



BURNTWOOD
ACTION GROUP

MASTER OBJECTION LETTER

Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM – Land off Church Road / Coulter Lane



TO: Planning Department, Lichfield District Council

FROM: Strategic Policy Team, Burntwood Action Group & Residents

DATE: January 2026

SUBJECT: MASTER OBJECTION & CALL-IN REPRESENTATION: Application 25/01485/OUTM – Land off Church Road / Coulter Lane

Dear Gillian Pinna-Morrell / Planning Committee Members,

The Burntwood Action Group (BAG) formally objects to application 25/01485/OUTM. This submission is supported by **21 Technical Appendices (A through U)**, providing a comprehensive professional rebuttal of the applicant's evidence.

Following the **Call-In by Cllr Serena Mears**, we request this representation be provided in full to the Planning Committee. We urge the Council to **REFUSE** this application on the following nine grounds:

1. PRIMARY OBJECTION: Substantial Heritage Harm (Fulfen Hamlet)

The applicant's Heritage Statement is invalidated by fundamental omissions and topographical failures (**Appx A & G & R**).

- **Topographical Dominance:** The site features an elevated ridge situated to the **rear of the 60-metre wide historic frontage** to Fulfin Cottage (Grade II). Placing high-density housing here creates an invasive urban wall that destroys the rural backdrop and "Openness" required to protect the setting of this asset.
- **Settlement Identity:** This site is the strategic "Green Lung" preventing the total coalescence of the historic Fulfen Hamlet into Burntwood, violating **Burntwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy 6**.

1.1 The Significance of the Fulfen Hamlet Islet

Fulfen is not merely a collection of buildings; it is a historic "islet" that has retained its rural character for centuries. This hamlet, comprising **Fulfin Cottage, Fulfen Farmhouse, Christchurch, Princes Park**, and the collection of locally listed buildings represents the foundational identity of Burntwood.

- **The Setting as a Heritage Asset:** Under **Paragraph 201 of the NPPF (2026)**, the "setting" of a heritage asset contributes significantly to its value. The open fields of the Coulter Lane development are the essential rural backdrop that allows these historic buildings to be understood in their original context.
- **The Francis Barber Connection:** The site holds immense cultural significance due to its links to the Francis Barber legacy (the manservant of Dr. Samuel Johnson). To urbanise the very land that defines this history is to erase a unique chapter of Burntwood's heritage.

1.2 Conflict with the Burntwood Neighbourhood Plan (BNP)

The BNP was specifically designed to prevent the "blurring" of Burntwood's historic settlements.

- **Policy Breach:** The proposal represents an aggressive encroachment into the **Fulfen Hamlet**, directly violating the community-mandated goal to protect the town's separate identity.

- **Loss of Character:** Replacing 12 hectares of historic agricultural setting with a high-density, "anywhere" housing estate will result in **Substantial Harm** to the character of the hamlet. This harm cannot be mitigated by simple landscaping or "sympathetic" brickwork.

1.3 The "Wraparound" Effect and Coalescence

The Fulfen Hamlet currently acts as a "Green Buffer."

- **Urban Choking:** This development would effectively "choke" the historic cluster, surrounding it with modern urban sprawl. This results in the loss of the "openness" that is fundamental to the Green Belt's purpose.
- **Failure of the Balancing Exercise:** When weighing the public benefit of 250 houses against the permanent destruction of a 1,000-year-old hamlet's setting, the "Heritage Balance" tilts decisively toward **Refusal**.

2. STATUTORY OBJECTION: Flood Risk & Drainage (LLFA Refusal)

We highlight the **Statutory Objection** from the Lead Local Flood Authority (SCC, 24/12/2025) recommending that **planning permission not be granted (Appx F)**.

- **Vulnerable Receptors:** The LLFA confirms records of internal property flooding in close proximity. The applicant has failed to prove the development will not "aggravate risk" to existing residents.
- **Incorrect Data:** The applicant used obsolete rainfall data. The LLFA mandates the use of **FEH-22 rainfall data**, meaning current drainage calculations are scientifically unsound.
- **SuDS Failure:** The "basin at the bottom" design is rejected by the LLFA as "not best practice." A total re-design of the site is required to manage water at-source.

3. STATUTORY BREACH: The "Golden Rule" (18-Home Deficit)

Under **NPPF Paragraph 157**, Green Belt release is legally conditional on meeting the "Golden Rules" (**Appx Q & J**).

- **Selective Use of Evidence:** The Council is using **HEDNA 2025** to dictate house *mix* but calling it "untested" for the *percentage requirement*. This is internally inconsistent.
- **The Math Error:** Applying the 15% uplift to the highest existing requirement (HEDNA 2025: 35%) results in a mandatory **50% target**. By offering only 43%, the developer creates a **shortfall of 18 affordable homes** for Burntwood.

4. THE "GREY BELT" FALLACY: The Badger Paradox

The applicant seeks release as "Grey Belt" (degraded land). This is factually incorrect (**Appx B, P & T**).

- **The Paradox:** The Council's Ecology Manager notes the requirement to close **three established badger setts (S1-3)**. A site supporting three badger communities and Red-List birds is, by definition, high-performing Green Belt, not "degraded" land.

5. ECOLOGICAL LIABILITY: The "Dispersal Fallacy"

We formally reject the Ecology Manager's "Standard Compliance" response (**Appx B, M & P**).

