned as follows:

- The development hereby permitted should not commence until drainage plans for the disposal of foul and surface water flows have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and
- The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use.

- Planning Practice Guidance and section H of the Building Regulations 2010 detail surface water disposal hierarchy. The disposal of surface water by means of soakaways should be considered as the primary method. If this is not practical and there is no watercourse available as an alternative, other sustainable methods should also be explored. If these are found unsuitable satisfactory evidence will need to be submitted before a discharge to the public sewerage system is considered. No surface water to enter the foul or combined water systems by any means.

Suggested informative re. affected sewers and water mains

Response dated 18 February 2026

Holding Objection raised as the proposed development may have a detrimental impact on the surrounding Network and Treatment Works, with the potential to cause flooding or pollution.

Severn Trent will undertake further investigations and then clarify our response no later than 10 weeks from the current due date (20 February 2026).

In the meantime, if not done so already, the Developer should submit a Development Enquiry in order to discuss the drainage proposals for this site.

Police Liaison Officer:

Comments raised surrounding the following considerations:

- Accessibility - the increase in cars would need to be addressed in the form of a safe road crossing, and transport links connecting children to schools would need to be considered
- Entrance - noting it is important there is only one main access into the proposed development as this reduces the possibility of the new estate becoming a rat-run to somewhere else. The secondary road off the central loop should be designed in a way to discourage this becoming a short-cut across the estate.
- Other design advisories surrounding parking, lighting, boundary treatments, secure bicycle storage and public open space e.g. natural surveillance for play areas

County Archaeologist:

Comments dated 20 July 2026

Confirmation that WSI has already been reviewed and informally agreed.

Given that the WSI has now been formally submitted, we could either keep the original condition and I would be happy to recommend the discharge of Part A, or we could re-word it as below:

- A) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, all archaeological site work shall be completed in full in accordance with the approved Archaeological Project Design (Lanpro 5887: A51 Weston Trial Trenching WSI v1.0, December 2025)
- B) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post-excavation assessment has been completed in accordance with the approved Archaeological Project Design (Lanpro 5887: A51 Weston Trial Trenching WSI v1.0, December 2025) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

Comments dated 16 September 2025

The submitted Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment concludes that the site has moderate potential for late prehistoric or Roman period activity within the site. There is archaeological potential for the post medieval and modern periods primarily comprising remains associated with the Stafford and Uttoxeter Railway and the Weston Salt Works Tramway spur.

Any surviving archaeological remains within the site have the potential to be disturbed, truncated or removed by the proposed development as a result of groundworks associated with construction of new dwellings, infrastructure and landscaping. As a result of the somewhat uncertain archaeological potential of the site, an archaeological evaluation is recommended. Pre-commencement condition recommended to secure this.

Defer to Conservation Officer with respect to impact upon the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area

District Newt Officer:

No objection subject to conditions to secure precautionary working method statement/ RAMs

It is recommended that a precautionary working statement in the form of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)/Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) strategy documents completed by a suitably qualified ecologist is produced, to show that the works will be carried out following best practice procedures.

It is also recommended to supply the informative included below.

The applicant can apply to the District Licensing Scheme at any time should they wish to avoid any risks or should newts be encountered on the site.

National Grid Asset Protection:

There are no National Grid Electricity Transmission assets affected in this area.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service:

General advisories surrounding fire safety e.g. vehicle access and sprinklers

National Gas:

No response received

SBC Tree Consultant:

No response received

Environment Agency:

No response received

Health and Safety Executive:

Do not advise against granting planning permission

Weston with Gayton Parish Council:

3 representations received objecting to the proposals raising the following considerations:

- Cumulative impacts of the development in relation to those proposed in Hixon should be considered
- Concerns in relation to pedestrian and cyclist access
- Concern surrounding pressure on local services
- Concerns surrounding adequacy of public transport eg. to local GP surgeries
- Traffic and highway safety concerns noting issues with existing A51 and A518 junctions
- Flooding and sewerage concerns, noting limited capacity of the existing network
- Noting closure of Weston's village shop and post office since been allocated as a Key Service Village
- Concerns in relation to the scale of the proposal compared with the existing settlement
- Concerns surrounding infrastructure capacity e.g. available services/utilities
- Concerns surrounding impact upon village character
- Concern that the proposals could set a precedent for further housing development

- Unclear community benefits e.g. through planning contributions

Neighbours:

(49 representations received, all objections raising the following material considerations):

