



HOW

Planning and Environmental Advisers

**SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT
PROPOSED EQUESTRIAN CENTRE
AT CROW TREES FARM, OAKAMoor
ON BEHALF OF LAVER LEISURE**

JUNE 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared by HOW Planning on behalf of Laver Leisure ("the applicant") in support of a planning application submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC). The planning application relates to Crow Trees Farm, Oakamoor ("the application site").

1.2 The planning application is submitted in full detail and seeks planning approval for the creation of an equestrian centre comprising:

- The demolition of the existing barn building and erection of 2 no. replacement stable buildings (use class D2) together comprising:
 - 13 no. stables;
 - 2 no. tack rooms and feed stores; and
 - 1 no. wash/ grooming room
- The change of use of:
 - the farmhouse and B&B (use class C3/C1) to an ancillary office for the administration of the equestrian centre (use class D2)
 - the B&B Chalet (use class C1) to an ancillary office for the administration of the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - the B&B (use class C1) to a reception to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - Covered Silo Pit (*sui generis*) to tack room (use class D2);
 - Outbuildings and garage (*sui generis*) to outbuildings and garage ancillary to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - Tool shed (*sui generis*) to tool shed ancillary to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - the agricultural fields to paddocks; and
- Formalised car parking comprising 19 no. car parking spaces and an area for manoeuvring horseboxes/ trailers.

- 1.3 A suite of documents are submitted in support of the application. The scope and extent of the revised supporting documents has been prior agreed with Mrs Jane Curley, a Principal Planning Officers at SMDC. A schedule of the supporting documents is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Application Supporting Documents

Document	Author	Date
Supporting Planning Statement	HOW Planning	June 2014
Design and Access Statement	NBDA Architects	June 2014
Bat Inspection and Emergence Survey Report	Bowland Ecology	June 2014
Tree Survey	Bowland Ecology	June 2014
Flood Risk Assessment Report	Abbeydale Building Environment Consultants	June 2014

- 1.4 The application is also supported by a suite of drawings prepared by NBDA Architects. Attached at **Appendix 1** is a Schedule of Submission Documents.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 This section describes the site's characteristics and local setting.

Site and its Surroundings

2.2 The site is irregular in shape and extends to approximately 24 hectares. It encompasses two parcels of land bisected by Eaves Lane. The application site as shown edged red on the Site Location Plan (drawing ref. 1372/CT-001) at **Appendix 2**, is situated approximately 1.4km north west of Oakamoor and 1.9km south east of Whiston.

2.3 The site comprises the following uses as shown on the Existing Site Plan (drawing ref. 1372/CT-002) at **Appendix 3**:

- A farmhouse (use class C3) with B&B rooms (use class C1) – 270 sq m;
- B&B chalet (use class C1) – 39 sq m;
- B&B (use class C1) – 102 sq m;
- Barn buildings (Sui Generis) – 650 sq m;
- Garage and outbuildings (Sui Generis) – 99 sq m;
- Covered silo pit (Sui Generis) – 65 sq m;
- Tool shed (Sui Generis) – 12 sq m; and
- Informal car parking

2.4 The site is bounded to the north and east by agricultural land, to the south by Carr Wood and to the west by the former Moneystone Quarry. It is located outside the settlement boundary of Oakamoor and is in open countryside.

2.5 The site slopes from north to south. The buildings are set out roughly parallel with the contours. Level platforms have been created on the original slope through cut and fill and several of the buildings are set into the slope such that they are single storey from the upper side, but 2 storey from the lower.

2.6 The site is located within the Potteries and Churnet Valley National Character Area (ref. NE509) as defined by Natural England and sub area 1a 'Alton and Oakamoor' of the Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment.

2.7 **Planning History**

2.8 The sites planning history is summarised below:

- On 12 February 2014 a planning application proposing change of use from existing C1 (holiday units) and Sui Generis to D2 (Equestrian Centre) at Crow Trees Farm (ref. SMD/2013/1115) was withdrawn. Concerns were raised by the case officer over the structural soundness of the existing barn and its ability to be converted into stables. The proposals have been refined to address these concerns and the existing barn will now be demolished and replaced with 2 no. stable buildings on a smaller footprint.
- On 7 March 2003 full planning permission was granted by SMDC for the conversion of barns to holiday units at Crow Trees Farm (LPA ref. 03/00074/FUL).

3. DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

3.1 This section describes the application proposals and should be read in conjunction with the application drawings prepared in support of the application by NBDA.