- **The Dispersal Fallacy:** The claim that **Lapwings and Skylarks** can "disperse" into the landscape is scientifically unsubstantiated and leads to local extinction.

- **BNG Baseline Fraud:** The 12.55% gain relies on a "Cereal Crop" baseline. Expert testimony confirms the site is **Species-Rich Pasture**. A correct baseline results in a **Net Loss of Biodiversity**.

6. LANDSCAPE & LAYOUT: Loss of Openness

The application fails the **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)** methodology (**Appx C & D**). The urbanisation of this ridge permanently destroys the visual amenity of the Burntwood-Chorley gap and the rural character of Coulter Lane.

7. "SEVERE" HIGHWAY SAFETY: Pedestrian Risk

The transport model fails **NPPF Paragraph 115 (Appx E)**. It fails to model "rat-running" and ignores the lack of pavements on Woodhouses Road. Forcing traffic onto routes used by school children without footways constitutes a **"Severe" safety impact**.

8. INEFFICIENT LAND USE: Strategic Land-Banking

A density of just **11.76 homes per hectare** violates **NPPF Chapter 11 (Appx C & U)**. To destroy 12 hectares of Green Belt for a "land-hungry" layout is a gross waste of a finite national resource.

9. INFRASTRUCTURE COLLAPSE & PREMATUREITY

As detailed in **Appx S & R**, the cumulative impact of nearly 1,000 proposed homes is **premature** under **NPPF Paragraph 50**. It bypasses the "Infrastructure-First" assessment required for sustainable growth.

Conclusion

The Burntwood Action Group requests that this application be referred to the Scrutiny Committee before any recommendation is made. This application relies on flawed data, ignores statutory flood warnings, and causes substantial heritage harm. We urge the Council to **REFUSE** permission.

Signed, Strategic Policy Team, Burntwood Action Group & Residents

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Appendix A: HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT & REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SITE: Land off Church Road / Coulter Lane, Burntwood

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the *Heritage Statement* (August 2025) submitted by Orion Heritage on behalf of Bloor Homes. Document:

25_01485_OUTM-HERITAGE_STATEMENT_PN2129_LAND_OFF_CHURCH_ROAD_BURNTWOOD_HS.PDF-1180925.pdf

While the applicant's statement attempts to categorise the heritage harm as "less than substantial," it contains critical admissions that confirm the development will permanently degrade the setting of three Grade II listed assets. This report argues that the proposed mitigation strategies (planting buffers and view corridors) are insufficient to offset the severance of historic functional links and the permanent urbanisation of a rural landscape.

Consequently, the application fails to meet the "clear and convincing justification" required by the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** and conflicts with **Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy Core Policy 14**.

2.0 Planning Policy Context

The following policies are the primary grounds for this objection:

- **NPPF (2024) Paragraph 207:** Requires the applicant to describe the significance of heritage assets, including the contribution made by their setting.
- **NPPF (2024) Paragraph 212:** States that "great weight" should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether the harm is substantial or less than substantial.
- **NPPF (2024) Paragraph 213:** Any harm to a designated heritage asset requires "clear and convincing justification".
- **Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy (Core Policy 14):** Mandates that the Council will "protect and improve the built environment" and give the "highest level of protection" to the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings.
- **Lichfield District Local Plan Policy BE1 (High Quality Development):** Requires new development to have a positive impact on the significance of the historic environment.
- **Burntwood Neighbourhood Plan:** The proposed development represents a fundamental violation of the **BNP**, which was adopted with a 76% mandate to safeguard the town's unique heritage and local identity. Specifically, the BNP seeks to protect the distinct character of Burntwood's founding hamlets. By urbanising the open countryside that defines **Fulfen Hamlet**, this proposal irreversibly erodes the 'buffer zone' that maintains the settlement's historic separation, directly contradicting the statutory policies designed to prevent urban sprawl and preserve our community's founding legacy.

3.0 Critique of the Applicant's Heritage Statement

The applicant's Heritage Statement (HS) contains three critical flaws which understate the true level of harm.

3.1 The Severance of Historic Links (Fulfen Farmhouse)

- **Applicant's Admission:** The HS acknowledges that the Grade II listed **Fulfen** farmhouse shares a "historic ownership and functional link" with the study site (HS, Para 4.25). The land was historically the agricultural setting that supported the farmhouse.
- **The Flaw:** The applicant argues that because the house is screened by vegetation, the harm is negligible. This contradicts Historic England's guidance, which states that "setting" is not purely visual but includes the "historic relationship between places".
- **Rebuttal:** By building 250 homes on the associated farmland, the development permanently severs the farmhouse from its agricultural context. A farmhouse without a farm loses a critical aspect of its narrative and historic significance. Vegetation screens the *view*, but it does not preserve the *historic relationship*.

3.2 The Failure of "Green Buffers" (Fulfin Cottage, 57 Church Road)

- **Applicant's Admission:** The HS admits the site "contributes to the significance" of 57 Church Road (Grade II) and that the development will cause harm (HS, Para 4.20).
- **The Flaw:** The proposed mitigation relies entirely on a "green landscape buffer" (HS, Para 4.21).
- **Rebuttal (Topographic Dominance):** A buffer strip cannot mitigate the fundamental change in character, particularly given the topography.
 - **The Height Difference:** The land designated for housing adjacent to 57 Church Road sits approximately **1.5 metres higher** than the ground level of the listed cottage itself.
 - **The Impact:** Placing modern 2-storey dwellings on a raised platform (+1.5m) will cause the new estate to physically tower over the vernacular cottage. The new homes will appear visually overbearing, destroying the cottage's modest scale.
 - **The "Wall of Green":** Planting a hedge on this higher ground creates an oppressive "green wall" that blocks light and encloses the listed building, rather than preserving its open rural setting. This violates **Policy BE1**, which requires development to have a "positive impact" on the historic environment.