- Concerns in relation to highway safety given proximity to A51 junction
- Concerns in relation to the scale of the proposal compared with the existing settlement
- Concerns surrounding infrastructure capacity e.g. available services/utilities
- Concerns that Weston is not a sustainable location for further development
- Concerns surrounding the impact of the development upon flood risk and drainage/sewerage
- Concerns raised in respect of increased light and air pollution
- Concerns surrounding impact upon ecology and wildlife
- Concerns in relation to protected trees (at Bridge House)
- Concerns surrounding the impact upon the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area
- Concerns raised in respect of the 2020-2040 Local Plan evidence base and Preferred Option Document
- Concerns that the proposals would undermine the plan-making process in terms of the emerging 2025-2045 Local Plan
- Concerns raised in respect of landscape impacts and the impact upon the character and identity of Weston village
- Concerns raised in respect of noise and disruption during construction
- Concerns that Weston should no longer be considered a Key Service Village
- Concern surrounding maintenance of open space

PUBLICITY

Site Notice A Expiry: 9 October 2025

Newsletter Advert A Expiry: 15 October 2025

Site Notice (Listed Building and Conservation Act) Expiry: 7 October 2026

Newsletter Advert (Listed Building and Conservation Area Act) Expiry: 7 October 2026

Recommendation

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. Details of the appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale ("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 three years from the date of this permission.
3. The development hereby permitted shall take place not later than two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
4. This outline permission relates to the submitted details and the following drawings, except where indicated otherwise by a condition attached to this consent, in which case the condition shall take precedence:
 - Drawing LP.01 Rev. P9 - Red Line Plan 01
 - Drawing T25532.001 rev A Proposed Site Access with Visibility Splays, contained within Transport Assessment ref: T25532 Revision A
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Water Quality Statement Report Ref: 22111-FLD-0102 - Rev E - June 2026
 - Air Quality Assessment Ref: 22111-ENV-0402 Rev A
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment V1 dated July 2025
 - Archaeological Project Design - Lanpro 5887: A51 Weston Trial Trenching WSI v1.0, dated December 2025
 - Phase I report Ref: 22111-GEO-0401 Revision A
5. The submission of reserved matters applications pursuant to condition 1 of this outline permission shall be in substantial compliance with the with following parameter plan to fix the development principles:-
 - Drawing LUP-01 - Land Use and Access Parameter Plan Revision E
6. Reserved matter application(s) shall include the following details:
 - The means of inclusive access to the dwellings for all users.
 - Levels of the site including finished floor levels of the buildings

- The alignment (including the width and gradient) and construction of all roads, footways, footpaths, cycle ways and other means of access including lighting, signage and road markings.
- Provision of adequate turning and servicing facilities within the site.
- Tactile treatment of all paved surfaces.
- The drainage of the site including surface water drainage from roads, footpaths and other hardstanding's to an acceptable outfall

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

7. No development shall commence unless and until a Construction Management Plan (CMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved CMP shall include details relating to:

- Construction access
- Hours of construction
- Routing of HGV's
- Delivery times
- Construction programme and the location of the contractors' compounds, cabins, loading and unloading areas
- Plant / material storage areas and contractors parking
- A scheme for the management and suppression of dust and mud from construction activities including the provision of a vehicle wheel wash

All site operations shall thereafter be undertaken strictly in accordance with the approved CMP for the duration of the construction phase.

8. No development shall commence unless and until the final detailed surface water drainage design has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The final design shall conform to the design detail summarised in the Flood Risk Assessment and Water Quality Statement - 22111-FLD-0102 - Rev E - June 2026. The design shall further demonstrate:

- A surface water drainage system designed in accordance with the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- Detailed design drawings of the adoptable and private drainage system, including manhole schedules, long sections of the adoptable network, cross section drawings of attenuation basins and design detail of surface water infrastructure, SuDS features, headwalls and flow control device(s).
- The Private Drainage Plans shall include Finished Floor Levels and the surrounding ground levels to demonstrate that properties are 150mm above ground level; that surrounding ground levels slope away from thresholds; and that any surface water in private areas is collected by a suitable drainage feature such as a gully or ACO drain. An arrow indicating the direction and gradient of falls shall be included upon all driveways, private areas and gardens.
- Performance calculations shall demonstrate the performance of the designed system and attenuation storage for a range of return periods and critical storm durations (15 mins up to 48 hours), to include as a minimum the 1:2 year, 1:30 year and the 1:100-year plus climate change return periods.
- The hydraulic modelling design shall use FEH Rainfall Data and shall apply an allowance of climate change upon the 30-year and 100-year return periods.
- A plan showing the total impermeable/ permeable areas of the development layout shall be submitted alongside the drainage design to confirm the contributing areas within the hydraulic model, including a factor of 10% to model the impact of urban creep over the lifetime of the development.

The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

9. No development shall commence unless and until detailed drainage plans for the disposal of foul water flows have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The foul water drainage scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use.
10. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall set out proposals (including a timetable) to promote travel by sustainable modes which are acceptable to the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable set out in that plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reports demonstrating progress in promoting sustainable transport measures shall be submitted annually on each anniversary of the date of this planning permission to the Local Planning Authority for approval for a period of 5 years from first occupation of the development.

