

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0367
Valid 28/08/2025

**BROADHURST FARM LEEK
ROAD
WATERHOUSES**

**CHANGE OF USE OF THREE
HOLIDAY COTTAGES FROM
HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION TO
OPEN-MARKET HOUSES**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact
- Highways
- Amenity (Proposed occupiers of development and neighbour amenity)
- Ecology / Biodiversity Net Gain.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is Broadhurst Farm, Leek Road, Waterhouses. The building which is the subject of this application is a detached, 'L' shaped, stone and tile building which sits in close proximity to the main dwellinghouse and separated from it by fencing, a gate and several plant pots. Open fields surround the application site, with both the A523 and Milkhill Gate Farm not too far away. At the front of the three holiday lets there is a large concrete forecourt/hardstanding area which, at the time of the site visit, contained a number of picnic tables and sun umbrellas. To the rear (north-west) there stands a detached, agricultural-looking building. There are land-level variations with land to the rear of the buildings sloping downwards in a north/east direction.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration, the application site is located within the open Countryside (not Green Belt), and within the Churnet Valley Masterplan boundary. The application site does not form part of any Conservation Area and contains no listed buildings/structures.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the use of three holiday lets for permanent, open-market dwellings. Planning permission reference SM91-0932 approved holiday lets with a condition restricting the accommodation to short stay, not exceeding 4 weeks at any one time. The holiday lets are known as Cedar, Elm and Pine, and all of the units have ground and first floor accommodation.

Cedar: Ground floor Kitchen and dining room. First floor there are two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Elm: Ground floor lounge, kitchen, utility and bathroom. First floor has three bedrooms (master with ensuite) and a separate bathroom.

Pine: Ground floor kitchen, lounge, utility, bathroom and store. First floor has three bedrooms (master with ensuite) and a separate bathroom.

Grassland runs to the rear of each of the units and appears to be being used as amenity space for the holiday lets. The area would be split to provide garden areas for each of the proposed new dwellings. At the time of the site visit items within the grassed area included a picnic bench, trampoline, children's swings and a washing line. The scheme does not propose any internal or external alterations. Car parking is located to the south-west of the application building. The Planning Statement informs that the area is large enough to accommodate 8 cars, 2 spaces for each of the holiday lets and 2 for use by the attached dwelling.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

SS1	Development Principles
SS2	Settlement Hierarchy
SS10	Other Rural Areas Strategy
SS11	Churnet Valley Strategy
SD4	Pollution and Water Quality
E3	Existing Employment Areas, Premises and Allocations.
E4	Tourism and Cultural Development
H1	New Housing Development
DC1	Design Considerations
DC3	Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1	Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
T1	Development and Sustainable Transport
Appendix 2	Parking Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Space About Dwellings
2. Design Principles for development in the Staffordshire Moorlands

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide.

National Planning Policy Framework

Including sections;

- | | |
|----|--|
| 2 | Achieving sustainable development |
| 5 | Delivering a sufficient supply of homes |
| 6 | Building a strong, competitive economy |
| 9 | Promoting sustainable transport |
| 12 | Achieving well-designed places |
| 15 | Conserving and enhancing the natural environment |

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SM91-0932	Conversion to holiday accommodation. Approved. Condition number 2 restricts the accommodation to short stay holiday accommodation not exceeding 4 weeks at any one time.
SM92-1226	Barn conversion to form breakfast room. Approved.
98/00641/OLD	Signs. Refused.
04/00911/FUL	Variation of condition 3 of SM 92-1226 from short stay holiday accommodation to use as managers accommodation. Approved..

05/00969/FUL	Variation of condition 2 on planning permission SM91/0932 (change of use from short stay holiday accommodation to class C3 dwelling houses during the off peak period 1st October - 31st March). Refused.
05/01333/FUL	Variation of condition 2 of planning permission SM 91/00932 to permit use for residential purposes (class C3) during off peak period, 1st October - 31st March. Refused
07/01388/FUL	Single storey rear extension and rear conservatory. Approved.
SMD/2021/0276	Removal of condition 2 relating to SMD/2004/0528. Withdrawn.
SMD/2021/0548	The use of the former holiday cottage site manager's accommodation as a permanent house unencumbered by an occupancy condition.. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice. Expired.
Neighbour consultation period. Expired

Public Comments

No representations received.

