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From: planningcomments@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
Sent: 30 March 2026 09:23
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

[REDACTED]

Application Reference No. : SMD/2025/0517 Site Address: Land off Alwoodley Edge Lane Endon Staffordshire ST9 9DG Stoke On Trent Comments by: D
From:

Stoney Lane
Endon
Stoke on trent

Phone:
Email: [REDACTED]
Submission: Objection
Comments: Inspector's Reference 6005296

SMD/2025/0297 and SMD/2025/0517

I wish to submit the following additional comments in support of the Council's refusal for SMD/2025/0297 . The proposal remains contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2014-2033), and the harm to the Green Belt is not outweighed by any very special circumstances.

Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

Under NPPF paragraph 152, inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 153 requires substantial weight to be given to any Green Belt harm.

A riding arena constitutes new engineered development, and unless it meets the narrow exception for appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation under NPPF 154(b), it is inappropriate.

Harm to Openness (Spatial and Visual)

The Courts have confirmed that openness has spatial and visual dimensions. The proposed arena, surfacing, fencing, and associated activity would:

Introduce a permanent engineered platform into open countryside.

Increase visual intrusion in an otherwise undeveloped field.

Create domestication of the rural landscape.

Recent Staffordshire Moorlands appeal decisions show Inspectors place strong weight on openness. This site is open, rural, and visually sensitive.

Conflict with the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2014-2033)

The proposal conflicts with several key policies:

Policy SS10 - Other Rural Areas Strategy

Requires development to protect the Green Belt, landscape character, and openness.

This proposal does the opposite.

Policy DC3 - Landscape and Settlement Setting

Requires protection and enhancement of local landscape character.

A riding arena with engineered surfacing and fencing erodes rural character.

Policy SS1 & SS1a - Sustainable Development

Development must be appropriate in scale and location.

A riding arena on undeveloped Green Belt land is not sustainable.

These policies are part of the adopted Local Plan (2020).

No Very Special Circumstances (VSC)

Under NPPF paragraph 153, VSC will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The appellant has not demonstrated:

Any public benefit

Any site-specific need

Any exceptional circumstances

Personal convenience or hobby-based equestrian use does not constitute VSC, as repeatedly confirmed in appeal decisions.

This site is open, undeveloped, and visually exposed - meaning the arena cannot be considered appropriate.

Environmental Harm

The arena is not adjacent to existing equestrian buildings.

It introduces new built form into an open field.

It causes greater landscape and openness harm.

Thus, the Green Belt harm is significantly greater.

Precedent and Cumulative Impact

Allowing this appeal would create a harmful precedent for incremental equestrian development across the Staffordshire Moorlands Green Belt. Inspectors recognise cumulative erosion of openness as a legitimate planning concern.

Conclusion

The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, causes significant harm to openness and landscape character, and is contrary to both the NPPF and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. No very special circumstances have been demonstrated.

I respectfully request that the Inspector dismiss the appeal.

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