11. No construction works shall commence unless and until the vehicular access to the site via Green Road has first been completed in accordance with Drawing T25532.001 revision A (contained within the Transport Assessment ref: T25532 Revision A), together with the associated visibility splays.

The visibility splays shall thereafter be retained free of obstruction over a height of 600mm for the lifetime of the development.

12. No dwelling shall be occupied unless or until the pedestrian footways along Green Road have been completed in accordance with Drawing T25532.001 revision A (contained within the Transport Assessment ref: T25532 Revision A). The pedestrian footways shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.

13. Prior to the commencement of development, a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include details relating to:

- Retaining existing habitats of ecological value, and measures to minimise impacts (eg. noise, dust etc.) on the adjacent woodland
- Risk Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS) for protected species and their habitats
- Implementation of a sensitive lighting strategy during construction to prevent illumination of wildlife habitats (hedgerows, trees). Any lighting shall be low level and of the minimum wattage, as recommended by Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and Institute of Lighting Professionals (2023).
- Measures to prevent run-off into the Trent and Mersey Canal in the interests of the Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC

The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved CEMP.

14. The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

The approved HMMP shall contain the following:

- a) a non-technical summary;
- b) the planned habitat creation and/or enhancement works to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;

- c) the timeframe for the start and end of the habitat creation and/or initial enhancement works for the purposes of defining the start of the 30-year management and monitoring period;
- d) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of the habitat creation and initial enhancement works;
- e) the monitoring methodology in respect of the created and/or enhanced habitat;
- f) mechanisms of adaptive management to account for necessary changes in work schedule to achieve the required targets;
- g) a timetable for review of the management actions and monitoring;
- h) the procedure(s) in the form of a remediation and reinstatement methodology for addressing a failure to manage and maintain the full extent of habitat(s) to the specified condition(s) at any point in time over the period of the HMMP.

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the latest approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the latest approved HMMP.

At years 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 and 30 of the approved 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Period, monitoring reports, including updated biodiversity metric calculations demonstrating the biodiversity units achieved, shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the methodology set out in the approved HMMP.

15. Reserved matters application(s) shall be supported by a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) detailing how Biodiversity Net Gain will be delivered, managed and monitored. The LEMP shall include:
 - Implementation of a hedgehog friendly habitat connectivity strategy, connecting urban garden habitats to each other and the wider environment
 - Provision of a range of wildlife boxes and hibernacula (eg. bat, bird) to provide further enhancement for these species
 - New planting and landscaping design to provide foraging and nesting opportunities for a range of wildlife. Use of native species of local origin with a known benefit to wildlife to be incorporated into the planting scheme.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved LEMP.

16. No development shall commence until a precautionary working statement in the form of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)/Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) strategy document relating to Great Crested Newts completed by a suitably qualified ecologist has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved statement.
17. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, all archaeological site work shall be completed in full in accordance with the approved Archaeological Project Design (Lanpro 5887: A51 Weston Trial Trenching WSI v1.0, December 2025).

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post-excavation assessment has been completed in accordance with the approved Archaeological Project Design (Lanpro 5887: A51 Weston Trial Trenching WSI v1.0, December 2025) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

18. No development shall commence unless and until a Phase II intrusive ground investigation has been undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Phase I report Ref: 22111-GEO-0401 Rev A and submitted for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The Phase II report shall confirm the underlying geology and the extent of any contamination, the completion of a ground gas risk assessment and clarification of civil engineering design requirements. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with any recommended remedial mitigations within the approved Phase II report.

19. Reserved matters application(s) shall be supported by an Arboricultural Method Statement to include full details of tree protection measures for retained trees and hedgerows (as identified within the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment V1 dated July 2025) including construction methods, schedule of arboricultural supervision and specific forms of tree protection. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement.
20. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out within Section 5 of the submitted Air Quality Assessment Ref: 22111-ENV-0402 Rev A.
21. Reserved matter application(s) shall be supported by a further Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) in relation to the dwellings most exposed to noise from London Road and shall further explore glazing and overheating mitigation options for those properties. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out within the approved NIA.