Waterhouses Parish Council

Waterhouses Parish Council have provided the following response..

'The parish council of Waterhouses does not object to this application. However, it (Parish Council) feels that the sale of the cottages should perhaps be restricted to those who live within the area, in order to provide dwellings for local people.'

Environmental Health

Environmental Health have looked at this application a number of times, including when additional information has been submitted by the planning agent.

First Environmental Health consultation response

Sound Insulation between units: Please consult Building Control to check if Building Regulation Document E applies to this proposed change of use. This building regulation was introduced in approx. 2003-2004 , it is not clear what year these units were built and if they have been built to a modern sound insulation specification. If the regulations do not apply and we have no certainty as to the level of sound insulation between the units then we would advise sound testing is undertaken to determine if the party wall meet the required resistance to sound standards.

Farm Noise: The proposed site appears to be adjacent to a working farm and so there is potential for noise disturbance if suitable sound insulation is not installed. We would advise a site specific sound insulation scheme is submitted with the application so we can properly consider if the site is suitable for third party occupation. This would include the outside living areas. The current short term holiday let controlled by the farm would have meant amenity would have been protected but these units may be sold to third party occupiers.

Farm Odour: No advice is provided on any close by animal housing or manure/slurry storage which can generate smells likely to impact residential amenity. As mentioned these residential are likely to

be occupied by people not associated with the farm and so their amenity could be compromised and complaint against the farm might be caused.

Recommendation – Environmental Health recommend that further advice is provided to address internal noise transfer, farm noise and odour

Additional Environmental Health advice

In consideration of the updated information – The farm is described as not a commercial farming operation yet it could revert to this in the future. The holiday cottages sit in the middle of the farm between 2 farm buildings to the NW and the farm house/dwelling to the SE. This would mean movement of farm machinery and animals would be expected through the shared yard at any time day or night. Future residents of these cottages would be expected to accept noise, smells etc caused by farming and domestic equestrian activities. It does not appear to be a compatible use given the lack of separation between the uses. The applicant will retain use of all access roads and paddocks around the cottage meaning amenity could be compromised if they choose to use any of the remaining farm buildings or land for commercial use.

1. (a) There is no advice on sound insulation between these units. If this change of use means they are not subject to building regulations then sound tests should be provided to demonstrate their suitability for permanent residential use. The insulation should be sufficient to attenuate noise across a broadband of sound, there is no evidence provided to demonstrate this. The description of wall construction and thickness provided is insufficient.
(b) There is no advice contained to address noise breakout from the equestrian use and farm building to the north.
2. Odour and flies –We would advise a 50m separation distance between manure storage and habitable dwellings. The current distance to the nearest cottage under application is approx.35m, less to Broadhurst Farm house. We would advise this is reviewed.

In summary our concerns remain.

Further Environmental Health advice

Noise: a noise impact assessment and sound insulation scheme has been submitted with this application (SBM Safety Solutions Report Date: 16th February 2026Ref: E22543). In summary it determines that subject to the mitigation set out in sections 8 and 9 that reasonable amenity can be achieved by future occupiers. The proposal to retain the current windows as they might fit the required sound reduction level should be addressed by the applicant in consultation with their acoustician, but ultimately it is the responsibility of the developer to implement the recommendations completely.

Odour: The information supplied by the agent/applicant indicates the site is mainly used as for personal/family equestrian. This should mean that management of horse manure is more readily controlled. It would be preferable that a 50m separation distance is maintained but given the relative low level domestic equestrian use 35m should be acceptable subject to good on-site management. The proposed restriction of buildings to prevent future odour/insect issues should be considered as a condition.

Recommendation – Environmental Health have no objection subject to condition.

Severn Trent Water

With reference to the above planning application the Company's observations regarding sewerage are as follows.

Severn Trent requests that any approval be conditioned as follows:

- The development hereby permitted should not commence until drainage plans for the disposal of foul and surface water flows have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and

- The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use.
- Planning Practice Guidance and section H of the Building Regulations 2010 detail surface water disposal hierarchy. The disposal of surface water by means of soakaways should be considered as the primary method. If this is not practical and there is no watercourse available as an alternative, other sustainable methods should also be explored. If these are found unsuitable satisfactory evidence will need to be submitted before a discharge to the public sewerage system is considered. No surface water to enter the foul or combined water systems by any means.