3.3 The "View Corridor" Fallacy (Christchurch)

- **Applicant's Admission:** The HS admits "less than substantial harm" to **Christchurch** (Grade II) but claims a "green visual corridor" will "enhance" the experience (HS, Para 4.8).
- **Rebuttal:** This is a misrepresentation of "enhancement." The church is currently experienced within a broad, open agricultural landscape that reflects its origins as a rural parish church. Viewing the church through a narrow gap between modern housing blocks creates a contrived, urbanised view that destroys the original rural context. This is a net loss of significance, not an enhancement.

3.4 The "Francis Barber" Connection (Potential National Significance)

- **The Asset:** The "Former Sunday School" / "Old School House" on Coulter Lane.
- **The Historical Link:**

- It is documented that **Francis Barber** (Samuel Johnson's heir and widely considered Britain's first Black schoolmaster) opened a school in Burntwood in the late 18th century.
- It is also documented that the school at this site was established/run by **Elizabeth (Betsy) Ball** in 1769.
- Francis Barber's wife was **Elizabeth Ball** (referred to as Betsy).
- **The Omission:** The applicant's Heritage Statement fails to connect these critical historical facts. By treating "Elizabeth Ball" and "Francis Barber's wife" as potentially separate entities, or by failing to investigate the link, they have potentially overlooked a site of **National Black Heritage Significance**.
- **The Requirement:** Given the rarity and importance of Francis Barber's legacy, the Council cannot determine this application until a specialist historical assessment confirms whether this building was indeed the site of Barber's school. To approve development that harms the setting of such a potentially significant asset without this knowledge would be negligent.

4.0 The "Less Than Substantial" Test

The applicant relies on **NPPF Paragraph 215**, which allows "less than substantial harm" to be weighed against public benefits.

However, the "public benefit" argument is flawed for the following reasons:

1. **Lack of Justification:** NPPF Paragraph 213 requires "clear and convincing justification" for any harm. The applicant has failed to demonstrate why this specific heritage-sensitive site is necessary for development over less sensitive alternatives.
2. **Questionable Benefits:** The "affordable housing" provision is not guaranteed in perpetuity or at values accessible to local residents, weakening the "public benefit" weight in the planning balance.
3. **Local Opposition:** The overwhelming objection from Burntwood residents demonstrates that the community does not view this development as a public benefit, but rather as a public loss of green amenity and heritage value.

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendation

The developer's own consultants have admitted that this scheme will cause harm to **three designated Grade II heritage assets**.

Under **NPPF Paragraph 212**, the Council must give "great weight" to the conservation of these assets. The proposed mitigation measures (planting and view corridors) are cosmetic solutions that fail to address the fundamental loss of rural setting and historic context.

We respectfully submit that the application should be refused on the grounds that:

1. It causes unjustified harm to the setting of designated heritage assets, contrary to **NPPF Paragraph 213**.
2. It fails to conserve or enhance the historic environment, contrary to **Lichfield District Local Plan Core Policy 14**.
3. It does not demonstrate a positive impact on the significance of the historic environment, contrary to **Policy BE1**.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix B: BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG) ASSESSMENT & TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SITE: Land off Church Road / Coulter Lane, Burntwood

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a formal technical rebuttal to the **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric 4.0**

Assessment (Document:

25_01485_OUTM-EDP8982_R003_BIODIVERSITY_METRIC_V2-1180473.xlsx) submitted by Bloor Homes. The applicant claims the development will deliver a Total Net Change of **+12.55%** in Habitat Units. However, a forensic review of the baseline data reveals that this figure is a statistical artifact achieved by a fundamental misclassification of the site's primary habitat.

Specifically, the applicant has classified **12.07 hectares** of established pasture as **"Cropland - Cereal Crops"**. This classification artificially suppresses the baseline biodiversity value of the site. Furthermore, the presence of **breeding Lapwings** (as admitted in their own Ecological Impact Assessment) provides biological proof that this classification is false. When the baseline is corrected to reflect the actual land use, the scheme fails to deliver the mandatory **10% Net Gain** and results in a significant **Net Loss of Biodiversity**.

2.0 Planning Policy & Legislative Context

The following policies form the primary basis of this objection:

- **Environment Act 2021:** Mandates a minimum **10% biodiversity net gain** calculated using the statutory biodiversity metric. This gain must be genuine and secured via a legal agreement for at least **30 years**.
- **NPPF (2024) Paragraph 180(d):** Requires that planning decisions enhance the natural and local environment by "minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity".
- **Lichfield District Council Policy:** Mandates the delivery of net gains for all developments. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) emphasises that impacts and net gains must be measurable and verifiable.

3.0 Critique of the Baseline Calculation

The validity of any BNG calculation rests entirely on the accuracy of the pre-development baseline. The applicant's baseline contains critical factual and biological errors.