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

1. To define the permission.
2. To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
3. To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
4. To define the permission.
5. To define the permission.
6. In the interests of highway safety and convenience (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
7. In the interests of highway safety and convenience (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
8. To ensure that adequate provision for surface water drainage (Policy N2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
9. To ensure that adequate provision for foul water drainage (Policy N2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
10. To promote sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policy T1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough.
11. To ensure adequate access to the site during construction and occupation phase of the development (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
12. To ensure adequate means of access to the site for all users (Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
13. To minimise impacts upon biodiversity during the construction phase of development (Policy N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
14. To ensure adequate management and monitoring of created and/or enhanced habitats over the lifetime of the development (Policy N4 of Stafford Borough).
15. To ensure biodiversity net gain proposals are adequately delivered, managed and monitored (Policy N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
16. To ensure adequate mitigation for great crested newts, a protected species (Policy N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

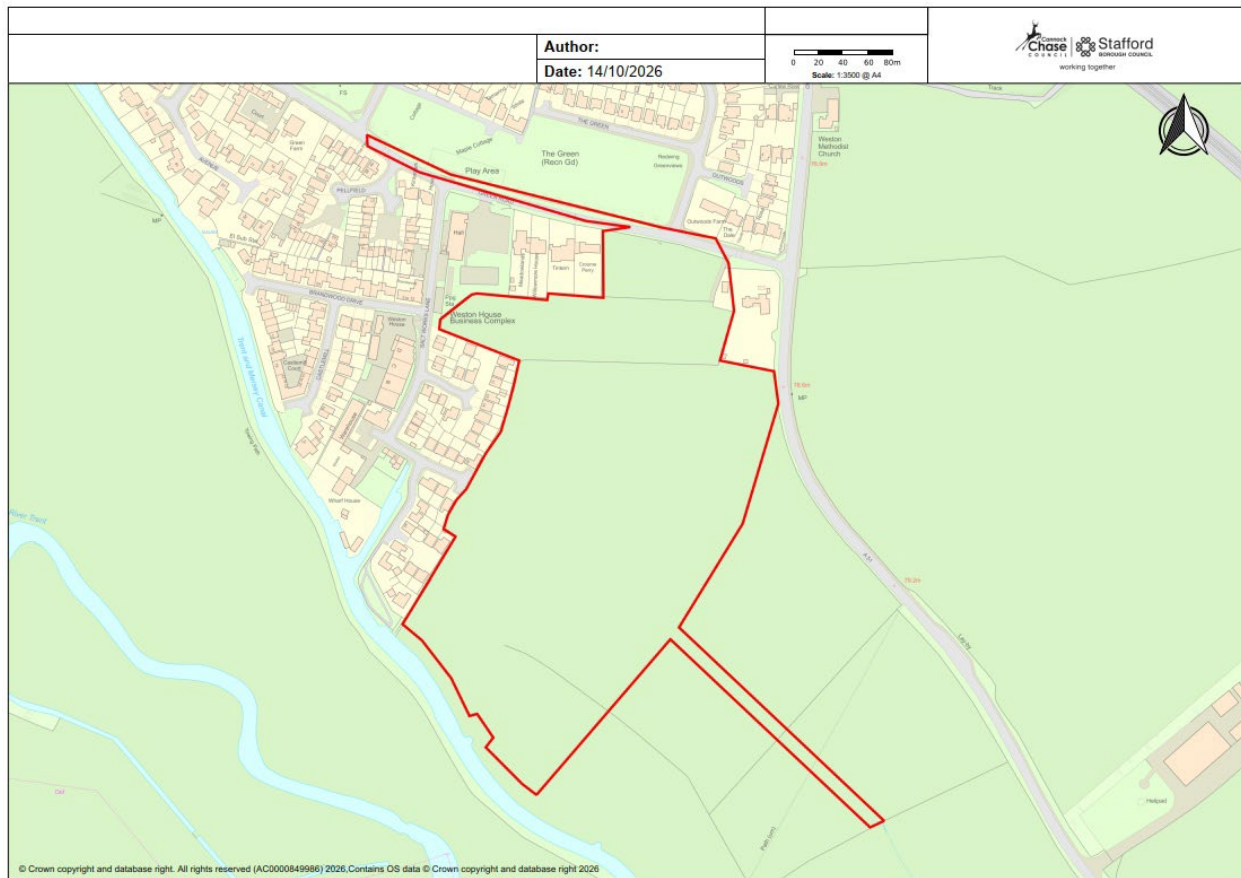
17. To ensure adequate investigation and recording of any archaeological interest (Policy N9 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
18. To ensure adequate mitigation and remediation surrounding any land contamination (Policy N2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
19. To ensure adequate protection for retained trees (Policy N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
20. To ensure adequate mitigation surrounding air quality (Policies N2 and N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
21. To ensure adequate noise mitigation is provided in the interests of the living conditions of future 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 The applicant is reminded that all nesting birds are afforded protection under Part 1 section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended 2016), making it an offence to: disturb, injure or kill a nesting bird; disturb, take or destroy their nest; or damage, take or destroy their eggs.
- 3 The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments of the Lead Local Flood Authority, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Cadent Gas, Severn Trent Water, SBC Housing Officer, the District Newt Officer (Nature Space UK), Staffordshire Police and the Canal and River Trust as submitted in response to consultations on this application. All comments can be viewed online through the planning public access pages of the Council's website at (www.staffordbc.gov.uk)
- 4 The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments of the local authority authority, in particular the need for a Highways Work Agreement. The applicant is requested to contact Staffordshire County Council in order to secure the Agreement. The link below is to the Highway Works Information Pack including an online application form. Please complete and submit online or contact highway.agreements@staffordshire.gov.uk for more information. The applicant is advised to begin this process well in advance of any works taking place in order to meet any potential timescales.
- 5 The applicant's attention is drawn to the following design criteria to inform the submission of reserved matters application(s)