Reason

To ensure that the development is provided with a satisfactory means of drainage as well as reduce the risk of creating or exacerbating a flooding problem and to minimise the risk of pollution.

IMPORTANT NOTE: With regard to network capacity, this response only relates to the public waste water network and does not include representation from other areas of Severn Trent Water, such as the provision of water supply or the protection of drinking water quality.

Suggested Informative – affected sewers and water mains

Before undertaking any work on site, all applicants must determine if Severn Trent has any assets in the vicinity of the proposed works. This can be done by accessing our records at www.digdat.co.uk

Severn Trent Water advise that even if our statutory records do not show any public sewers within the area you have specified, there may be sewers that have been recently adopted under The Transfer of Sewer Regulations 2011.

Public sewers and Water mains have statutory protection and may not be built close to, or diverted without consent, consequently you must contact Severn Trent to discuss your proposals. Severn Trent will seek to assist you obtaining a solution which protects both the public sewer and the proposed building.

Additional information

If the development site includes a Vehicle Wash / Petrol Station / Swimming Pool / Industrial Processes, or anything else that may discharge waste other than foul sewage or surface water into the public network, we would strongly recommend the applicant speaks to the Trade Effluent Support Team before requesting a discharge of any drainage related condition. The team can be contacted by email: trade.effluent@severntrent.co.uk

Please note for the use or reuse of sewer connections either direct or indirect to the public sewerage system the applicant will be required to make a formal application to the Company under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991. They may obtain copies of our current guidance notes and application form from either our website (www.stwater.co.uk) or by contacting our Developer Services Team (Tel: 0800 707 6600).

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust comment that. 'Having looked at this application, we believe it should be exempt from BNG due to the de minimis. Additionally, the proposed planting of the trees and hedgerows would be welcomed but would not count towards BNG as the whole site should be designated as vegetated garden. There are no other ecology reports to look at for this application.'

Conservation Officer

We have undertaken a desk-based assessment of the proposal, including a review of the submitted Planning Statement and decided that no technical advice is required from Conservation. The development site would involve a possible non-designated heritage asset, visible on historic mapping. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining applications and a balanced judgment will be required in regards to the

scale of harm or loss of the significance of that asset (par.216 of the NPPF). The application should be determined in accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework.

We have determined not to provide technical conservation advice in this case. If you believe specialist conservation advice is required, please contact conservation@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk

Waste Services (SMDC)

No representations received.

Building Control

Building Control officer's have stated that....

I would consider that Building Regulations would apply. An application would need to be submitted to ourselves or a RBCA.

Trees (SMDC)

There are no significant trees within or immediately adjacent to the application site; in any case the application is solely for change of use and does not include any physical development (with the probable exception – although not detailed in the application – of provision of fencing or other physical boundary demarcation to subdivide the existing shared garden as indicated on the site plan as proposed). Therefore there would be no impact on existing trees arising from the proposed change of use.

The rear (north-east facing) aspect of the group of cottages, and their existing shared rear garden area, are in clear view across an open intervening field from the A523 Leek Road with only timber post and rail fencing separating the garden from the field. There are a good number of mature trees generally in the surrounding fields, although not particularly providing screening of Broadhurst Farm and its associated former agricultural buildings including the current application cottages; many of these trees are Ash and clearly in various states of decline due to Ash Dieback Disease. In the short to medium term therefore, views of/into the application site and its farm context are only likely to become even more open and prominent as trees decline further, die and/or are removed. The shared garden is predominantly a large, featureless lawn, and already accommodates various items of outdoor furniture and paraphernalia such as picnic tables, hot tubs, swings and trampoline.

In theory, the proposed change of use would be unlikely to bring about significant visual change to the appearance and use of the existing garden area. There is perhaps a likelihood, though, that owners/occupiers of private dwellings would wish to introduce taller fences for privacy/security, and to develop their gardens to be more interesting/attractive with various ornamental plants, paths, paving, decking etc. There could well also be introduction of other features such as sheds, greenhouses, summerhouses/gazebos, washing lines etc as a result of permanent occupation of dwellings as opposed to holiday cottages intermittently occupied by a series of different short-term guests. Such intensification of garden use and features would be likely to create a more obviously domesticised appearance to a site in open countryside which still currently retains a reasonable degree of traditional simple rural agricultural character, and is situated only a field's width outside and clearly visible from the Peak District National Park boundary (along the A523).