Description of Development

3.2 The planning application is submitted in full detail and seeks planning approval for the creation of an equestrian centre comprising:

- The demolition of the existing barn building and erection of 2 no. replacement stable buildings (use class D2) together comprising:
 - 13 no. stables;
 - 2 no. tack rooms and feed stores; and
 - 1 no. wash/ grooming room
- The change of use of:
 - the farmhouse and B&B (use class C3/C1) to an ancillary office for the administration of the equestrian centre (use class D2)
 - the B&B Chalet (use class C1) to an ancillary office for the administration of the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - the B&B (use class C1) to a reception to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - Covered Silo Pit (*sui generis*) to tack room (use class D2);
 - Outbuildings and garage (*sui generis*) to outbuildings and garage ancillary to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - Tool shed (*sui generis*) to tool shed ancillary to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - the agricultural fields to paddocks; and
- Formalised car parking comprising 19 no. car parking spaces and an area for manoeuvring horseboxes/ trailers.

Equestrian Centre

- 3.3 As shown on the Proposed Site Plan (**Appendix 4**) it is proposed to demolish the existing barn building and erect 2 no. single storey parallel stable blocks within its footprint containing 13 no. stables. The proposed stable buildings will be of smaller scale than the existing barn and of high quality design.
- 3.4 The proposed equestrian centre will offer the hire of horses between 7am and 7pm, 7 days per week. No livery will be offered. Riders will be able to hack on local bridleways and within the paddocks located within the red line boundary. The new stable buildings have been designed to accommodate up to 13 no. horses. No events, shows or competitions will be held at the equestrian centre. No ménage is proposed. The applicant is willing to enter into discussions with the Council to agree conditions which limit the operation of the equestrian centre as described in this paragraph.

Use and Amount

- 3.5 As shown in table 3 below the proposals are of a smaller scale than the existing development at Crow Trees Farm and will reduce the overall built area at the site by 422 sq m.

Table 3 – Existing and Proposed Building Footprint

Existing Building	Existing footprint (sq m)	Proposed Building	Proposed footprint (sq m)
A farmhouse (use class C3) with B&B rooms (use class C1)	270	Office accommodation ancillary to equestrian centre (use class D2)	270
B&B chalet (use class C1)	39	Office accommodation ancillary to equestrian centre (use class D2)	39
B&B (use class C1)	102	Reception to equestrian centre (use class D2)	102
Barn buildings (<i>sui generis</i>)	650	Stables (use class D2)	228
Garage and outbuildings (<i>sui generis</i>)	99	Garage and outbuildings ancillary to equestrian centre (use class D2)	99
Covered silo pit (<i>sui generis</i>)	65	Tack room (use class D2)	65
Tool shed (<i>sui generis</i>)	12	Tool shed ancillary to equestrian centre (use class D2)	12
Total	1,237	Total	815

- 3.6 With the exception of the existing barn which would be demolished and replaced by purpose built stables as part of the proposed development, no external alterations are proposed to any other buildings on the site.

Appearance

- 3.7 The stables elevation Plan ref. 1372/CT-014 Rev A (**Appendix 5**) illustrates the proposed appearance of the new stable building. The proposals would be of high quality design and would result in a significant visual improvement through the replacement of the existing barn building (**Appendix 6**) which has fallen into a state of disrepair. The buildings would be constructed of ship lap board and profiled fibre cement sheeting.

Layout

- 3.8 As shown on the proposed stables GA Plan ref. 1372/CT-012 Rev A (**Appendix 7**) the new stable buildings have been designed to accommodate up to 13 no. horses. The stable buildings would comprise:

- 13 no. stables;
- 2 no. tack rooms and feed stores;
- 1 no. wash/ grooming room; and
- A stable yard.

Landscape

- 3.9 The proposed stable buildings have been designed sensitively to a smaller scale than the existing barn and will be well screened by existing tree planting. The proposals are acceptable in landscape and visual terms.

Access

- 3.10 The site is accessible via the existing access point on Eaves Lane. As shown on drawing ref. 1372/CT-011 (**Appendix 3**), 19 no. formalised car parking spaces

are proposed along with parking spaces for horseboxes and trailers, and a turning area.

Tree Survey

- 3.11 As identified on the accompanying Tree Survey prepared by Bowland Ecology, 7 no. grade U trees (T2, T3, T4, T7, T12, G1 and G3) are to be removed as part of the proposed development to reduce overhanging. None of these trees have any significant arboricultural merit and their removal is acceptable.