- The urban structure, street alignment and building lines of the proposed development should be directly aligned with the existing urban structure, street alignment and building lines of the adjacent townscape to provide continuity to the urban grain of the village and opportunity for open physical linkages to create appropriate permeability and connectivity between places;
- Consideration of building lines and different treatments to countryside edge. The northern, southern and eastern edges of the site should be formed to deliver a softer, more informal visual transition between the urbanised character of the development and its surrounding landscape setting. It will be expected that building lines to these edges are more stepped and informal to create a looser urban grain and structure; and that the design of the frontage curtilages, related street scenes and adjacent open space includes provision of an enhanced level of shrub and tree soft landscaping.
- The development layout should ensure that direct viewpoints through the site to the surrounding countryside are provided via the street scenes.

25/40960/OUT
Land Off Green Road
Weston



 PLANNING COMMITTEE - 28 OCTOBER 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
25/41347/FUL Delegated refusal	Land Off A34 Opposite George and Dragon PH, Stone Road, Meaford	Creation of an Electric Vehicle Charging Hub comprising 31 charging bays equipped with solar panels and a substation (Sui Generis), picnic areas and a drive-through restaurant (Use Class E), with associated access, car and cycle parking, and landscaping.
26/41855/HOU Delegated refusal	Duttons Brook House, Fradswell Lane, Fradswell	Erection of a garage/workshop with ancillary living accommodation above to replace existing outbuildings
26/42425/PIP	Land Rear of Fulfield. Fulford Road, Fulford	Permission in principle for up to nine dwellings

Decided Appeals

Application Reference	Location	Proposal
25/41644/PAR Appeal dismissed	Pole Barn, Hollywood Farm, Uttoxeter Road	Prior Approval - Conversion of redundant agricultural building to one dwelling

Application Reference	Location	Proposal
25/40867/FUL Appeal dismissed and Costs refused	Heather Lodge, 2 Old Acre Lane, Brocton	Erection of Replacement Dwelling (self-build)

Previous Consideration

Nil

Background Papers

File available in the Development Management Section

Officer Contact

Sushil Birdi, Development and Policy Manager, 01543 464326

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2026

by **Alison Fish BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 October 2026.

Appeal Ref: 6011939

Pole Barn, Hollywood Farm, Uttoxeter Road, Hollywood, Stone, ST15 8RB

- 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 appeal is made by Harrowby Estates against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/41644/PAR.
 - The development proposed is conversion of the redundant agricultural building to one dwelling,
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

2. The appeal relates to proposals advanced 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”). Class Q permits the change of use of a building that is or was part of an established agricultural unit and any land within that building’s curtilage, to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order.
3. The Council’s case is that the building does not have suitable existing access to a public highway and therefore does not constitute permitted development by virtue of Paragraph Q1(p) of the GPDO.
4. Consequently, the main issue is whether the building has suitable existing access to a public highway and therefore, whether the proposed development qualifies as permitted development under Class Q of the GPDO.

Reasons

5. Hollywood Farm consists of a farmhouse and complex of former agricultural buildings located to the southern side of Uttoxeter Road. The appeal site is located adjacent to the existing farmhouse and at the southern edge of the existing complex. The proposal relates to the conversion of a pole barn to a single dwelling and the change of use of the land immediately to the north of the building for use as its associated parking and garden.
6. Drawing number: YBD09235-P-102 Revision H accompanying the application, indicates that access would be provided to the proposed dwelling via a new access from the classified B5027 Uttoxeter Road. This access benefits from a separate grant of planning permission and is shown on drawing number: YBD09235-P-302 Revision F (‘the drawing’).