3.1 The 12.07 Hectare Misclassification (Cereal Crops vs. Pasture)

- **The Developer's Data:** In the raw metric file **A-1 On-Site Habitat Baseline**, the developer has classified **12.07 hectares** as **"Cropland - Cereal Crops"**.
- **The Technical Impact:** Under Metric 4.0, "Cereal Crops" are assigned a **Low Distinctiveness** score. This artificially lowers the "Starting Value" of the site.
- **The Contradiction:** In the developer's own **Heritage Statement** and **Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)**, the land is repeatedly described as **"pasture and meadow fields"** and **"pastureland."**

- **Biological Proof:** The developer's **EcIA (EDP8982_R002)** admits two **established breeding pairs of Lapwing** in this specific field. Lapwings are ground-nesting birds that require **open pasture or grassland** for successful breeding. They do not establish breeding pairs in intensive, ploughed cereal crops subject to constant mechanical disturbance.



Site Baseline Evidence. This photograph, taken in June 2025. Note the established, green sward and evidence of grazing. This is functionally and visually **Permanent Pasture**, not the "intensive arable cereal crops" claimed in the developer's BNG Metric. This photo alone invalidates the "Low Distinctiveness" score used to manufacture the +12.55% net gain.

3.2 Undervaluation of "Modified Grassland" The sward likely qualifies as **"Other Neutral Grassland" (ONG)**, which is a **Medium Distinctiveness** habitat type. By classifying it as "Modified Grassland" (Low Distinctiveness), the developer has underestimated the site's ecological value by roughly **50% to 75%** per hectare.

4.0 Critique of Habitat Creation Strategy

The proposed "Net Gain" is achieved by "trading down" habitats and relying on unsecured private land.

4.1 Replacing Pasture with Lawns ("Trading Down") The proposal involves destroying **12+ hectares** of established agricultural pasture and replacing it with **amenity grassland** (mown lawns). This represents a permanent degradation of habitat quality and complexity.

4.2 Reliance on Private Gardens The metric claims biodiversity units from **private gardens**.

- **The Risk:** BNG must be secured for **30 years**. A developer cannot legally prevent future homeowners from paving over gardens or installing artificial turf.
- **The Requirement:** These units must be heavily discounted or assigned a "Poor" condition as they are effectively outside the developer's long-term control.

4.3 The "Green Space" Quality Deficit The applicant argues that retaining "two-thirds" of the site as green space guarantees a benefit. However, **"Green Space"** does not automatically equal **"Biodiversity Gain"**. Replacing agricultural pasture with managed public open space subject to

high recreational pressure (dog walking, lighting, footfall) supports far less biodiversity than the semi-improved pasture it replaces.

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendation

The claimed **12.55% Biodiversity Net Gain** is a statistical artifact resulting from the demonstrably false classification of **12.07 hectares** of pasture as "Cereal Crops." When the baseline is corrected to reflect the actual land use and the presence of breeding Lapwings, the proposal reveals a **significant net loss**.

6.0 Documented Taxa & Habitat Significance

The following species have been identified by local residents through multi-year observations. This list serves as a direct challenge to the "shallow" ecological surveys submitted by the applicant, which fail to reflect the seasonal biodiversity value of the Coulter Lane/Church Road site.

Avian Species (Priority Conservation Status)

- **Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*): RED LISTED.** Confirmed as breeding on the site. This is a "Priority Species" under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.
- **Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*): RED LISTED.** Resident evidence of breeding habitat on-site.
- **Owls (various species):** Documented nocturnal hunting and nesting.
- **Diverse Songbirds:** Including species that utilize the ancient hedgerows as vital nesting corridors.

Protected Mammals (Statutory Protection)

- **Bats (Various Species):** Residents consistently observe bats foraging over the fields. Under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**, all bats and their roosts are protected. The site provides a "dark corridor" essential for their survival.
- **Badgers (*Meles meles*):** Resident evidence of activity and foraging. Badgers are protected under the **Protection of Badgers Act 1992**.
- **Foxes:** Established presence as part of the local predatory ecosystem.

Herpetofauna & Other Wildlife

- **Amphibians:** Documented in the damp margins and field boundaries.
- **Diverse Invertebrates:** Supporting the food chain for the avian and bat populations.

We respectfully submit that:

1. The Biodiversity Metric is factually incorrect and unfit for determination.
2. The Council must require an independent botanical survey to correctly classify the baseline habitat.
3. The application should be **refused** on the grounds of failing to demonstrate a genuine, measurable 10% net gain as required by the **Environment Act 2021**.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix C: LANDSCAPE & LAYOUT CRITIQUE - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SITE: Land off Church Road / Coulter Lane, Burntwood

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

The applicant promotes this scheme as a "sustainable infill" neighborhood that has been "significantly scaled back" following consultation.

While the reduction in total area (removal of the Coulter Lane parcel) is noted, the decision to retain a yield of **250 homes** on a significantly reduced development footprint has resulted in a **higher density, urbanised cluster** that is inappropriate for this Green Belt location.

The claim that "two-thirds of the site is retained as open space" is a classic example of Greenwashing. The proposal replaces functional, rural pasture with suburban infrastructure (play areas, drainage ponds, cycle routes). This does not preserve the countryside; it sanitises and suburbanises it.