To address Biodiversity Net Gain, the application indicates the proposed planting of 5 new trees close to the north-east boundary of the rear gardens, but these, although appropriate in themselves, would not provide any significant degree of screening or filtering.

Whilst I would suggest it would seem harsh to object to or refuse the application on grounds of the "gardenification" of what is (in practical and planning terms) already anyway a garden, approval of the application would provide the opportunity to require some more effective and meaningful screening of the site in views from Leek Road, in keeping with, and mitigating against erosion of, the rural character and appearance of the area and to enhance the setting of the site. I would suggest a new mixed native species hedgerow along the full length of the north-east and north-west boundaries of the combined garden area, with the trees already proposed being incorporated as standard hedgerow

trees – and ideally increased in number and species variety to include other appropriate species such as standard Hawthorn (i.e. as actual trees, not just as part of the hedge shrub mix), native Crab Apple, native Rowan.

In conclusion I have no objection to this application.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Location of Development: Broadhurst Farm Leek Road Waterhouses

Recommendation: Conditional

Site Visit Carried Out on 17/09/2025

Personal Injury Collisions

Current records show that there were not any Personal Injury Collisions (PICs) on Milkgate Link Road (shown as Common Lane on submitted plans) within 215m either side of the access to Broadhurst Farm or on the A523 Leek Road within 160m either side of the junction with Milkgate Link Road between 31/12/2020 and 30/12/2023. Current records also show that there were no PICs on Milkgate Road (shown as Common Lane on submitted plans) within 215m either side of the junction with Milkgate Link Road for the same period.

Background

The 3 holiday cottages are located within Broadhurst Farm off Milkgate Link Road (Road No. ZG1132). Milkgate Link Road is an unclassified, 60mph lane and has junctions with A523 Leek Road and Milkgate Road (Road No. D1132). The section of Milkgate Link Road from A523 to the access to Broadhurst Farm is tarmacked, the section beyond the farm towards Milkgate Road is unmaintained, has a rough surface and is overgrown with grass. Access off Milkgate Link Road to the cottages/Broadhurst Farm is tarmacked and in good condition. There is no footway or streetlighting provision along Milkgate Link Road or Milkgate Road, however there is footway along Leek Road from the junction with Milkgate Road heading towards Waterhouses village.

Planning History

SMD/2021/0548 - The use of the former holiday cottage site manager's accommodation as a permanent house unencumbered by an occupancy condition - Approved by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

SMD/2021/0276 - Removal of condition 2 relating to SMD/2004/0528 – Application withdrawn.

SMD/2005/1000 - Variation of condition 2 of planning permission SM 91/00932 to permit use for residential purposes (class C3) during off peak period, 1st October - 31st March – Refused by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

SMD/2004/0528 – Variation of condition 3 of SM 1226 from short stay holiday accommodation to use as managers accommodation – Acceptance Staffordshire County – Approved by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

Description of Proposal

Change of use of three holiday cottages from holiday accommodation to open-market houses.

Comment

This application is for a change of use from 3 No. holiday cottages to 3 No. residential dwellings for the open-market. Currently the holiday cottages Elm and Pine have 3 bedrooms each cottage, and Cedar has 2 bedrooms. The proposed floor plans shows that each cottage will remain unchanged with no increase in bedroom numbers. The former manager's house approved under SMD/2004/0528 has 2 bedrooms. Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards state a property of up to 3 bedrooms requires 2 parking spaces (each space 2.4m x 4.8m) for residents and visitors. Parking for 8 vehicles is identified on the submitted Site Plan as Proposed Drawing Number PL01E. The Planning Statement states: there is an existing hard-surfaced car parking area for 8 cars to the southwest. Two spaces in this area are reserved for use by the 4th cottage, the former manager's house. The 2 spaces allocated for the former manager's house is sufficient for a 2-bedroom property.

