

Subject: Planning Application 25/40960/OUT @ Land Off Green Road, Weston – OBJECTION

(2nd October 2025)

Submitted by: WESTON WITH GAYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Beth Nicholls

Clerk to Weston with Gayton Parish Council

Tel: 07594 002590

Email: clerk@westongayton-pc.gov.uk

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FAO: Stafford Borough Planning Department, Hannah Cross, Case Officer

Email: planning@staffordbc.gov.uk: 01785 619515

Dear Sir/Madam

Weston with Gayton Parish Council wish to register a formal objection to planning application (25/40960/OUT) relating to land off Green Road, Weston, which proposes *“the erection of 150 residential dwellings, with associated infrastructure works, including access (vehicular, pedestrian and cycle), drainage, public open space and landscaping.”*

As a statutory consultee and representative of Weston residents and the wider parish, the Parish Council (‘the PC’), consider this application to be fundamentally flawed. It conflicts with several material planning considerations, is not in accordance with the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough 2011 - 2031 and does not meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for sustainable development.

** We note that work on the 2020–2040 Local Plan has ceased, with a recommendation that preparatory work should instead commence under the new planning system, covering the period 2025–2045**

The PC’s objection is based on the following material considerations:

- ❖ The scale and density of the proposed development is inappropriate and disproportionate
- ❖ The scheme would create significant traffic, access, and highway safety concerns
- ❖ The development would place unsustainable pressure on local services and infrastructure
- ❖ The character and identity of the village and surrounding area would be adversely affected

General point to note:

The PC express its disappointment that the applicant has largely ignored its submission to the pre-application public consultation on the proposed outline planning application for land off Green Road (May 2025). The PC maintain its view that the applicant has been premature in submitting this application and, from what we have seen, has failed to consider the full impact

and consequences of this significant proposal. Insufficient time and consideration appear to have been given to understanding the unique context and character of the village of Weston. This approach continues to risk setting an unwelcome precedent and does little to reassure either the PC or residents that their concerns will be genuinely heard, now or as the matter progresses. This is not the position in which we, as the PC and as residents of Weston, wish or expect to find ourselves in. We therefore insist that our voices are fully acknowledged and respected.

PC's Objections in Summary*

- **Development scale disproportionate:** the proposed 150 dwellings would increase the parish housing stock by 32.4%, a sharp rise compared to past growth, conflicting with the village's Tier 4 designation and adopted local plans.
- **Traffic and highway safety concerns:** the application's transport assessments underestimate local travel realities, with existing hazardous junctions at Green Road's connections to A51 and A518, existence of Old Road, limited pedestrian infrastructure, and increased vehicle use expected to exacerbate congestion and accident risks.
- **Inadequate public transport:** the current bus service is insufficient, and proposed improvements funded by Section 106 contributions lack clarity on duration and effectiveness, making the target reduction in single-occupancy car journeys unlikely.
- **Pedestrian and cyclist access issues:** existing walking and cycling routes are unsafe or inadequate, with no clear plans to improve connectivity, especially regarding hazardous roads, narrow bridges, and missing links to local amenities and the canal towpath.
- **Pressure on local services:** the development would strain healthcare, education, and retail services, with no direct public transport to the nearest GP surgery, limited hospital emergency care, school facility concerns and absence of a local shop since 2013.
- **Flooding / drainage risks and sewage concerns:** despite the site being in Flood Zone 1, adjacent properties experience regular flooding due to poor maintenance of local watercourses and drainage infrastructure, raising concerns about long-term flood management. The sewage infrastructure serving Weston has been under considerable strain for many years and is understood to be inadequate to support a housing development of this scale.
- **Impact on village character:** the development isolates the proposed new housing site from the village core, threatens open village greens held in covenant, and risks undermining the rural identity and community spirit of Weston.
- **Unclear community benefits and future risks:** the PC seek detailed clarification regarding affordable housing, education, healthcare contributions, and the proposed arrangements for future site management (Section 106 monies). In addition, the PC is concerned that approval of this application could set a precedent for further housing development in subsequent years.

Conclusion

The PC strongly urge SBC to refuse planning permission. The proposal represents a substantial and unsustainable development that would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the character and identity of Weston, place unsupportable strain on local infrastructure, and severely diminish the residential amenity of its residents. These harms, grounded in legitimate material planning considerations, clearly outweigh any presumed benefits of the scheme.

We therefore request that our objection be formally recorded and given full weight in the determination of this application, and that the PC be notified of the date and time of the Planning Committee meeting as this application has been called in by the Stafford Borough Councillor for Weston, Frances Beatty.