7. There appears to be no dispute that the access to the east would not provide a suitably located safe access for the residential use of the buildings at Hollywood Farm and that it would be necessary to carry out the access works shown on the drawing in order to provide a suitable access for the site.
8. I saw that whilst construction works were clearly taking place on the wider site at the time of my visit and works to convert other buildings were underway, the access as shown on the drawing had not been provided. The hedge along the site frontage had been removed but there was no access connecting the site to the road in the position shown on the drawing. The access to the east, shown on the drawing to be reinstated as verge, was being used for construction deliveries to the site.
9. I accept that in all likelihood, the access shown on the drawing would be in place before the dwelling proposed in this appeal was occupied and that there are practical reasons for completing access works in the latter stages of construction. I also note that there would be benefits arising from the additional dwelling which would be created, were I to allow the appeal. However, I must only consider the matter of whether the proposal complies or not with the GPDO. Other considerations advanced by the appellant are not relevant in this instance.
10. Paragraph Q1(p) of the GPDO states that development is not permitted if the building does not have suitable existing access to a public highway. The word 'existing' means something that is already present and I saw that the suitable access shown on the drawing is not. I conclude that the building does not have suitable existing access to a public highway. Consequently, the proposal does not constitute permitted development under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the GPDO.

Conclusion

11. As the proposal does not constitute permitted development, the appeal fails.

Alison Fish

INSPECTOR

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2026

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 September 2026

Appeal Ref: 6011888

Heather Lodge, 2 Old Acre Lane, Stafford ST17 0TW

- 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 Balginder Sidhu against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/40867/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a replacement dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Balginder Sidhu against Stafford Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. There is some discrepancy between the parties as to the nature and extent of the proposed development. A householder application was initially submitted for various works for a rear infill extension, new front porch and remodelling/replacement roof to the single storey dwelling. During the course of the application, the Council advised that the development was a replacement dwelling. The application was withdrawn.
4. A new full application was submitted with the proposed development clearly described as being for a replacement dwelling. The Council proceeded to determine the application on that basis. The appellant has appealed against the Council's decision to refuse a replacement dwelling and hence the appeal before me is for a replacement dwelling, and so I shall proceed on that basis. It is not within the scope of this appeal for me to interrogate whether the development constitutes extensions to the property or a new build.
5. During the course of the appeal, a new National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was issued on 17 August 2026 and replaces the previous Framework published in December 2024, and all other iterations. The main parties have had the opportunity to comment as to whether there are any implications for the appeal. In reaching my decision I have had regard to it and to any responses received from the main parties, where relevant.

Main Issue

6. In light of the above, the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal site comprises a single storey dwelling and its front and rear gardens. The dwelling is set back from the road behind a good sized front garden and drive. Due to the topography, the existing dwelling is sited at a lower level than the road and the drive slopes down to the garage. The property presents a simple, low-key, single-gabled elevation to the road, with an attached flat-roof link and single garage. The property has been extended over time but remains modest in size.
8. Old Acre Lane is a no-through road that contours the lower western flanks of Cannock Chase Country Park and Cannock Chase National Landscape (formerly the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), which is a nationally designated 'Protected Landscaped'. Old Acre Lane is residential in nature, save for Brocton Village Hall.
9. I saw that dwellings were generally on a similar building line set back from the road and presented a mix of designs, styles, sizes and ages. They included single storey bungalows, including some of a similar design and age to the appeal property, and larger two storey properties including a number that had been altered with a contemporary feel. Opposite, and up on the side of the hill, was a larger two storey flat roof dwelling (Swedish House) and next to it a twin-gabled white rendered property (No.9). I saw that properties on this eastern side of Old Acre Lane were generally more imposing due to their elevated position. To one side of the appeal property was the single storey, timber-clad Village Hall and its car park. To the other side was an asymmetrical, part-one and two-storey, contemporary-styled dwelling (No.4) which I understand has been subject to some remodelling. Properties on the lower, western side of Old Acre Lane, are generally set lower in the landscape and have a less imposing visual presence.
10. The topography, difference in ground levels and the variety of dwellings all positively contribute to the overall eclectic design interest of Old Acre Lane, to which the appeal property contributes. The mature, wooded slopes of Cannock Chase and the vegetated surroundings of gardens and the Oldacre Brook and fields to the west combine to give Old Acre Lane a distinct sense of place as a road of character in this mature extension to the village of Brocton.
11. The proposal would result in a substantially larger property that would have two floors of accommodation, with full height upper floor windows breaching the eaves. Whilst the self-build custom house (SBCH) declaration form states the dwelling would be 1.5 storeys, the form and scale and resulting appearance would be more akin to a two storey dwelling. There would be significant change to its roadside and rear elevations as the existing, shallow pitched roof would be replaced by two, much steeper gables with linking roof ridge between them. The footprint of the dwelling would be 'squared off'. The addition of a new first floor, to provide 4 large bedrooms, an office, 3 ensembles and a family bathroom, would effectively double the floor area of the dwelling. Due to the difference in ground levels, both side elevations would increase in height towards the rear. As a result there would be a significant increase in the height, volume and massing of the dwelling compared to what is currently there.
12. This becomes an issue when considering the site's location. The existing dwelling sits between a single storey village hall and the asymmetrical dwelling at No.4, whose design responds sympathetically to the existing bungalow with built form

being lower closer to the shared boundary and the bungalow, before stepping up in height to the asymmetrical taller roof sections. In addition, on approaching the appeal site from the start of the lane in the village the general aspect is fairly open, with views across the single storey Village Hall towards the appeal site. The proposed enlarged side elevation, together with the prominent gabled roofscape, would dominate this generally low-lying vista and appear unduly large and incongruous in the street scene.