Bat Survey

- 3.12 Bowland Ecology undertook a bat inspection survey and evening emergence survey of the barn at Crow Trees Farm in June 2014. The report concludes at paragraphs 4.8 - 4.10 that:

"The property is to be developed as an equestrian centre. The conversion will result in the property being occupied and will therefore be warmer and drier which may be a positive impact of the scheme, making the property more suitable for bats. There will be changes to ventilation and airflow.

Complete roost loss is unlikely as a building will remain present and will still be accessible to bats.

The site is surrounded by pasture, tree lines and woodland which will not be affected by the development. There will be no impacts to commuting routes or foraging habitats."

- 3.13 The application proposals are acceptable from an ecology perspective and appropriate mitigation measures as described in the Bowland Ecology report will be adopted at the site.

Flood Risk Assessment

- 3.14 A Flood Risk Assessment of the site was undertaken by Abbeydale BEC. It identifies that the site is located outside the flood plain (Zone 1). Therefore, the

report concludes that the development proposed is appropriate and no further assessment is required.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 This section provides an overview of the relevant planning policy guidance at the national and local levels.

Development Plan

- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Planning Act 2004 states that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 4.3 The development plan for the site comprises the following policy documents:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy adopted March 2014; and
- Staffordshire Minerals Local Plan adopted December 1999

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (March 2014)

- 4.4 The Core Strategy, adopted in March 2014, is the land use strategy for the District. It includes policies to guide development and proposals for the use of land to ensure the needs of the Borough's population are met.

Tourism and Cultural Development

- 4.5 Core Strategy Policy E3 'Tourism and Cultural Development' states:

"New tourism and cultural development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports the local economy and promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District and enhances the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5, SS6 and SS7. In addition:

- *New tourist and visitor accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering, good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. They should normally be located in or*

close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available or in areas specifically allocated for tourism development. Outside of these locations, including within the Green Belt, new accommodation, attractions and facilities should:

- be of a scale and design which can be easily assimilated into the local area in a sustainable manner;*
 - normally be limited to the conversion of existing buildings; or*
 - exceptionally, may be new build where it is required to support or complement existing accommodation, facilities or attractions and there is an identified need which cannot be met in other ways. Preference will be given to buildings which are non-permanent in nature.*
- *Outside the Green Belt permission will be granted for sites for camping and touring caravans provided they are well screened, sited and designed and have good access. Small camping sites may be appropriate in the Green Belt provided they do not prejudice the 'openness', there is appropriate screening and any necessary facilities can be accommodated within existing buildings.*
 - *Support will be given to the provision of new cultural facilities in town centres and villages to meet the needs of local communities and visitors.*
 - *All development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance."*

Sustainable Tourism

4.6 Core Strategy Policy SS7 'Churnet Valley Area Strategy' states:

"The Churnet Valley is identified as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. Within this area particular support will be given to the following forms of development and measures:

- *short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;*
- *the expansion of existing tourist attractions and facilities and the provision of compatible new tourist attractions and facilities;*
- *measures to enhance, protect and interpret the landscape character and heritage assets of the Churnet Valley;*
- *measures to remediate and restore derelict land, buildings and features including the appropriate redevelopment of sites;*
- *actions to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the valley, including the maintenance, buffering and connection of designated sites and actions to mitigate climate change;*
- *measures that support and integrate the heritage transport infrastructure of the valley, sympathetically with enhancing and developing links to strategic footpaths, cycle and horse riding routes;*
- *measures to improve connectivity and accessibility to and within the Churnet Valley by sustainable transport means.*

Any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and demonstrate strong sustainable development and environmental management principles. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximize opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.

Complementary and sensitive highway improvements to access routes and/or measures to support other alternative means of access will be required to serve any developments which generate significant additional demand for travel.

A Masterplan will be produced to guide the detailed planning and management of the area. The Site Allocations DPD will allocate specific sites for development or redevelopment.

Further development at Alton Towers shall be considered against guidance set out in the Masterplan. This may include, as appropriate, measures to improve the principal access routes to Alton Towers and the provision of a road link."

Rural Development

4.7 Core Strategy Policy R1 'Rural Diversification' states:

"All development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment.

Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise and pollution.

Wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion. Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement.

Within the Green Belt, inappropriate development which is otherwise acceptable within the terms of this policy, will still need to be justified by very special circumstances."

