

From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories: [REDACTED]

Application Reference No. : SMD/2026/0250 Site Address: John Munroe Independent Hospital Reacliffe Road
Rudyard Staffordshire ST13 8RU Leek Comments by: Simon Penaluna

From:

Chestnut Lodge
Lake Road, Rudyard
Rudyard
LEEK

ST13 8RN

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Submission: Objection

Comments: While I recognize the national societal need for specialized healthcare facilities, the location proposed for this high-security C2A use class is entirely inappropriate. My objections are based strictly on material planning considerations and conflict directly with local planning policy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

1. Material Conflict with Green Belt and Rural Landscape CharacterThe application site sits within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and the historically sensitive Churnet Valley character area. A C2A secure facility fundamentally requires aggressive security infrastructure, including high perimeter fencing (often 3-metres+), anti-climb barriers, external security lighting, and CCTV apparatus. This institutional, harsh aesthetic will introduce an unacceptable visual blight, severely disrupting the open, rural character of the Dissected Sandstone Uplands landscape type and the nearby Rudyard Conservation Area. This directly violates local policies aimed at preserving the open nature of the Green Belt.

2. Highway Safety and Inadequate Local Road NetworkThe road networks connecting Horton, Leek, and Rudyard (such as Horton Road and Reacliffe Road) consist largely of narrow, rural lanes, many of which lack continuous footways or street lighting. A C2A facility operates with high-frequency, 24-hour shift patterns, specialized medical deliveries, forensic transport vehicles, and emergency services. The local transport network is structurally incapable of safely absorbing this increased volume of heavy and commercial traffic. It creates a direct hazard for local motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians using rural lanes.

3. Inappropriate Proximity to Sensitive Local Amenities (Residential Amenity & Safeguarding)A secure psychiatric or detention facility must be positioned in a location that aligns with sustainable community planning. The proposed site sits in immediate proximity to highly sensitive local infrastructure, including Horton St. Michael's First School, local nurseries, and well-utilized public rights of way (such as the Horton footpaths). The intensive nature of a secure facility—including potential noise disruptions from localized internal courtyards, extensive security lighting overspill, and constant alarms—undermines the residential amenity, tranquility, and character of this quiet rural community.

4. Unsustainable Location and Lack of Public Transport Links Under sustainable development guidelines, major institutional facilities should be located near urban centers with robust public transport links. The Horton and Rudyard area lacks regular, high-frequency bus or rail services capable of supporting a large facility's workforce, professional visitors, and contractors. This forces an absolute reliance on private vehicle trips, directly contradicting the council's overarching carbon reduction and sustainable transport objectives.

For the reasons outlined above, most notably the detrimental impact on the Green Belt landscape, the hazardous pressure on narrow rural roads, and the total incompatibility with the surrounding village context, the proposed development represents an unsustainable and inappropriate overdevelopment of this rural site. I respectfully urge the Planning Committee and Case Officer to refuse planning permission for this application. I also request to be formally notified of any updates, officer reports, or upcoming public committee meetings regarding this file.

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