13. This harm would be compounded by the proximity of the dwelling to its shared boundaries. The existing dwelling occupies much of the width of the plot, leaving only narrow gaps to the shared boundaries with neighbouring properties being little more than functional access routes. The proposed dwelling would follow the same side elevations, but the increased bulk, massing and height would substantially increase its presence within the plot. As a consequence, the dwelling would appear excessively confined within its site, with insufficient space around it to moderate its visual presence. This would create the impression of a cramped and over developed form of development resulting in a building that would be overly dominant in this part and side of Old Acre Lane, which is characterised by lower-lying properties. Whilst I saw examples of single and two storey dwellings sitting next to each other, most had successfully managed to respect the differences in a more considered way, creating a more comfortable visual relationship.
14. Furthermore, whilst I have no reason to doubt the finished build-quality, the design of the dwelling would appear unduly stark with a sombre use of dark vertical timber cladding, which of itself is not a prevailing facing material. Most properties I saw were brick or coloured render. Whilst the Village Hall is timber clad it is a community building, not a dwelling, and therefore is not necessarily a design cue. In addition, the double-width garage door would sit beneath two full height upper floor windows that would create an unbalanced and visually uncomfortable elevation.
15. There are no plans showing the proposal as part of the street scene, or in relation to its neighbours. The artist's impression gives an idea of what the architect envisages and its relationship with No.4, showing relative heights of the eaves and ridge. Whilst illustrative and not determinative, it reinforces my concerns about the design of the building and its resulting dominance and incongruity and the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area.
16. The appeal site is located on the western edge of the Cannock Chase National Landscape. The statutory purpose of National Landscapes is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area¹. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 amends the duty on relevant authorities in respect of their functions to now "seek to further" the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. In terms of the effect on the Cannock Chase National Landscape, Framework policy N4:1 states that substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of such Protected Landscapes and that development proposals should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and their special qualities. Policy N7 of The Plan for Stafford Borough (the Borough Plan) follows these principles to ensure that the special landscape character and distinctiveness of the locality is conserved and enhanced.

¹ Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

17. Old Acre Lane and the residential development along it, including the appeal site, already sit within this National Landscape. As already described, Old Acre Lane is residential with a suburban form sitting on the lower western edge of Cannock Chase. I walked the public bridleway off Old Acre Lane up onto the country park hillside and also took the public footpath down to Oldacre Brook and walked along it. Due to the wooded nature of the slopes and the intervening vegetation and distances involved I was not able to discern the housing along Old Acre Lane. Even when the leaves fall, I consider it unlikely that the appeal dwelling would be distinctly discernible as it would be read as part of existing residential development along Old Acre Lane.
18. Furthermore, the new dwelling would replace an existing dwelling and would occupy the same part of the site, albeit the new building would have a greater height and massing on a slightly larger footprint. In the context of the scale and extent of this National Landscape, the appeal site is a relatively small parcel of residential land and is framed by other development adjacent and opposite. Hence the resulting building would not be isolated or sited within an expansive and open setting. Trees in the area generally restrict wider views of the countryside beyond.
19. From the evidence before me and my observations on site, I am satisfied that the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cannock Chase National Landscape would be conserved. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with Borough Plan N7, whose aims are set out above.
20. Drawing all of the above points together, there would be no harm caused to the Cannock Chase National Landscape and no conflict with Borough Plan Policy N7. However, the height, volume, massing and design of the proposal would result in an overly dominant and incongruous form of development that would fail to satisfactorily respond to its context and setting and cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the resulting dwelling would conflict with Borough Plan Policy C5 f). As the policy requires compliance with all of its criteria a) to i), and I have found failure with one, there is no need for me to consider the others. The proposal would also conflict with Borough Plan Policy N1, which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that the design of development has regard to the local context and should preserve and enhance the character of the area.

Other Matters

21. Interested parties have raised a number of other concerns. However, having already concluded in respect of the main issue, a finding on these matters would make no difference to my decision.

Planning Balance

22. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and be contrary to the development plan. The Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. The alleged self-build dwelling would help reduce any shortfall in SBCH, but I have not been advised of the quantum of shortfall. However, SBCH is one type of housing and as the proposal is for a replacement dwelling there would not be any net gain in the number of dwellings. There would be some short term economic gain through the construction process, but for a single dwelling this would be very modest.

