

Wedgwood Building
Tipping Street
Stafford
ST16 2DH

Email:

Please ask for: James Chadwick

Planning Policy
Cannock Chase District Council
Civic Centre
PO BOX 28
Beecroft Road
Cannock
Staffordshire
WS11 1BG

Date: 26 March 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Hednesford Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for consulting Staffordshire County Council on the Hednesford Neighbourhood Plan. At the last round of public consultation we raised some concerns over how the plan and policies related to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the AONB. The suggested changes we advised to be made have not been incorporated in the final plan and therefore due to potential for adverse impacts on the SAC we do not believe the Plan meets the basic conditions as currently drafted.

We previously suggested amendments to policy ROW1 in our consultation response of Oct 26th 2017 due to the policy risks adverse impact on Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation contrary to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Notwithstanding the accompanying Habitats Regulations Assessment policy ROW1 does not include measures required to avoid impacts on the SAC. The Cannock Chase SAC Partnership is working on management of recreational access to reduce impacts on the SAC and prevent impacts of new development. An amendment is recommended as follows:

In partnership with Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase Council, The Forestry Commission, [the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership](#) and the Cannock Chase



AONB Unit the Town Council will encourage improvements to the existing public rights of way network in order to provide better access for existing and future residents of Hednesford to the Cannock Chase AONB while avoiding impacts on its natural heritage.

In relation to Landscape section 10.6 perpetuates an inaccurate description of the reason for designation of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As previously advised under Ecology, the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest within the AONB is designated for the heathland habitats. AONBs are designated for natural beauty: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonbs-designation-and-management> ; Cannock Chase AONB is designated for its beautiful landscape, its history and its wildlife. While the largest surviving area of lowland heathland in the Midlands, which is an internationally scarce and threatened wildlife habitat is of high importance, it is not the main reason for the AONB designation, which is principally for landscape quality. This Section should be reworded accordingly.

The approach taken regarding the Historic Environment in the plan is to be supported and commended.

Public realm works should look to be informed by an area's historic character and should look to de-clutter the area. Regarding this, the inclusion of a reference to the Historic England document 'Streets for All: West Midlands' in Appendix 2 is welcomed. It is advised that the HELM website also referred to here is no longer in use. Relevant guidance and advice can now be found on the Historic England website at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/>.

Policy BE1 is to be supported. As previously noted, the policy may also wish to consider including development within the setting of the local listed buildings by ensuring that any planning applications coming forward demonstrate how their proposals will contribute to protecting and enhancing the heritage significance of the locally listed buildings potentially affected. Guidance regarding the setting of heritage assets can be found in Historic England's 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets'.

Policy BE2 is supported.

Yours sincerely

James
Chadwick

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James Chadwick
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James Chadwick
Planning Policy Officer