Your faithfully

For and on behalf of Weston with Gayton Parish Council

For a more detail breakdown of our objections with supporting evidence drawn from national and local planning policy, please see **Appendix One below:*

APPENDIX ONE: PC OBJECTIONS IN DETAIL:

❖ The scale and density of the proposed development is inappropriate and disproportionate

Although Weston has long been identified as a key service village, and the land off Green Road has appeared in Stafford Borough Council's SHELAA for several years, its Tier 4 designation, defined by limited services and infrastructure, makes it unsuitable for major development. While the Green Road site has been assessed previously, at that time it was discounted in light of a lower housing requirement and the provisions of the NPPF.

As noted, work on SBC's Local Plan 2020 – 2040 Local Plan has ceased, with justification for the proposed development instead being based on the NPPF and the acknowledged shortfall in SBC's housing capacity. The PC strongly believe however, that certain underlying policy principles remain relevant, particularly regarding scale (adopted Local Plan 2011 – 2031). The proposed development is disproportionately large and conflicts with existing policy, notwithstanding the provisions of the NPPF. The PC oppose the idea that housing should be provided through "development anywhere, at any price".

The addition of up to 150 new dwellings represents a 32.4% increase in the number of residential dwellings within the Parish.

Historically, it should be noted that between April 2011 and March 2019, planning permission was granted for 14 new dwellings in Weston, representing a 3% increase in the settlement. The Settlement Assessment (July 2018) also records that 10 dwellings were approved between 2011 and 2017. At this time, it was suggested that Weston had made only a small contribution to housing growth, with potential implications for future development allocations. However, focusing narrowly on this period risks presenting a distorted picture. Just before this timeframe,

a major scheme at Salt Works Lane delivered a significant expansion, almost a 24% increase in the village's housing supply, without any corresponding growth in local facilities. The PC suggest that the Weston of 2025 is less suitable for a development of this scale and nature than it once was.

Additionally, the PC request that it be formally recorded that it fully supports the recommendation of Stafford Borough Council (Strategic Planning & Placemaking), as set out in their formal response to this planning application dated 18th September 2025, namely that planning consent should be refused. This position reflects their assessment of the application against paragraph 11 of the NPPF and the five-year housing land supply, as well as other material considerations, including those identified in the site profiles included in their response.

❖ **The scheme would create significant traffic, access, and highway safety concerns**

The applicant's **Travel Plan and Transportation Report – Transport Assessment** have been reviewed by the PC. Fundamentally, we consider that the methodology underpinning these documents is, at best, disconnected from the day-to-day realities and practical travel behaviours and needs of both Weston residents and those coming into and out of the village.

At worst, the approach could be perceived as dismissive and flippant of the genuine transport needs and patterns within the community.

Specific Observations:

Transport Assessment 4.0 – Development Proposals:

Section 4.4 states: *'2.0m footways will be provided on both sides of the site access. The existing footway running along the northern verge of Green Road is proposed to be widened to 2.0m between Ferrers Road East and Ferrers Road West (near the Woolpack public house).'*

- The PC wish to highlight that the existing footpath proposed for widening is a listed asset under the ownership and maintenance of the PC.

Transport Assessment 4.12 – Bus Service Enhancement

This section states: *... Hub will liaise with SCC's public transport team with a view to agreeing Section 106 (s106) contributions to deliver bus service improvements in the area, particularly regarding the potential for enhancing the existing 841 bus service. This is likely to comprise providing a service frequency of 30 minutes during peak periods and hourly services during off-peak periods.*

- The PC consider that this statement, in its current form, implicitly acknowledges that the existing bus transport service is not adequate or fit for purpose to support the application.
- Should improvements to the bus service be delivered through Section 106 (S106) funding, the PC wish to understand how long such financial support would remain in place. Would it be indefinite, or time-limited?

Travel Plan 5.0, Travel Plan Targets

5.7 & 5.8 states: *... 'The proposed development will seek to deliver a reduction of 10% in single occupancy car journeys within five years of full occupation; in real terms, this would seek to*

reduce the car driver trips by 8.5% (10% of current 85% single occupancy car use), down to 76.5% from 85%.

This is likely to provide a challenging, but achievable, target for the proposed development; with proposals to increase the frequency of the 841 bus service in particular expected to assist in achieving the modal shift.'

- The PC does not accept that such a target is achievable based on a merely *probable* improvement in bus services. It is considered that, regardless of any incentives or travel targets set, journeys will continue to be made predominantly by single-occupancy car use. This outcome would directly conflict with the site development policy.

The Travel Plan and the Transport Assessment both fail to mention a Construction Management Plan.