2.0 Critique of the "Scaled Back" Proposal

2.1 "Scaled Back" vs. "Increased Density"

- **The Applicant's Claim:** The website states the development has been "significantly scaled back," with the "number of homes reduced... from up to 300 to up to 250" and the "Parcel at Coulter Lane removed."
- **The Reality:** By removing the eastern parcels but keeping the housing number high (250 units), the applicant has been forced to **increase the density** of the remaining "Church Road pocket."
- **The Impact:** Instead of a loose, rural-edge development, this creates a **dense, solid block of urbanisation**. The "scaling back" has actually **worsened the visual impact** on Church Road and the listed building by concentrating all the built form into one aggressive "island" rather than spreading it out.

2.2 The "Sustainable Infill" Myth

- **The Applicant's Claim:** They describe the site as a "sustainable infill location."
- **The Rebuttal:** This is a misuse of planning terminology. "Infill" typically refers to developing a small gap within a continuous built-up frontage. This site is a large, open tract of Green Belt land that defines the edge of the settlement. Developing 250 homes here is not "infill"; it is **urban expansion** and encroachment into the countryside.

3.0 Critique of the "Green Skirt" Strategy

3.1 "Green Space" or "Suburban Park"?

- **The Applicant's Claim:** They promise "extensive new landscaped public open spaces," including "play areas," "allotments," and "sustainable drainage systems (wetland habitats)."
- **The Reality:** These are suburban features, not rural ones.

- **Play Areas & Allotments:** These introduce domestic activity, noise, and structures (fencing, sheds) into the Green Belt.
- **SuDS (Drainage):** "Wetland habitats" are often engineered attenuation basins required for flood control. They are functional infrastructure, not natural "wetlands."
- **The Objection:** The character of the land transitions from **agricultural pasture** (production) to **amenity parkland** (recreation). This permanently alters the setting of Burntwood's heritage assets. A manicured park with cycle routes and play equipment is a suburban landscape, not a rural one.

3.2 "Biodiversity Areas" vs. Habitat Loss

- **The Applicant's Claim:** The proposal includes "Green corridors" and "Biodiversity areas."
- **The Rebuttal:** As detailed in our separate *Biodiversity Technical Rebuttal*, the scheme relies on destroying high-value pasture to create these "biodiversity areas."
- **Trading Down:** The promise to "retain existing mature trees and majority of hedgerows" conceals the fact that they are removing established agricultural habitat to replace it with "amenity grass" and "garden planting," resulting in a net loss of distinctiveness.

4.0 Critique of Heritage Mitigation

4.1 The Failure of "Additional Planting" (Topographic Impact)

- **The Applicant's Claim:** The plans include "Additional landscape planting to protect the setting of the listed cottage on Church Road."
- **The Rebuttal:** This is an admission that the development *harms* the setting. Relying on screening (planting) to hide a 250-home estate is contrary to good planning practice.
- **The Impact (Topographic Dominance):** The land designated for the new housing and planting adjacent to **Fulfin Cottage, 57 Church Road** sits approximately **1.5 metres higher** than the ground level of the cottage.
 - **The "Green Wall":** Planting a hedge or tree line on this elevated embankment creates an oppressive, towering "Green Wall."
 - **Boxing In:** Instead of "protecting" the setting, the planting physically encloses the cottage in a trench, blocking light and severing its historic connection to the landscape. The mitigation effectively "buries" the listed building behind an elevated barrier, which is a significant harm in itself.

5.0 Conclusion

The applicant's website portrays a "softened" scheme, but the reality is a **harder, denser urbanisation** of the Green Belt.

By "scaling back" the boundary but retaining 250 homes, the applicant has created a **high-density urban wedge** that:

1. **Urbanises** the setting of listed buildings (despite "additional planting").
2. **Suburbanises** the Green Belt with play areas, lighting, and cycle routes.
3. **Misrepresents** a major Green Belt expansion as "sustainable infill."

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix D: LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (LVIA) REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SITE: Land off Church Road / Coulter Lane, Burntwood

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)* (Document:

25_01485_OUTM-LANDSCAPE_AND_VISUAL_IMPACT_ASSESSMENT_R001V2_EN_P25-0349_LVIA_FINAL_COMPLETE-1180477.pdf) submitted by the applicant.

The LVIA concludes that the development will have acceptable landscape and visual effects. We fundamentally disagree. This conclusion is reached by **systematically undervaluing the sensitivity of the landscape** and **overstating the effectiveness of mitigation planting**.

Crucially, the LVIA fails to align with the applicant's own *Heritage Statement*, which admits harm to the setting of listed buildings. A landscape cannot be deemed "low sensitivity" if it forms the critical setting for multiple Grade II listed assets. Furthermore, the assessment relies on "Year 15" mitigation scenarios, ignoring the immediate and significant harm caused by the urbanisation of the Green Belt.

2.0 Critique of Landscape Sensitivity (The Baseline Flaw)

The LVIA methodology relies on combining **Sensitivity** (Value + Susceptibility) with **Magnitude of Change** to determine Significance. The applicant has artificially suppressed the **Sensitivity** score.

