

Development, Stafford Borough Council
Civic Centre, Riverside
Stafford, ST16 3AQ

Senders address
Date

Planning Application Reference No: ECC02

I object to the above planning application above for land south of the Stone Road, Eccleshall for the following reasons;

(Please insert in here those issues which affect you personally)

In particular, this application should be rejected because:

1. The impact on the area

- 1.1 The development is on BMV grade 2 and 3A land (Natural England Agricultural Land Classification guidance para 001, ref id:8-001-20190721) protecting this land is important for maintaining food security and a sustainable food supply.
- 1.2 NPPF states that planning policies should recognise the benefits of BMV land and areas of poorer quality should be preferred
- 1.3 Development of agricultural land that is in use is not supported by NPPF 127(b). NPPF (124) 'emphasizes the importance of effective land use for housing and other needs while protecting the environment and promoting healthy living conditions. It advises that strategic policies should outline a strategy for meeting needs, prioritizing the use of previously developed land.'
- 1.4 Spatial Principle 7(ii), Local Plan, states 'development in the countryside will only be allowed where it is consistent with the objectives of Spatial Principle 6 and policies E2 and C5.'
- 1.5 The SBC Landscape Sensitivity Study, table 1 shows ECC06 as High/medium Sensitivity. The study states that for these sites the effect of development would have 'significant effect. **Mitigation is unlikely to be possible'**
- 1.6 This site borders on the Gentleshaw Wildlife centre which has been in operation since 1993. They depend on open countryside to manage their collection of birds and rare animal species. The noise from an adjacent housing estate would make much of their work unsustainable.

2. Scale

- 2.1 The Local Plan states areas outside Stafford and Stone 'provide for high quality new **small scale housing development** at appropriate villages that reflects their distinctive local character'
- 2.2 This development of up to 150 houses will border on another planned estate of 480 houses
- 2.3 The scale cannot be viewed without taking into account, the other developments planned around Eccleshall and is **clearly a Material Consideration**. The total, currently, is 961 houses bringing in approximately 2210 people, a 34% increase on the current population. This is out of all proportion to the allocation in the Local Plan, Spatial Principle 4 (SP4) para 6.53, states that the Key Service Villages will have a new provision of 537 out of 6586 (20 year plan) i.e. 8.15%, the new annual target is 782, so the KSV target, as a whole, should be 64. Even with the new target giving a 5 year supply of 826 houses the KSV target should be 67.
- 2.4 The KSV's have already overdelivered against their target; 22% of completions since 2011 almost three times their planned share!
- 2.5 The additional housing would conflict with Spatial Policy SP3 & SP4 which define the settlement hierarchy and balanced distribution. NPPF directs housing supply to follow a Plan led pattern not to frustrate the Local Plan aim of directing the most growth to Stafford, Stone and strategic areas.

3. Settlement Boundaries

3.1 The Eccleshall Neighbourhood Plan Settlement Boundary Map shows that this development is outside the settlement boundary designed to prevent urbanisation of a historic village.

3.2 Acceptance of greenfield development would set a precedent for building housing in the countryside

3.3 This site, situated south of the Stone Road, would, with the adjacent development of 480 houses, create a corridor of housing linking up with the new developments at the Stone end of the B5026 road. Merging of Stone with Eccleshall would be the inevitable result.

4. Access

4.1 Access will be via the B5026 very close to the entrance to Gentleshaw Wildlife Centre/Fletchers Garden Centre, to the East, a bend in the road and the entrance to Blurtons Lane. A local survey established an average of 2 cars per house, so another 300 cars will be entering a potentially dangerous stretch of road

5. Schools

5.1 It was calculated by SBC that 150 dwellings would be expected to generate 23 First school pupils, 18 Middle school pupils, 14 High school pupils and 14 Post 16 pupils.

Developer	Site	Houses	First School	Middle	High	Post 16
Bloor	25/41516/OUT	480	72	58	43	14
Bellway	South of Stone Road ECC02	150	23	18	14	4
Taylor Wimpey	North Shaws Lane ECC14	150	23	18	14	4
Muller	25/41015/OUT 25/41016/OUT 25/41120/OUT	55 48 71	8 7 11	7 6 9	5 4 6	2 2 2
Total		954	144	116	86	28

5.2 Eccleshall has only one School, Bishops Lonsdale Academy for primary pupils and the availability of teachers is such that recently years have had to be combined so existing staff can cope.