Further, the PC re-iterates the following:

Traffic Implications

- ❖ The addition of up to 150 new dwellings could result in approximately 300 - 500 additional residents, depending on household size
- ❖ Assuming three-quarters of these new households own two vehicles, this equates to roughly 225 additional cars.
- ❖ If three-quarters of those vehicles make at least one round trip per day, this would conservatively add around **337 daily journeys** along Green Road and through the village.

- Green Road & A51

Green Road has traffic calming measures in place, with a 30mph speed limit. However, the junction where Green Road meets the A51 has always been hazardous. Visibility is poor in both directions, and the high volume and speed of A51 traffic (notwithstanding the 40mph speed limit) make exiting particularly difficult.

Drivers often wait between 3 to 5 minutes for a safe gap to join the A51 in either direction. We are deeply concerned about the potential congestion and increased risk of accidents if a significant number of vehicles begin using this route, especially during peak hours and school runs.

- Green Road & A518

Accessing the A518 from Green Road requires crossing a bridge with a 7.5-tonne weight limit. There is no right turn permitted from Green Road, only a left turn towards Stafford. Due to the narrow width of Green Road from Bridge Cottage and Bridge Farmhouse, vehicles entering or exiting must give way, as the road only safely accommodates single-file traffic.

- Green Road & Old Road, onto A518

The application documentation fails to acknowledge the *existing* use of Old Road as a common route to access or exit the A518 to and from the village.

Old Road is residential in nature, with limited parking capacity, combined with frequent on-road parking making it unsuitable for any significant increase in through-traffic. This stretch of road

often functions as a de facto chicane and will not safely accommodate higher volumes of vehicles.

This entry and exit point is often used by villagers seeking to avoid the difficulty and stress of accessing the A51 from Green Road. It also provides a convenient way to turn right towards the crossroads and traffic lights, allowing access to the A51 in either direction or to continue along the A518 towards Uttoxeter.

- **Green Road**

Some sections of Green Road lack a pedestrian footpath altogether.

An increase in traffic on Green Road would significantly heighten the risk for children and others needing to cross. More vehicles mean fewer safe gaps in traffic, making it harder to cross safely and increasing the potential for accidents.

- **Vehicle speeds on the A51 and A518**

A51: Speed limit 40mph, however the Staffordshire Police speed camera sited to the left of the exit from Green Road is non-operational.

A518: Speed limit 30mph.

The PC operates a Speed Indicator Device (SID), which is periodically positioned at designated locations along the A51 and A518 to monitor and display vehicle speeds. In addition, Weston benefits from an active Community Speed Watch (CSW) group, comprising trained local volunteers who collaborate with Staffordshire Police to address speeding concerns. For detailed statistical data or further information, please contact the CSW team, Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership.

Access Issues for Walkers and Cyclists

Although the aim of creating a pedestrian friendly environment in Weston Village, encouraging walking and cycling, appears progressive and sustainable, several practical issues raise doubts about its feasibility. The PC maintain that the cycling and pedestrian approach underlying these documents fails to reflect everyday realities such as network availability, condition and safety of walking and cycling routes. In particular, the assumptions made seem to overlook key challenges to pedestrian and cycle accessibility.

The application documentation material lacks clear, actionable plans for establishing safe cycling routes both within the village, to perceived 'local facilities / locations in nearby villages and, around any new development. Currently, the footpaths along the A51 and A518 are poorly maintained and hazardous. Given the speed and volume of traffic on these roads, they are unlikely to appeal to casual or local cyclists as viable 'road' routes.

Routes towards Salt and Weston Bank via the A518 are heavily used by both walkers and cyclists but are severely compromised by the hazardous conditions at Weston Bridge. The bridge lacks separation between the footpath and carriageway, with the footpath itself being no more than 900mm wide and bounded by a low parapet above the river. Cyclists using the carriageway face additional risks, particularly on the stretch of the A518 from Green Road to the entrance of Weston Hall, where narrow lanes and poor road alignment reduce visibility and

make overtaking unsafe. This often leads to traffic delays and increases the danger for cyclists travelling in both directions.

Connectivity to Hixon may be particularly relevant for access to employment opportunities from the proposed development. However, cycling along the A51 is hazardous for much of its length. The footpath alongside the A51, leading to New Road, is inadequate in several places for both pedestrians and cyclists, many of whom use it to avoid the dangers of cycling on the carriageway. From the junction of New Road into Hixon, the path becomes a shared footway and cycle route.

