

OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED SITE ALLOCATION Ref. 036c

“LAND AT WEEPING CROSS (ADJOINING STAFFORD BOROUGH BOUNDARY)” LAND ACTUALLY ON ACTON HILL, ADJACENT TO WILDWOOD

The objection is on the following principal grounds.

LACK OF NEED

The justification for the proposal appears to be principally that the site is not in the Green Belt. It is not, however, justified by the housing needs of either the West Midlands Conurbation or of Stafford Borough Council. Stafford Borough has and can meet its own housing requirement and South Staffordshire Council has acknowledged the “*lack of unmet housing need*” in Stafford and the fact that Stafford Borough is in a separate housing market area. Site 036c is disassociated from the rest of the Parish.

Furthermore, the proposal does not assist in meeting the needs of South Staffordshire residents. These are being met elsewhere in the District by the other allocations, including on non- green belt sites, and which are focused on the district’s most sustainable larger settlements.

VISUAL INTRUSION AND IMPACT ON FARMING AND ENVIRONMENT

The site and adjoining land has been identified by Consultants advising the Council as being of “**HIGH**” landscape sensitivity. The reduction in the extent of the proposal from that previously put forward to 81 houses does not negate this high landscape sensitivity finding and major negative impacts are anticipated. The proposal will be visually obtrusive from local views (in particular from both the A34 and Wildwood Drive) and also from the Cannock Chase AONB to the east and southeast. Moreover, there would be no clear or defensible southern boundary to the development. This is an arbitrary line across the field with no physical features. It would be expected that if site 036c development is permitted by the Inspectorate, the developers will press for additional houses to be built at the same time.

The land is ‘open countryside, productive farming land (Graded 3a), and National regulations require that building on such land is minimized. It is a wildlife corridor between the AONB and the valley of the Penk.

IMPACT ON CANNOCK CHASE AONB

The Cannock Case AONB is recognised as a highly sensitive area where visitor management is critical to maintaining its characteristics. With already planned increasing housing development in the wider vicinity and a growing human population, recreational use is predicted to increase.

It is acknowledged by the bodies responsible that there is a need to meet recreation demand while in the long-term ensuring that the issues associated with high levels of recreation do not cause damage or lessen the experience for other users.

To identify a new housing site so close to the AONB is at odds with the need for its conservation, particularly when there is no overriding need for the site proposal.

IMPACT ON SERVICES IN WEEPING CROSS AND STAFFORD

It is clear from previous representations to the Council that the residents of Wildwood have significant concerns regarding the ability of schools and health facilities to cater for the increased demand that will result from the housing proposal. The increase in traffic on already congested roads, with resulting air pollution, is also a local concern. The increase in traffic on Acton Hill Road and through the Parish is a concern. These concerns do not appear to have been fully considered when the site was allocated.

CONCLUSION

From the above, we see no justification for site allocation ref. 036c and ask that it be withdrawn from the finally adopted Local Plan.