



BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

SERVING THE VILLAGES OF
MILFORD AND WALTON ON THE HILL

THE GATEWAY TO CANNOCK CHASE

1 Holly Drive
Walton on the Hill
Stafford
ST17 0NH

berkswichclerk@gmail.com

9 December 2022

Strategic Planning
South Staffordshire Council
Council Offices
Wolverhampton Road
Codsall
Wolverhampton
WV8 1PX

Dear Sir or Madam

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW
PROPOSED SUBMISSION VERSION (REGULATION 19 PUBLICATION STAGE)
SITE 036C: LAND AT WEEPING CROSS, CANNOCK ROAD, STAFFORD**

On 10 December 2021 Berkswich Parish Council responded to your Council's Preferred Options consultation with an objection to the inclusion of Site 036C, land at Cannock Road, Stafford within the draft local plan (copy attached). Berkswich Parish Council is extremely concerned to note that, notwithstanding considerable local objection to the proposed site allocation, it has been included in policy DS5 of the Proposed Submission Plan as *Development adjacent to the town of Stafford - Land at Weeping cross west of the A34 and in Locality 1* at para 5.28 *Southern Edge of Stafford (A34 corridor*, and is shown in the Spatial Housing Strategy table at para 5.21.

The Parish Council does not consider that inclusion of this site within Policy DS5 of the Submission Version Local Plan satisfies the tests of Soundness and Legal Compliance required by paragraph 35 of the NPPF. By its own admission South Staffordshire Council accepts at paragraph 5.28 that the site is remote from the unmet needs of Greater Birmingham and the Black Country and that there is no unmet housing need in Stafford Borough immediately adjacent – issues raised in paragraph 1 of the Parish Council's previous letter of objection. It is contradictory and illogical therefore to promote the site as "strategic" (DS5 page 51) and an urban extension to Stafford when there is no local demand for development or capacity for local services to accommodate the additional users generated. Table 5.21 shows the site as meeting only 0.8% of the housing target for the district which combined with its remoteness from areas of housing need underlines the argument that it is neither strategic nor a suitable location for delivering the objectives of the Local Plan.

The District Council also acknowledge the highway and landscape sensitivities arising from development of the land (points 2, 4 and 5 of the Parish Council's previous objection).

The intrusion of development here into the setting of Cannock Chase AONB and the wider local countryside is not compliant with environmental protection policies outlined at policy DS3. In these circumstances inclusion of the site in the plan is perverse and harmful and does not meet the criterion of being *Positively prepared*.

The proposal is not *Justified* both for the reasons outlined above and because no evidence is adduced to show that there is no reasonable alternative.

The draft plan is not *Effective* in that, while seeking justification as an urban extension to Stafford it does not show agreement with Stafford Borough Council that development here will help address housing or community needs in the adjacent local authority area. The Stafford Local Plan Issues and Options consultation 2020-2040 (November-December 2022) shows that Stafford Borough has adequate housing land availability to meet projected needs throughout the plan period without need to rely on cross border allocations with adjoining local authorities.

Berkswich Parish Council is very disappointed that its previous representations (and those of many nearby local residents in Stafford) have been disregarded in the publication of the Submission Plan. The Council does not consider that the document satisfies the tests of Sustainability or is an appropriate response to past Community Involvement.

The Parish Council does not consider the Submission Plan to be either sound or sustainable in respect of site 036C Land at Weeping Cross, Stafford and requests that this site be deleted.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Fullwood', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Sue Fullwood
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

Enc. Copy of letter of objection dated 6 December 2021