The village currently lacks a direct connection to the canal towpath via a footbridge at the south end of Green Road. This missing link reduces opportunities for recreation, social interaction, and stronger community ties that such a route could provide. At present, there is no safe walking or cycling route to the Saracens Head public house. Improved access to the canal would also encourage visitors, both walkers and boat users, to stop at The Woolpack on the Green. Additionally, the towpath from Sandon to the Haywood's is unsuitable for cycling, as it consists only of dirt and grass rather than a hardened surface. Overall, there is no continuous, safe canal towpath for pedestrians or cyclists between Stone and Rugeley.

❖ *The development would place unsustainable pressure on local services and infrastructure*

GP Surgery: There is no direct public transport to Weston's designated GP surgery, Hazeldene House Surgery in Great Haywood. In fact, the nearest GP practice to Weston is Beaconside Health Centre, just 2.7 miles away. However, it is rare for Weston residents to register there, as the practice is at full capacity and typically does not accept patients from outside its catchment area, including those from Weston.

NHS Hospital / A&E: The nearest NHS hospital to Weston is County Hospital in Stafford, located 3.8 miles away. However, the A&E department operates only from 8am to 10pm daily. As a result, Weston residents are often required to travel 17.9 miles to access 24-hour emergency care at Royal Stoke University Hospital.

For clarity, Beacon Park Hospital is located 2.2 miles from Weston. However, as a private hospital and GP service, it is not universally accessible to Weston residents.

Local shop facility: Weston's local shop and post office closed in March 2013, leaving the village without any local retail facilities. The nearest "shop local" options are 2.2 and 4.1 miles away, but only one is directly accessible by public transport and although you can reach this destination by bus / public transport, you are unable to make a return public transport journey within a 60-minute period.

Sewage, drainage, flooding: It is well understood that the sewage and drainage infrastructure serving Weston has been under considerable strain for many years. Severn Trent Water has confirmed insufficient sewage capacity. Required upgrades remain undefined, meaning the proposal fails NPPF paragraph 129.

Although The Environment Agency flood maps classify the site as Flood Zone 1, residents adjacent to the 'land off Green Road' frequently report prolonged flooding at the rear of their properties. Similarly, the fields within the proposed development area are often waterlogged for

extended periods, as evidenced below: -



26th Feb 2020 (Happened Many Times before & After!)



If Gayton Brook is not proactively maintained, it poses a significant flood risk. This has been demonstrated by repeated flooding incidents on the A518 end of Green Road, most notably in June 2012 and October 2022. Likewise, poor management of field runoff, gullies, and drainage pipework on the A51 end of Green Road contributes to recurring flooding at the A51/Green Road junction.

As a result, several homes on Green Road are unable to obtain flood coverage through their home insurance providers.

Flood risk and its long-term management remain serious concerns for the local community.

The village school, St Andrews CofE (primary): With pupil numbers assumed to rise, investment is likely needed to replace the ageing wooden hut classrooms from circa 1975 with modern classrooms.

Weston Road Academy (Senior School): is located 2.4 miles from Weston and is not safely accessible on foot or by bicycle due to the distance, road conditions and the absence of footpaths and cycle track. Pupils from Weston typically travel either by a school bus service, which picks up and drops off on Old Road, or by private transport.

❖ ***The character and identity of the village and surrounding area would be adversely affected***

Weston's rural character and scenic surroundings are among its most valued qualities. A development of this scale risks altering the landscape and undermining the village's traditional identity and sense of community, especially if it feels disconnected from the existing fabric of the village.

Weston is a small, cohesive village. The proposed site plan effectively isolates the development from the existing village core and encloses the Village Greens, diminishing their openness and accessibility.

The Village Greens were granted to the care of the PC under covenant, intended for the well-being, recreation, and shared use of the entire community. Both the PC and residents are

committed to preserving the remaining open space and the uninterrupted views of the countryside from the eastern end of the Village Green(s).

Preserving these features is essential to maintaining Weston's character, community spirit and whole village approach.

Other concerns:

- **Lichfields - Planning Statement, Draft S106 Heads of Terms, 6.11 – 6.15**
 - The PC seek more detailed information as to how S106 monies will benefit Weston community and the village directly e.g.
 - % / type of affordable housing?
 - What is a health care contribution?
 - Library services and school places?
 - What is a primary and secondary education contribution?
 - Use of a management company moving forward?
 - At this stage, the draft S106 Heads of Terms appears insufficiently detailed, overly focused on the short-term, and lacking the necessary provisions to ensure enforceability to the direct benefit of Weston.
- Whilst the PC acknowledge that our role is limited to commenting on the application as submitted, we remain deeply concerned for the medium / long term future of Weston village. Based on our understanding of the land ownership position, we are concerned that this proposal may set a precedent for further housing development extending from this site in the future. We respectfully ask SBC Planning to consider the broader implications and the potential consequences of opening the door to such expansion.

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