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From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
Sent: 15 May 2026 11:59
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

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Application Reference No. : SMD/2025/0388 Site Address: New Buildings Farm Sandon Road Sharpley Heath Stone
Staffordshire ST15 8SL Stoke On Trent Comments by: Gregory Coppenhall Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
From:

Stockwell Street
Staffordshire Moorlands
Leek

ST13 6HQ

Phone:

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Submission: Neither

Comments: Landscaping Comments

Overall, the detailed landscaping plan submitted presents a good opportunity to enhance the site's existing features, making effective use of retained hedgerows to define field boundaries and strengthen the pond features across the site.

The proposals appear to incorporate thoughtful planting alongside the public right of way, creating a visual screen for users of the footpath which will help soften and partially obscure views of the solar arrays. This planting will contribute to maintaining the conventional character of a countryside walk, reducing the visual prominence of the development within the landscape.

Plant Sourcing and Biosecurity

Given the site's proximity to ancient woodland, careful consideration must be given to the sourcing of all planting stock. Plants must be sourced locally and from UK-grown nursery stock, rather than imported material, in order to minimise the risk of introducing pests or diseases which could adversely affect the adjacent ancient woodland.

All planting stock and operations must accord with the relevant British Standards, including BS 3936 Nursery Stock, BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape, and BS 4428:1989 Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations. All tree stock must be supplied in accordance with the National Plant Specification and must be free from pests, diseases and defects.

Planting Adjacent to Ancient Woodland

The areas adjoining the ancient woodland are proposed to include native structural planting mixes and trees such as *Betula pendula*, alongside native hedgerow species. However, these areas are likely to prove difficult for successful tree establishment due to the existing competition for light, moisture and nutrients from the adjacent woodland edge. Consequently, the proposed planting is unlikely to provide significant long-term screening or amenity value to the site itself, although it may offer some limited screening to users of the woodland.

It is considered that a more beneficial approach, both for the development site and the ancient woodland, would be to fence these areas using appropriate deer fencing and allow natural regeneration to occur from the existing woodland edge. This would encourage the establishment of species naturally suited to the local conditions, containing locally adapted genetic stock and, over time, effectively extending and buffering the existing protected woodland habitat.

The species currently proposed for these marginal planting areas must instead be redistributed elsewhere within the site where establishment conditions are more favourable and where they would better contribute towards the creation and strengthening of ecological and landscape corridors throughout the development.

Species Schedule

The applicant must provide a summary schedule detailing the total number of each species proposed across the site. Whilst the landscaping plan identifies quantities within individual planting areas, an overall schedule is necessary to properly assess the net landscape and biodiversity benefits arising from the proposals, particularly in comparison to any vegetation proposed for removal.

Tree Protection and Impact Assessment

There remains concern regarding the proximity of the proposed access tracks and solar arrays to retained trees and the adjacent ancient woodland. This cannot be fully assessed in the absence of a suitably detailed and scaled Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction & Recommendations.

These documents must be submitted before the impacts upon retained trees and woodland features across the site can be properly assessed and further comments provided.

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