

[REDACTED]

From: Chris Karen Lees <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 27 April 2026 21:10
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Objection to Planning Application SMD/2026/0165

[REDACTED]

Dear Planning Officer,

Re: Planning Application SMD/2026/0165 – Land South of Mill Lane

I wish to formally object to planning application SMD/2026/0165 for the proposed residential development on land south of Mill Lane.

I live directly opposite the application site and therefore have a direct interest in the proposal and its impact on the character of the area, residential amenity, and the surrounding Green Belt.

I am aware of the recent appeal decision relating to Land off Mill Lane (APP/B3438/W/24/3354428), where planning permission was granted for residential development elsewhere along the same road. However, I do not consider that decision to be directly comparable to this proposal, and I am concerned that undue reliance may be placed upon it.

The Inspector's decision in that case was clearly based on the specific characteristics of that site, particularly its close relationship to an established built-up frontage and its identification as "limited infilling in a village."

The current application site is materially different.

Unlike the appeal site, this land does not sit within a continuous built frontage, nor does it form a natural gap between existing dwellings. Instead, it forms part of a more open and rural stretch of Mill Lane and is experienced as countryside rather than part of the main built-up village form.

For this reason, I do not consider that the proposal can reasonably be classified as limited infilling under Green Belt policy.

My objection is based on the following planning grounds:

1. Conflict with Green Belt policy

The site lies within the Green Belt, where there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development.

The proposal does not constitute limited infilling as described in the National Planning Policy Framework. It is not a small gap within an otherwise continuous line of development, but an undeveloped field that contributes to the openness and rural character of the area.

Its development would therefore represent encroachment into the countryside and harm the openness of the Green Belt.

This conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraphs 142, 143 and 154.

2. Conflict with Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Policy SS6

The proposal conflicts with Policy SS6 (Development in Rural Areas), which seeks to restrict development in rural areas and protect the countryside from inappropriate expansion.

The site is clearly part of the rural landscape rather than the established village envelope, and its development would erode the distinction between settlement and countryside.

3. Harm to character and appearance – Policy DC1

This section of Mill Lane is characterised by detached dwellings within generous plots, irregular spacing, and a loose rural form of development.

The proposal would introduce additional built form into an open gap that contributes positively to the rural character of the lane.

This would be harmful to the established character of the area and would conflict with Policy DC1, which requires development to respond positively to local distinctiveness and setting.

4. Loss of agricultural land

The site is not previously developed land and has been actively used for agricultural purposes, including livestock grazing.

This demonstrates that the land remains part of a functioning rural landscape and cannot reasonably be regarded as a redundant infill site.

Its development would result in the loss of open countryside land.

5. Impact on neighbouring amenity

As a resident living directly opposite the application site, the current open aspect forms an important part of the residential setting and outlook from my property.

Development on this site would introduce additional built form, increased traffic, noise, activity and vehicle lighting, materially changing the character of the immediate environment and adversely affecting residential amenity.

6. Urbanising impact

The proposal would introduce not only dwellings but associated domestic infrastructure such as driveways, boundary treatments, hardstanding, lighting and domestic activity.

These features would collectively urbanise what is currently a rural stretch of Mill Lane and further extend the built form into open countryside.

7. Highway safety concerns

The site is located near the transition between the 30mph and 60mph speed limit, reflecting the change from village environment to open road conditions.

Additional vehicular access and movements at this location may create highway safety concerns due to changing traffic speeds and driver expectations.

Conclusion

The previous appeal decision on Mill Lane does not establish a general precedent for development along the road.

That decision was based on a site-specific assessment of a location forming part of an established built frontage and considered to be infill development.

This application site is materially different. It is open countryside and does not constitute infill.

The proposal would therefore amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, conflict with Policies SS6 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and harm the rural character and openness of this part of Mill Lane.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Lees
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