The remaining 6 spaces meets with amount of parking required as stated in the Parking Standards for the 2 x 3 bedroom and 1 x 2-bedroom properties.

There are no objections on Highway grounds to the proposed development subject to the following condition being included on any approval:-

The parking area as detailed on the approved Drawing Number PL01E shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To comply with NPPF; to comply with SMDC Core Strategy policy DC1; in the interests of highway safety.

Note to Planning Officer

The proposed development does not constitute sustainable development in that it is entirely reliant on the private car and does not enable future residents to reasonably choose sustainable modes of transport to access the site as required by national and local planning policies.

OFFICER COMMENTS

This application concerns the three holiday lets within the 'L' shaped building. An existing dwelling is attached to the holiday-let building and this does not form part of the proposal.

Principle of Development

Local Plan policy SS10 covers development within the rural areas. The policy states that '*these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.*' SS10 also expresses some support for housing developments (including the conversion of rural buildings) in accordance with the provisions of policy H1. The need to sustain the rural economy, support employment uses and enhance tourism opportunities is also identified. SS10 also expands upon tourism opportunities, seeking small scale tourism developments, developing close links to the Peak District and linking recreational and tourist resources.

Local Plan Policy H1 can support new housing developments, requiring a mix of accommodation sizes, types and tenure which are high quality and sustainable. The policy also enables housing in appropriate locations. H1(d) is relevant in that it offers some support for 'the conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; or where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.'

Local Plan policy E4 concerns itself with securing tourism and cultural development, including within '*areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.*'

The Planning Statement gives details of occupancy rates over the period 2022 – 2024, and the application is accompanied by accounts. The submission claims that the business is making a loss and that occupancy rates are low. However, there is no information to suggest/demonstrate that there is any potential for alternative uses. There is nothing to suggest any research has been undertaken to identify what may be causing any low occupancy rates given that this property is within the Churnet Valley, within the Masterplan area and is close to the Peak District National Park. The Planning Statement also informs that the property has been marketed as a whole and in lots. The LPA are informed that the property is still advertised for sale with Reld Property. However a search on popular property website Rightmove, brings no search results.

It is noted that the property lies within the Churney Valley Masterplan area. The low occupancy rate information (advanced by the applicants) indicates decreased demand. However, this is contrary to the data within the Council's Tourism Strategy (to cover the period 2022-2027), where it has been identified that there is a need to increase overnight stays. The Tourism Strategy for the Staffordshire Moorlands identifies priorities for growth in tourism. One priority raised in this document is to expand,

improve and encourage investment in accommodation for tourists, in order to attract visitors to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions. This document states that an existing weakness of the Staffordshire Moorlands is the lack of accommodation investment. The strategy identifies that increasing the average lengths of stays will contribute to economic impact including sustaining jobs. The strategy is detailed in its account of spending and the proportion of day and overnight visitors stating that *'Day visitors dominate, accounting for about 90% of the 5.6m visits but just 58% of the £335m spend. Staying visitors however account for 42% of the total spend despite just being 10% of visits.'*

From this, it is clear that the loss of the available holiday let accommodation would contradict the evidenced need of Staffordshire Moorlands for more overnight tourist accommodation. Statistically speaking, it is clear that there is an essential need for growth through investment in tourist accommodation, including a duty to protect existing accommodation facilities in the District. This brings consideration back to the point of no information available to suggest any reason why the premises is seeing a lack of demand when the Tourism Strategy says there is and there is no evidence that any downturn in occupancy is from competition elsewhere or that there won't be an increase in future demand.

The site is an unsustainable location for housing and there would be reliance on private vehicles to access services and facilities which is not necessarily the case with self-catering holiday accommodation.

Local Plan Policy SS10 states that areas outside of development boundaries will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. Residential accommodation can sometimes be allowed where it can meet the requirements of policies H1 and H3. This proposal does not meet any of the policy H1 or H3 exceptions.

For the above reasons it is concluded that the scheme does not have 'in principle' support and conflicts with the identified needs of the Tourism Strategy as well as policy E4 and SS11

It is noted that there is a dwelling attached to the application property. A review of the planning history shows that the attached unit secured consent for a manager's house in 2004. The officer report commented that a land and property sale split the building from the farmhouse and the new owner of the holiday lets wanted to continue their use and the accommodation would be ancillary to the main holiday let. In 2021 permission was granted for the unit to become permanent residential accommodation for reasons including that the change would not significantly harm the tourism economy in the Churnet Valley. This is clearly different to the case currently being considered. It is noted that previous applications for conversion of the three holiday lets to permanent residential have been refused.