2.1 Undervaluation of Landscape Value

- **Applicant's Assessment:** The LVIA likely characterises the site as "urban fringe" or "semi-enclosed agricultural land" of limited intrinsic value.
- **The Rebuttal:** This classification ignores the **Heritage Value** confirmed in the applicant's own Heritage Statement. The site is an established pasture that provides the historic setting for **Christchurch** (Grade II), **Fulfen Farmhouse** (Grade II), and **Fulfin Cottage, 57 Church Road** (Grade II).
- **Correction:** Under GLVIA3 guidelines, the presence of designated heritage assets elevates the landscape value. The site should be classified as **High Sensitivity** due to its role as the historic rural setting for these assets.

2.2 Misrepresentation of "Containment"

- **Applicant's Assessment:** The LVIA argues that the site is "visually contained" by existing vegetation and development, reducing the magnitude of change.
- **The Rebuttal:** "Visual containment" does not equal "landscape preservation." Even if a hedge hides the site from the road, the **character** of the land changes from open Green Belt pasture to a high-density housing estate. The loss of openness is absolute, regardless of whether it is screened from public view.

3.0 Critique of Visual Effects

3.1 The "Beneficial Effect" Fallacy

- **Applicant's Claim:** LVIA's often argue that replacing "monoculture" farmland with "diverse parkland and housing" results in a **Neutral** or even **Beneficial** effect.
- **The Rebuttal:** Converting open Green Belt countryside into a suburban housing estate is **always** an adverse change in landscape terms. The introduction of 250 homes, roads, lighting, and domestic paraphernalia (trampolines, sheds) represents a permanent urbanisation. To claim this is "beneficial" or "neutral" is a distortion of reality.

3.2 Reliance on "Year 15" Mitigation

- **Applicant's Assessment:** The LVIA likely relies on "Year 15" photomontages to show that trees will eventually screen the houses.
- **The Rebuttal:**
 1. **Immediate Harm:** Residents must live with the "Year 1" and "Year 5" impacts, which will be raw, visible, and significant.
 2. **Winter Views:** Screening relies on deciduous leaves. For 5-6 months of the year (Winter), the trees are bare, and the "hard urban edge" of the housing estate will be clearly visible through the branches. The LVIA downplays the significance of these winter views.

4.0 Inconsistency with Other Technical Reports

A major flaw in the application is the contradiction between the LVIA and the other technical documents:

- **Conflict with Heritage:** The *Heritage Statement* admits the development causes harm to the setting of listed buildings. The LVIA cannot logically conclude "No Significant Effect" on the landscape when that very landscape is the setting being harmed.
- **Conflict with Biodiversity:** The LVIA relies on "Pasture" being low value to justify its loss, yet the *Biodiversity Metric* (as rebutted in Appendix B) relies on downgrading it to "Crops" to show a gain. The applicant is cherry-picking different baselines for different reports.

5.0 Conclusion

The LVIA is a subjective exercise in damage limitation. It relies on:

1. **Downgrading** the landscape sensitivity by ignoring heritage value.
2. **Over-relying** on future planting that takes decades to mature.
3. **Ignoring** the fundamental loss of Green Belt openness.

When the landscape is correctly valued as **High Sensitivity** (due to heritage and Green Belt status), the Magnitude of Change (250 homes) results in a **Major Adverse Effect**.

We respectfully request that the Council rejects the LVIA's conclusions as understated and unsound.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix E: TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT (TA) TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SITE: Land off Church Road / Coulter Lane, Burntwood

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the *Transport Assessment* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-TRANSPORT_ASSESSMENT_251024_328123_TA_001_FINAL.PDF-1180920.pdf) submitted by the applicant.

The Transport Assessment (TA) concludes that the development will have "no severe residual impact" on the local highway network. We fundamentally dispute this conclusion.

The assessment relies on theoretical models that fail to account for the physical reality of the local road network. It ignores the single-track nature of Coulter Lane and conveniently omits the inevitable "rat-running" towards the A5190 via Farewell Lane and Woodhouses Road.

Furthermore, the site's isolated rural location forces traffic through critical bottlenecks. Traffic heading to the end of Church Road must navigate the dangerous school-run congestion at Rugeley Road, while traffic heading south forces its way through the "Swan Island" pinch-point. By adding **1,400+ daily vehicle movements** onto this constrained network, the proposal creates severe safety risks that the applicant has failed to model.

2.0 Critique of Baseline Conditions

2.1 Mischaracterisation of the Road Network (Coulter Lane)

- **Applicant's View:** The TA treats the surrounding network as standard carriageways capable of absorbing distributed flow.
- **The Reality: Coulter Lane, Woodhouses Road are single-track rural lanes** for significant stretches, defined by narrow widths, blind bends, and a lack of passing places. It is historically and functionally an agricultural access track, not a residential distributor road.
- **The Objection:** The TA fails to acknowledge the physical limitations of Coulter Lane and Woodhouses Road. It cannot safely accommodate two-way traffic flow generated by a modern housing estate. The introduction of hundreds of new daily movements will lead to inevitable conflict, reversing, and verge erosion.

2.2 The "School Run" Crisis Point (Church Road / Rugeley Road)

- **Current Situation:** At the western end of Church Road (junction with Rugeley Road), the network fails during peak school drop-off and pick-up times. This junction experiences intense congestion, with road parking and chaotic vehicle movements causing dangerous conditions. The road is reduced to a single lane and school times.
- **The Impact:** The proposed "family homes" will generate significant new traffic exactly during these peak windows. Adding hundreds of new movements to a junction that is already operating at dangerous levels of congestion is negligent.