23. The Council refers to policy S5 of the new Framework, which relates to development outside settlements. However, the Council has already described the site as being within the village, and I saw this to be the case, and so Framework policy S4 would be more relevant as it deals with development within settlements. Policy S4:1 states that development should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects when assessed against national decision-making policies in the Framework. It goes on to advise of a number of circumstances to consider, most relevant of which in this case is S4:2.c). This directs that development that fails to comply with one of the decision-making policies in the Framework should be refused.
24. Framework design policy DP3:1 states that development proposals should respond to their context, including character and features of the site and its setting, so that they integrate and enhance their surroundings. I have found the proposal would not do this. Policy DP3:3 then directs that development proposals that fail to comply with policy DP3.1 without clear justification should be refused. It also directs that substantial weight should be given to compliance with relevant policies in the development plan when assessing the design quality of proposals. I have found that the proposal would fail to comply with development plan policies C5 and N1. I have not been provided with any clear justification for the proposal that would outweigh conflict with design policies in the Framework. Therefore the proposal would not accord with the Framework and should be refused.
25. Even if the development was assessed as an extension, and notwithstanding any mathematical calculations regarding the amount of permissible enlargement, the design and appearance of the resulting dwelling would still be inappropriate.
26. For the reasons above I conclude that the appeal proposal would not accord with the development plan and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, sufficient to outweigh this conflict.

Conclusion

27. The appeal should be dismissed.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR

Costs Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2026

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 September 2026

Costs application in relation to Appeal Ref: 6011888

Heather Lodge, 2 Old Acre Lane, Stafford ST17 0TW

- 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 Balginder Sidhu for a full award of costs against Stafford Borough Council.
 - The appeal was against the refusal of planning permission for erection of a replacement dwelling.
-

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 (the 'applicant') to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process.
3. The PPG gives examples of the types of behaviour that could give rise to procedural award of costs against a local planning authority. Procedural examples can include lack of co-operation with the other party, delay in providing information or other failure to adhere to deadlines.
4. In summary, the applicant considers the Council has behaved unreasonably by determining the application as a replacement dwelling and not as a householder application for extensions to the dwelling, which was what was originally submitted before the householder application was withdrawn. It also took the Council some 33 weeks to determine the application.
5. The Council's case, in brief, is that it considered the amount of new works and rebuilding would leave little of the remaining building and so would be tantamount to a new dwelling. The Council submits a chronology of events, including the need to resolve objections from the Highways Authority and the Council's Biodiversity Officer. It later came to light that the dwelling would be a self-build dwelling and exempt from biodiversity net gain requirements. The Council argues the applicant could have appealed against non-determination any time after the relevant time period.
6. I find the applicant's cost application effectively concerns the Council's handling of the application, and not the appeal process itself, other than to say that an appeal could have been avoided if the Council had determined the application as a householder application for extensions.

7. The Council determined the application for a replacement dwelling. The appellant decided to lodge an appeal against the decision to refuse a replacement dwelling. Therefore the appeal before me was for a replacement dwelling. In lodging an appeal the applicant elected to incur the necessary associated costs, including preparing the various appeal documentation.
8. The reasoning behind the Council's decision to consider the application as a replacement dwelling, rather than as extensions to an existing property, and the applicant's disagreement with the Council's approach is a matter for the parties to resolve between them, and not a matter for this appeal to determine. The appellant had a number of other options open to them as a means to explore whether the proposed works constituted a replacement new dwelling or whether proposed extensions would be lawful.
9. The Council's chronology shows there were a number of things to resolve, although there is a 3 month gap between 23 February 2026 and 21 May 2026 when the application was determined. No explanation of this delay is provided. To wait 33 weeks for a decision is an excessive amount of time and, without substantive explanation or justification for at least 3 months of that, amounts to poor service. Whilst hindsight is no consolation now, the applicant was at liberty to have appealed at any time once the relevant period for determining the application had expired, but chose not to.
10. The Council was perfectly entitled to come to the conclusion it did about the proposed works and find that the resulting dwelling was inappropriate, based on its own planning judgements. The Council evaluated the application and the merits of the scheme, and in this regard has not acted unreasonably and an appeal could not have been avoided. The Council's delays did not result in the appeal.
11. Even if the Council had determined the application as extensions (with similar plans) the same resulting design of dwelling would have likely also been refused for similar reasons. An appeal could not have been avoided with either route.
12. In the light of the above I conclude that the Council evaluated the application and the merits of the scheme (whether rightly or wrongly as a replacement dwelling) and in this regard has not acted unreasonably. The appeal could not have been avoided.
13. As I have found the Council has not acted unreasonably, I need not concern myself as to whether wasted expenditure has occurred, as both tests need to be satisfied before an award of costs can be made.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, an award for costs is therefore not warranted.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR