

From: [REDACTED]
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Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
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Application Reference No. : SMD/2025/0385

Site Address: Higherland Farm Caverswall Common Lane Caverswall Staffordshire ST11 9EU Stoke-On-Trent

Comments by: Richard Powell

From:
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Submission: Objection

Comments: I wish to object to the above planning application on grounds relating to highway safety, environmental and residential amenity impacts, overdevelopment, lack of local need, and the unsuitability of the proposed commercial use in this rural location.

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1. Highway Safety and Unsuitable Access

The proposed site is located on a narrow rural lane with weight restrictions, blind bends, and multiple concealed entrances serving existing properties and farms. The applicant's proposal to receive and dispatch trade vehicles including 3.5-tonne, 7.5-tonne, and 18-tonne rigid lorries is entirely incompatible with local road conditions.

The lane carries regular horse traffic, farm machinery, and pedestrians, yet has no footpaths or passing bays. The intensification of HGV and van movements would create a serious and unacceptable risk to public safety, contrary to paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires refusal where development would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

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2. Noise and Disturbance

The proposed daily operations including forklift use, reversing alarms, and constant vehicle loading would cause continuous noise disturbance throughout the working day. The peaceful, rural character of Caverswall Common would be materially harmed by the introduction of this industrial-style activity.

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3. Dust and Air Quality

The applicant proposes to operate from hardcore surfaces with heavy vehicular traffic. In dry summer months, this will inevitably generate significant dust, which will drift onto neighbouring homes, gardens, and vehicles, causing nuisance and health concerns.

No effective dust-suppression measures or surface treatments have been proposed, demonstrating a lack of due consideration for environmental protection and residential amenity.

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4. Overdevelopment and Site Unsuitability

The proposed level of activity including multiple daily collections and deliveries is disproportionate to the size and layout of the site. Vehicle manoeuvring and parking provision are clearly inadequate, leading to a risk of vehicles waiting or reversing on the public highway, exacerbating existing safety problems.

The development would constitute an over-intensive commercial use on a small rural plot, contrary to local and national planning policies promoting small-scale, sustainable rural enterprises.

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5. Concerns Regarding Future Intentions

The scale and unsuitability of the proposal raise concerns that the applicant's long-term objective may be to establish a non-viable business, thereby seeking to classify the land as a brownfield site for future residential development. Such a strategy would undermine Green Belt policy and the local plan's intent to protect the rural landscape from incremental urbanisation.

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6. Duplication of Existing Businesses and Lack of Local Need

There is no demonstrable local need for another stone and landscaping materials supplier in this area. Within a short radius of the site there are already multiple established businesses providing the same or similar products, including:

- ı Stone Valley, Roughcote
- ı Milton Garden Products, Blythe Bridge
- ı Acres Green, Caverswall Common

- 6 Oakleys, near Cellarhead
- 6 Dalecrete, Weston Coyney, Leek road

These existing operations already meet local and regional demand for stone, paving, and landscaping materials. The proposed business would therefore add unnecessary commercial duplication, contrary to Policy SS9 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, which seeks to support only development that enhances community vitality and meets proven local need.

Introducing yet another supplier within such close proximity offers no clear economic or community benefit, risks destabilising existing local businesses, and would instead result in unjustified intensification of traffic and industrial activity in a sensitive rural environment.

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Conclusion

This proposal represents an inappropriate, unsafe, and unnecessary commercial development within a rural area. It would cause unacceptable harm to highway safety, residential amenity, and environmental quality, while offering no demonstrable need or benefit to the local community.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Council refuse the application in its entirety.

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