3.0 Critique of Strategic Traffic Impact (The "Rat Runs")

The Transport Assessment assumes traffic will disperse evenly or use main routes. Local knowledge confirms that drivers already do and will actively seek "rat runs" to avoid congestion, using lanes that are totally unsuitable for high volumes.

3.1 The "Silent Route" to Lichfield (Farewell Lane, Prince's Park & Woodhouses Road)

- **The Omission:** The TA fails to model the obvious desire line for traffic heading east towards Lichfield and the A5190.
- **The Reality:** Drivers wishing to access the A5190 will not travel west into Burntwood Center; they will cut through **Farewell Lane** and the hamlet of **Woodhouses**.
- **Prince's Park Impact:** Traffic will be forced to negotiate the junction at **Prince's Park**, which acts as an informal, tight roundabout/gyratory. This is a heritage-sensitive location adjacent to the Church.
- **The Danger:** Farewell Lane and the Woodhouses Road route are narrow, unlit rural lanes frequently used by cyclists, horse riders, and walkers. Turning this into a commuter rat-run for the new estate destroys the tranquility of the area and creates a severe collision risk that the applicant has conspicuously failed to assess.

3.2 Impact on Burntwood Town Centre & Swan Island

- **The Bottleneck:** Traffic heading south or west must funnel through **Swan Island**, a junction that is already a critical pinch-point for the town.
- **The Impact:** Adding 1,400+ daily movements to Swan Island will have a disproportionate "ripple effect" on congestion across the entire town center, causing delays far beyond the immediate site vicinity.

4.0 Critique of Trip Generation

4.1 Trip Generation Underestimates

- **Applicant's Data:** The TA predicts the development will generate **135 vehicle trips** in the AM peak hour. BAG: *Traffic has been counted along Church Road and there are already 16,800 vehicles using it weekly.*
- **The Reality:** This assumes approximately **0.5 trips per household** during rush hour. In a semi-rural location with poor public transport connectivity (hourly buses), car dependency is significantly higher.
- **The Impact:** Even accepting their lower figures, this adds **2 cars every minute** to Church Road during peak hours. On a rural road with poor sightlines, this increase significantly raises the risk of accidents.

5.0 Conclusion

The *Transport Assessment* is a theoretical exercise that ignores the physical reality of Burntwood's road network.

1. **Coulter Lane** is a single-track lane unfit for estate traffic.
2. **Farewell Lane & Woodhouses Road** will become a dangerous "rat run" for commuters heading to the A51.
3. **Prince's Park** will be degraded by its use as a traffic gyratory.
4. **Church Road** is already operating at unsafe levels, especially during school times.

We submit that the residual cumulative impact on the road network is **severe** in terms of safety and character, and the application should be refused in accordance with **NPPF Paragraph 115**.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix F: FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (FRA) & DRAINAGE CRITIQUE

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SITE: Land off Church Road / Coulter Lane, Burntwood

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary: Statutory Recommendation for Refusal

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the applicant's Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Document:

25_01485_OUTM-FLOOD_RISK_ASSESSMENT_AND_DRAINAGE_STRATEGY_R-FRA-29100-01-A_ISSUE.PDF-1180926.pdf). Crucially, this critique is now supported by the **formal consultation response from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) - Staffordshire County Council (dated 24/12/2025)**, which states:

"The LLFA recommends that planning permission not be granted... The proposed development may present risks of flooding on-site and/or off-site if surface water run-off or other external flood risk is not effectively managed."

The LLFA's refusal recommendation validates the Burntwood Action Group's long-standing warning: the applicant has failed to account for the unique hydrology of this site, placing both future residents and existing "vulnerable receptors" (neighbors) at severe risk of flooding.

2.0 Validation of Local Evidence: Past Flooding Events

2.1 The "Desktop" vs. "Reality" Gap The applicant's FRA relies on high-level Environment Agency mapping. However, the LLFA has confirmed that their internal records match the lived experience of Burntwood residents:

- **LLFA Finding:** *"The LLFA holds record of internal property flooding in close proximity to the site of the proposed development."*
- **Resident Evidence:** Photos and testimony from Church Road residents confirm that the western, lower-lying part of the site (near Redmoor Brook) is a natural flood sink. During winter, the water table rises, causing garden flooding and saturation.
- **Conclusion:** The applicant's failure to acknowledge these verified local flood events in their FRA proves their hydraulic model is fundamentally flawed and dangerously optimistic.



Caption: Photo evidence shows the western sector of the site functioning as a saturated floodplain. This is the land the applicant claims is "Low Risk."

3.0 Critique of the Drainage Strategy (SuDS)

3.1 Rejection of the "Basin at the Bottom" Design The applicant proposes a single attenuation basin at the lowest point of the site. The LLFA has explicitly rejected this approach:

- **LLFA Finding:** "Basins at the bottom of the system are not best practice and this design should be revised and re-worked."
- **The "Soggy Park" Fallacy:** BAG maintains that the applicant is being deceptive by labeling the wettest, most flood-prone land as "Public Open Space."
- **Technical Failure:** The LLFA demands a "**Treatment Train**" of at least three linked stages. The current proposal fails to manage water "at source," meaning the higher ground will simply shed high-velocity runoff onto the lower slopes, overwhelming the Redmoor Brook catchment.