Design and visual impact

Local Plan policy DC1 requires that all developments shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the character and heritage of an area. Development should be of a high quality, adding to the value of a local area, incorporating creativity, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity. Policy DC3 cites 'resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside.'

There are no external alterations proposed and therefore the character of the building would remain.

In terms of visual impact there would be some increased impact due to the use of the grassed areas at the rear of the building being used for domestic gardens. The plan shows the intention to divide the space into a separate garden for each of the properties.

The original planning approval for the holiday lets (SM91-0932) does not give any clear indication of allocated garden space. Some land appears to be enclosed but it is not marked as garden and is neither the size nor shape of the existing enclosed area. Subsequent applications have shown the red edge around the building and those that have shown larger red edges have not been approved. It appears that there is no planning consent in place for the size and shape of the current enclosed

grassland to be used as garden space. Old aerial photographs do seem to show land at the back of the building enclosed, however it is unclear within the earlier photos whether it was being used for amenity space. Regardless of the planning 'status' of the enclosed 'garden' areas, the use of the three units as permanent residential accommodation would have greater visual impact and harm upon the undeveloped character and rural nature of this site. Whilst Permitted Development Rights could be removed, it would not stop ornamental planting, landscaping (which was not deemed an engineering operation), domestic furniture/bbq's, child's play equipment etc which would create a more domesticated appearance in the open countryside, than would be the case with holiday accommodation. This would unacceptably harm the character of the area.

Highways

No objections from the County Highways officer who is satisfied that there is sufficient on-site parking and raises no objections to access. A condition is recommended to secure the on-site parking provision for the lifetime of the development.

Amenity (Proposed occupiers of development and neighbour amenity)

There are several concerns with this proposal in terms of amenity for potential future occupants of the dwellings.

Although this is an existing building with existing window and door openings, there is a difference in what can be considered acceptable amenity for holiday accommodation occupation and permanent residential use. The 'L' shape of the building means that within the courtyard facing corner there are a number of windows and doors which are in close proximity, harmfully impacting upon amenity, including privacy. For example, a doorway to the Pine's utility room is next to a lounge window of the Elm property. Kitchen doors and windows within the Elm and Pine units are close together. The window relationship is also unacceptable at first floor level due to the close proximity of the Pine and Elm bedroom windows. Whilst this close proximity relationship may be acceptable for tourist accommodation it is not the case for permanent residential occupancy.

The proposed garden areas for each of the three properties are acceptable in terms of their sizes, however there is concern regarding the proposed location of the garden which would serve the Cedar property. The garden is detached from the house and would only be accessible by walking through the courtyard and along two sides (around the corner) of the farm building which is located immediately behind the Cedar property, it is not providing any meaningful and particularly accessible garden space.

Furthermore, the positioning of the large building behind the Cedar (and partially Elm) unit is unacceptable. Whilst the building is not sat directly in front of any principal windows, its proximity is unneighbourly, as is its location next to the garden area proposed for the Elm property. The size of the outbuilding will result in a large building have an unacceptably overbearing and close relationship with a proposed garden.

Local Plan policy H1(3d) specifies the need for all new dwellings to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standards. Policy DC1 also makes reference to the need to secure satisfactory residential amenity. The application does not provide any section details to demonstrate headroom, this means it is not possible to calculate whether the properties have sufficiently-sized floor spaces. It is noted that all principal rooms have windows and therefore natural light.

Ecology / Biodiversity Net Gain.

Biodiversity Net Gain information has been submitted to accompany this application. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust have confirmed that it should be exempt from BNG and that the planting of hedgerows and trees would be welcomed. The applicant has submitted a proposed planting scheme which could be conditioned in the event of the application being approved.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined within the report, it is recommended that the application is refused.

It is not just the loss of the holiday lets in principle, there are also concerns relating to residential amenity and visual impact.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Refuse.

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 17.04.2026.

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council