5.3 Secondary Schools in Stone

and Stafford are full, not all pupils can use the school bus service, and many parents drive their children to school, resulting in more road journeys, the opposite of Government Policy

5.4 In response to another very recent planning application Stafford Borough Council stated:

Site Selection Assessment

Topic Area	Evaluation
Education	<p>Primary School: Bishop Lonsdale CE Primary Academy. Limited capacity to accommodate further new houses within Eccleshall, and school cannot be expanded.</p> <p>Secondary School: Sir Graham Balfour High School. Development cannot be accommodated within existing capacity; school cannot be expanded.</p>

Outcome of Assessment: Rejected Site

Reasoning: Education capacity constraints are unlikely to be able to be resolved.

6. Impact on the community

6.1 The latest census figures show that Eccleshall has a higher average age than Stafford Borough and 'there is a requirement for bungalows' not addressed in this application. The Specialist Housing mentioned in the application is **not being built**; land is allocated if the specialist houses are 'brought forward'

6.2 Crown Surgery provides services to 7850 patients, soon to be increased by 1500 from outside their current area. The ICB has no plans to expand facilities or increase numbers of GPs, any available funds will be for a Primary Care Hub which is not planned for Eccleshall. Residents already must travel to Stafford Hospital for routine investigations including blood tests and ECGs. Increased patient numbers from this development will lengthen already long waiting times for appointments and result in increased car journeys to Stafford and Stoke Hospitals. Development in Woodseaves will add extra numbers to an already overstretched Surgery

6.3 Traffic will increase as there are few jobs in Eccleshall so more car journeys north to the industrial Estates, east to Stafford, Stone, etc, west to Market Drayton.

6.4 The developer states the mini roundabout in Eccleshall is already at capacity

6.5 Parking in Eccleshall is already very difficult, especially when the Coop car park is closed.

6.6 The site is $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the shops in Eccleshall, not counting the distance from individual houses to the site exit. There are limited safe footpaths and little lighting.

7. Flooding

7.1 Flooding in Eccleshall is a regular occurrence that is monitored by Severn Trent, but no solution has been implemented. The flooding maps from Severn Trent do not show a problem, because the water does not come from the River Sow, it comes down the side of the valley in which Eccleshall is built. Since Sancerre Grange was constructed the water table has increased, causing flooding, particularly affecting Fletchers Garden Centre and the Catholic Church.

7.2 The excess water overwhelms the sewerage system resulting, according to Severn Trent, in 67 discharges into the river in 2023, and 26 in 2024. Daily truckloads of liquid are observed being trucked from Sturbridge Water Treatment plant due to its lack of capacity.

7.3 The location of this site shows no access to existing drains to take surface water and mixing this with foul water would overwhelm the sewage works.

7.4 There is always flooding on the B5026 from overflow onto the road which will be made worse when the fields are concreted and tarmacked over, making the access and road dangerous.

8. Water supply

8.1 Severn Trent have stated to the Eccleshall Parish Council that their long-range plan only allows for 200 extra houses so will be unable to cope with the increased demand.

8.2 Severn Trent also stated in response to Applications: 25/40959/OUT & 25/41229/OUT Re Site: Land off Eccleshall Road Stone & Land off Eccleshall Road Stone, **“We shall be looking to request a Grampian Drainage Condition on the two planning applications above”**

9. Nature Conservation

9.1 The Climate Change Topic Paper (Local Plan 2020-2040) points out the need to protect and restore our natural environment. The Biodiversity Topic paper (Local Plan 2020-2040) state that the development of sites can result in the decrease of populations since species cannot disperse across a disconnected landscape. This land has high biodiversity which will be destroyed by the building.

9.2 **On the East side of this development is Gentleshaw Wildlife Centre, which will be irreparably damaged by having a huge housing estate virtually surrounding it.**

10. Sustainability

10.1 The Sustainability Appraisal of the SBC Local Plan 2020-2040 considered areas for sustainable growth. This document shows (p45) that Eccleshall has had the highest growth (2011 to 2019) of all the Key Service Villages, with 340 houses. **Without any increase in infrastructure.**

10.2 Sustainable Development Principles (NPPF Section 2) requires sustainable patterns of growth. Development should be located where it enhances sustainable travel, minimises environmental harm, and aligns with local plans. This site does not meet these principles.

10.3 **Under NPPF paragraphs 174 and 180, local planning authorities must protect valued landscapes and maintain the intrinsic character of the countryside.** Development on this site would result in the loss of open countryside and harm local landscape character.