Landscape and Settlement Setting

4.8 Core Strategy Policy DC3 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' states:

"The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

- 1. Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement*

and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;

- 2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*
- 3. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;*
- 4. Identifying through the Site Allocations DPD and protecting from inappropriate development, areas of visual open space where the intention will be to retain the land's open and undeveloped appearance. Where appropriate the Council will seek public access agreements with the land owners and seek proposals for the enhancement or improvement of these areas as part of the green infrastructure network in accordance with policy C3. In exceptional cases, limited development of areas of visual open space may be acceptable where this will bring about overriding improvements to the open space itself;*
- 5. Recognising and conserving the special quality of the landscape in the Peak District National Park, and ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the National Park."*

Other Material Considerations

Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (March 2014)

- 4.9 The Core Strategy, policy, SS7, identifies the Churnet Valley as a sustainable tourism area. This Masterplan, which is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), has an influence on future planning decisions and on other initiatives and strategies affecting the area.
- 4.10 The Masterplan identifies key opportunity sites, such as at the former Moneystone Quarry, located immediately to the west of the application site. An extract taken

from the Churnet Valley Masterplan which describes the concept at Moneystone Quarry is attached at **Appendix 8**.

National Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.11 In March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published, consolidating previous national planning guidance and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.12 The NPPF does not alter the statutory status of the Development Plan and planning law still requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.13 The overall emphasis of the NPPF is to reiterate the Government's key objectives of facilitating economic growth and securing sustainable development. These overarching policies seek to integrate the needs of planning and transport whilst focussing development in the most appropriate locations, thereby protecting and enhancing the environment.
- 4.14 Central to the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the need for the planning system to support economic growth. Paragraph 14 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of the policy for decision making:

"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

For decision-taking this means:

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*

- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or where relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*¹

4.15 The NPPF seeks to promote and support a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 28 states (HOW emphasis in bold):

"Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- *support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through **conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings**;*
- *promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- *support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include **supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres**; and*
- *promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*²

¹ National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) page 4 paragraph 14

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.16 On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which included a list of the previous planning practice guidance documents cancelled when the site was launched. The NPPG provides planning guidance on a range of planning matters and supplements the policies contained in the NPPF.

² National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) page 9 paragraph 28

5. APPRAISAL OF PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 This section provides an appraisal of the proposed scheme against the Development Plan and other material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

Core Strategy Policy E3 'Tourism and Cultural Development'

- 5.2 The proposed equestrian centre would be situated adjacent to the Moneystone Opportunity Site as identified in the recently adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (CVM SPD) (**Appendix 8**). The Development Strategy for Moneystone Quarry included within the CVM SPD proposes new leisure development based around restoration of the quarry comprising the following appropriate uses:
- *"Holiday accommodation – low impact holiday lodges in Zones 1 and 2. Limited development in Zones 4 and 5. Maximum of 250 holiday lodges in total.*
 - *Outdoor recreation facilities – including walking, cycling, horse riding and climbing Hub within Zone 1.*
 - *Recreational lake to include non-motorised water based activities in Zone 3"*
- 5.3 The proposed equestrian centre offers excellent connectivity to the Moneystone Quarry and other tourist destinations and attractions and therefore accords with Policy E3.
- 5.4 The new accommodation proposed is also of a scale and design which can be assimilated into the local area in a sustainable manner. The new stable buildings will replace the existing barn building which has fallen into a poor state of repair. The proposed new stable buildings are smaller in scale reducing the overall footprint of the existing barn from 650 sq m to 228 sq m, a reduction of 422 sq m.

Core Strategy Policy SS7 'Churnet Valley Area Strategy'

- 5.5 This policy identifies the Churnet Valley as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. It lends support to development that will deliver the provision of compatible new tourist attractions and facilities such as the proposed equestrian centre.
- 5.6 Furthermore, the proposals are of a scale, nature and design quality which conserve and enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. The proposed development will have an acceptable landscape and visual impact by virtue of its small scale and existing tree screening. The proposals also seek to demolish a redundant barn and replace it with a high quality stables.
- 5.7 In light of the above, the proposals accord with Policy SS7 'Churnet Valley Area Strategy' and will make a positive contribution to tourism in the Churnet Valley.

Core Strategy Policy R1 'Rural Diversification'

- 5.8 The proposed equestrian centre is acceptable in accordance with Policy R1 as it will:
- Enhance the character and appearance of the countryside, removing a poor quality barn and replacing it with high quality stables of a smaller scale;
 - Provide an opportunity for sustainable rural diversification to a tourism facility; and
 - Facilitate economic activity which will create employment and indirectly benefit the local economy.
- 5.9 Furthermore by virtue of its small scale, nature and levels of on-site activity the proposals will not harm the rural character or environmental quality of the area. The type and amount of traffic which could be generated by the proposals will be minimal.
- 5.10 In accordance with Policy R1, development is located primarily in existing buildings which will be converted to new uses. Furthermore, the replacement stables buildings are of smaller scale than the existing barn structure and will be

of high quality design which will have a minimal impact on the countryside or landscape quality of the area.

