

From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
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Application Reference No. : SMD/2021/0700

Site Address: Former Railway Line Barnfield Road Leek Staffordshire

Comments by: Adrian Northcott

From:

Hugo Street
Leek
Leek

ST13 5PE

Phone:

Email: adriannorthcott@aol.com

Submission: Objection

Comments: Whilst, in principle, I support the objective to bring the railway track closer to Leek, I object to the siting of the footpath. One has to look quite hard to realise that the proposed path is down the embankment on the golf course side. I have photographs, taken recently, which show how this area routinely floods (these can be supplied if required). In addition, I am concerned that the width of the new footpath will not be sufficient to accommodate the mixed uses currently taking place on the old track bed. Horseriders, cyclists, runners, dog walkers, walkers, etc will be a recipe for disaster if expected to co-exist on a path little wider than the average pavement. In an age when exercise should be encouraged and made more accessible, the proposal seems to be a retrograde step.

Each Tuesday, I assist in coaching junior runners at Birchall track and, aside from the darkest winter months, we take the youngsters along the track to make runs more interesting and more akin to what they would experience during races. I fear that this will be lost once the proposed path is put in place.

Being a regular user of the existing path, I am also concerned about the closer proximity to the golf course. Over time, I have had lots of near-misses as golfers accidentally fire their balls towards the track. Fortunately, the number of trees serve to give an early warning system or protect footpath users; clearly, this will not be the case if the path is sited as per the proposal. A better solution and one likely to appeal to reasonable-minded people, would be to site the path alongside the new track bed; the proposal already states that only a single track will be laid. Forgive me as the plans are quite difficult to decipher, however I am unsure as to how the path from the head of Barnfields Road (by the scrap yard) will be accommodated in a fashion that suits all needs. Can this be clarified before a decision is taken? Finally, as part of this application, as it will very likely be the only time it will be entertained as the council still has some leverage, CVR should be compelled to site a path on the Severn Trent works' side allowing access to Soils Wood, which has recently been fenced off. The history is that Moorland and City Railways permitted this access following a meeting I had with the Chief Executive at the time quite a few years ago.

Having said all of this, the whole proposal seems rushed for some strange reason and I fail to see how this can be permitted whilst our own Member of Parliament has put her considerable weight behind a feasibility study to bring passenger trains back on the Stoke-Leek line. I rather wonder if something is being hidden from view...

Kind regards

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