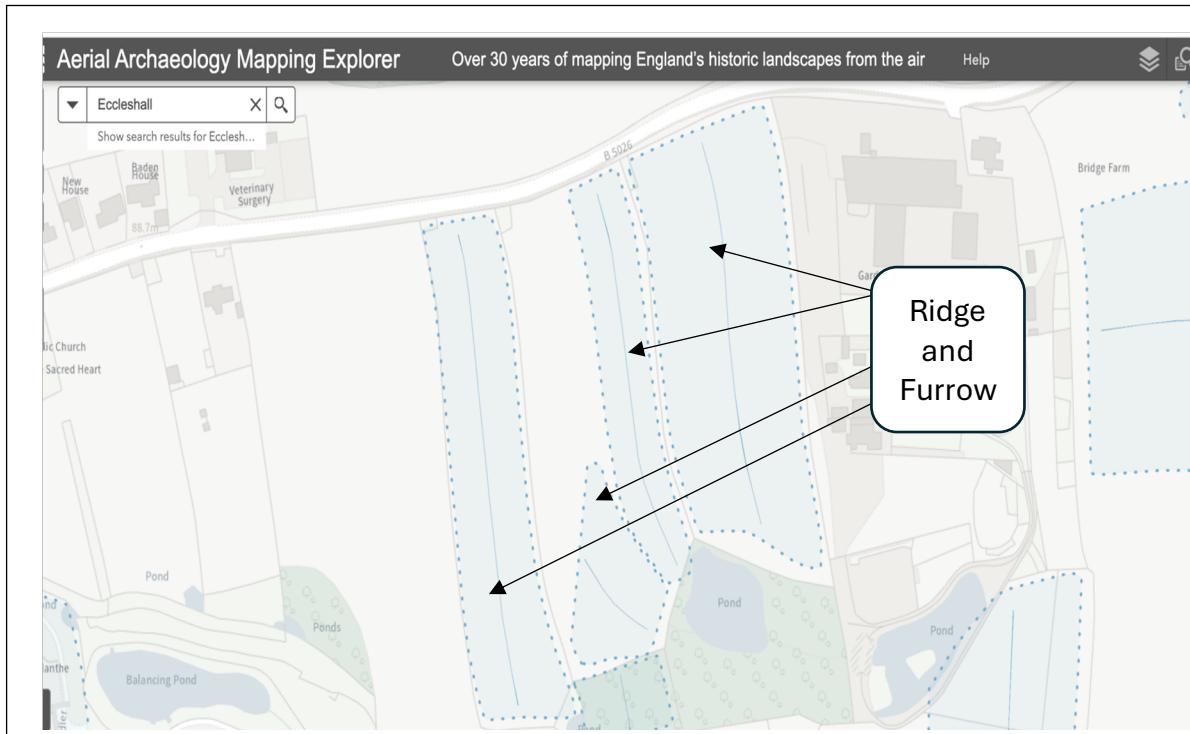
10.4 A significant portion of Eccleshall’s population is aged 65 and over, a higher percentage than the overall average for Staffordshire. The higher proportion of older adults places a greater demand on health and social care services which are already struggling to cope.

10.5 Car journeys will increase, as there are few jobs in Eccleshall, north to the industrial Estates, east to Stafford, Stone, etc, west to Market Drayton.

10.6 Bus timetables show the last bus from Stafford is 17.45pm (16.30pm on Saturdays) and 15.25pm from Stone (with no Saturday buses). There is a 6.40am bus to Stafford, but the next one is 7.55am, arriving at 8.43am, because it goes via Woodseaves and Parkside! How do parents get their children to school or residents to and from work? They must travel by car

11. Heritage Impacts

The Historic England Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer demonstrates that the eastern parcel of land adjacent to Newport Road is heavily constrained by the ‘ridge and furrow’ area. The following extract taken from the map shows the extent of the area (accessed December 2025).



The Archaeological Report submitted by the Stafford County Council Environment Specialist (Archaeology) December 2025 states: an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to better understand and characterise the potential archaeological resource within the application site. Should the application be granted consent it would result in the loss of a heritage asset. This would be contrary to the NPPF, Chapter 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' makes clear in Paragraph 202 that heritage assets range from sites or buildings of local historic value to World Heritage Sites. It also recognises that these are irreplaceable. Paragraph 207 states: "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting." The Parish Council request that the supporting information submitted by the applicant is updated to take full account of the correct extent of heritage assets within the proposed development and assess the proposals impact accordingly. Paragraph 214 states that: **"Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent,** unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site.
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation.
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible.
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

The application fails to demonstrate how it satisfies all the criteria of Paragraph 214 and therefore should be refused.

I am not against appropriate development in appropriate places, but this one, together with the five other Applications either submitted or about to be submitted, will urbanise a historic market town, surround its historic centre with modern estates and destroy productive farmland

Signed

Print Name