- 5.11 Technical studies assessing the potential impacts of the proposed development on bats, trees and flood risk have been undertaken at the site and accompany this submission. All assessments carried out by the technical team conclude that the scheme is acceptable in environmental terms.
- 5.12 In light of the above, the proposals accord with Policy R1 'Rural Diversification'.

Core Strategy Policy DC3 'Landscape and Settlement Setting'

- 5.13 Policy DC3 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' seeks to protect and, where possible, enhance the local landscape and setting. The proposed development accords with the relevant provisions of this policy for the following reasons:
1. Given the extensive screening around the site, distance from sensitive receptors and the fact that the scale of development at Crow Trees Farm will be reduced by the scheme, the proposals would not cause harm or be detrimental to the character of the local area or wider landscape setting. An equestrian centre is considered to be entirely appropriate in a rural area.
 2. The proposed development will enhance the local landscape character by demolishing the existing barn which is in a poor state of repair and replacing it with high quality stables.
 3. The proposed replacement building will be made from ship lap board and has been sympathetically designed to respect the existing buildings on site/ the wider landscape. The existing barn which is built from a range of materials, including plastic sheeting, will be demolished and removed.
- 5.14 In light of the above, the proposals accord with Policy DC3 'Landscape and Settlement Setting'.

Churnet Valley Masterplan

- 5.15 The proposed development will not only diversify the local rural economy but also provide a tourism offer that currently is not available in the locality. The proposals represent an excellent opportunity to provide a tourist attraction compatible with the Churnet Valley Masterplan adopted March 2014. Furthermore, given that the site is located adjacent to Moneystone Quarry there may be opportunities to link with the potential tourism offer provided there in the future.
- 5.16 The proposals will encourage horse riding and the use of bridleway's in the surrounding area, providing a sustainable and accessible way for riders to experience the Churnet Valley.
- 5.17 In light of the above, the proposals fully accord with the vision for the Churnet Valley as set out in the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.18 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF seeks to promote and support a prosperous rural economy. The proposals will predominantly utilise existing buildings through conversion and where a new building is proposed this will be of high quality design, use sustainable building materials and will be of smaller scale than the existing barn on the site.
- 5.19 The NPPF pays particular attention to the role sustainable tourism can play in facilitating rural diversification. It states (HOW emphasis):

*"support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include **supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres**"*

5.20 The proposed equestrian centre represents a rural enterprise which will fulfil a need currently not catered for in the local area. In light of the above, it is evident that the proposals are in full accordance with Paragraph 28 of the NPPF.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared by HOW Planning on behalf of Laver Leisure ("the applicant") in support of a planning application submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC). The planning application relates to Crow Trees Farm, Oakamoor ("the application site").
- 6.2 The planning application is submitted in full detail and seeks planning approval for the creation of an equestrian centre comprising:
- The demolition of the existing barn building and erection of 2 no. replacement stable buildings (use class D2) together comprising:
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 - the B&B (use class C1) to a reception to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - Covered Silo Pit (*sui generis*) to tack room (use class D2);
 - Outbuildings and garage (*sui generis*) to outbuildings and garage ancillary to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - Tool shed (*sui generis*) to tool shed ancillary to the equestrian centre (use class D2);
 - the agricultural fields to paddocks; and
 - Formalised car parking comprising 19 no. car parking spaces and an area for manoeuvring horseboxes/ trailers.

- 6.3 The proposed equestrian centre will offer the hire of horses for the day between 7am and 7pm, 7 days per week. Riders will be able to hack on local bridleways and within the paddocks located within the red line boundary. The new stable blocks have been designed to accommodate up to 13 no. horses. No events, shows or competitions will be held at the equestrian centre. No ménage is proposed. The applicant is willing to enter into discussions with the Council to agree conditions which limit the operation of the equestrian centre as described in this paragraph.
- 6.4 It has been demonstrated above that the proposals are in fully accordance with relevant Development Plan policies E3, SS7, R1 and DC3, the Churnet Valley Masterplan and the NPPF. Therefore it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted without delay.

This report has been prepared by HOW Planning LLP, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. The scope of this report is subject to specific agreement and has been prepared solely for the benefit of our Client and should not be relied upon by any other party. Any third parties that use this information do so at their own risk. HOW Planning LLP accepts no responsibility for information contained within this report that has been independently produced or verified.

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