3.2 Failure to Promote Green/Blue Infrastructure The LLFA notes that features like swales, rain gardens, and tree pits have been "discounted" by the developer. By opting for a "land-hungry" housing layout, the developer has left no room for the sophisticated, nature-mimicking SuDS required by the LLFA.

4.0 Critical Technical Failures & Obsolete Data

4.1 The FEH-22 Rainfall Data Breach In a major technical oversight, the applicant failed to use the mandatory **FEH-22 rainfall data** in their hydraulic models.

- **Impact:** This means the applicant's calculations for "1-in-100-year events" are based on obsolete data and almost certainly underestimate the volume of water the site will generate.
- **LLFA Requirement:** The LLFA mandates a total re-modelling of the site using FEH-22 data before permission can even be considered.

4.2 Hydraulic Modelling Irregularities The LLFA has questioned the applicant's choice of **MADD factor** and **manhole head loss parameters**, noting they are not the standard defaults. We submit that these parameters may have been manipulated to artificially produce a "pass" on the drainage model.

5.0 Risk to Vulnerable Receptors

5.1 Exceedance Flood Flow Risks The LLFA states that the current **Exceedance Flood Flow Plan** is inadequate.

- **The Danger:** The development will pave over 12 hectares of absorbing pasture. If the SuDS system is exceeded (a high probability given the use of obsolete rainfall data), the "exceedance flow" will be directed toward existing properties.
- **BAG Position:** The developer has failed to demonstrate that these flows will not **aggravate flood risk to existing neighbors**. Under the NPPF, development should not increase flood risk elsewhere; this application clearly fails that test.

6.0 Conclusion: Mandatory Grounds for Refusal

The LLFA's response is not a request for "minor tweaks"; it is a comprehensive rejection of the applicant's flood strategy.

1. **Statutory Refusal:** The LLFA recommends permission **not be granted**.
2. **Data Failure:** The hydraulic model uses obsolete rainfall data (Non-FEH-22).
3. **Site Misclassification:** The applicant treats a functional, high-water-table floodplain as "Low Risk" Zone 1.
4. **Amenity Deception:** The "Open Space" is a drainage sump, unusable for 4–6 months of the year.

The Burntwood Action Group requests that the Planning Committee upholds the LLFA's recommendation and **REFUSES** this application. The risk to existing homes on Church Road and the surrounding area is severe and technically unmitigated.

Signed: *Strategic Audit Team, Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix G: ARCHAEOLOGICAL & TECHNICAL CONSISTENCY REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Contradictions in Land Use Classifications & Premature Conclusions

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

We object to the findings of the *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (DBA) on the grounds that it relies on incomplete data and desk-based conjecture rather than field evaluation.

Crucially, the report admits that the study site **"has not been subject to any projects recorded on the Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer"**. Relying on a "lack of data" to conclude "low potential" is a fundamental methodological flaw, particularly given the site's location at the heart of a cluster of designated heritage assets.

Furthermore, the land use descriptions within the Heritage and Archaeological documents **directly contradict** the data submitted in the applicant's *Biodiversity Metric*. The applicant cannot claim the land is "Historic Pasture" in one document and "Intensive Cereal Crops" in another.

2.0 Material Contradictions (The "Pasture vs. Crops" Error)

The application is built on conflicting baselines regarding the site's history and land use.

- **Evidence A (Archaeology):** The DBA notes **"medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow recorded to the north of the study site"**. This indicates that the local landscape character is defined by historic agricultural practices (grazing/pasture) rather than modern intensive arable farming.
- **Evidence B (Biodiversity):** In contrast, the applicant's *Biodiversity Metric* classifies the majority of the site (12.07ha) as **"Cereal Crops"** (Habitat Type: Cropland), implying intensive modern ploughing that would have destroyed such features.

The Rebuttal: The applicant is "cherry-picking" land descriptions.

- If the site is part of the historic landscape context featuring ridge and furrow (as suggested by the Archaeological report), it cannot be "Cereal Crops."
- If it is "Cereal Crops," then the Heritage setting argument is undermined.
- **Conclusion:** The Council cannot determine the application until this factual contradiction regarding the site's baseline status is resolved.

3.0 Prematurity of the Assessment

The DBA concludes that the archaeological potential is "low" based on a vacuum of evidence.

- **Admission of No Data:** The report explicitly states: **"The area within which the study site is located has not been subject to any projects recorded on the Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer."**
- **The Flaw:** "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." The applicant assumes that because no one has looked, nothing is there.

- **High Sensitivity Location:** The site does not exist in isolation. It is physically bounded by **three** Grade II listed buildings: **Fulfen Farmhouse, Christchurch, and 57 Church Road.**
- **Specific Risk to 57 Church Road:** This 18th-century listed building sits directly on the site boundary. It is highly probable that archaeological evidence relating to its earlier phases, outbuildings, or historic boundary treatments extends into the study site. Developing this land without prior evaluation risks destroying unrecorded heritage assets associated with this listed building.
- **Requirement:** We request that the Local Planning Authority requires a **geophysical survey and trial trenching evaluation PRIOR to determination.** Leaving this to a "Condition" is unacceptable.

4.0 Non-Disclosure of Active Archaeological Investigations

It has been observed by local residents that active archaeological survey work (including geophysical surveying and/or trial trenching) has recently taken place on the application site.

- **Requirement for Transparency:** Under the **NPPF (2026) Paragraph 200**, where a site has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
- **Formal Demand for Disclosure:** We formally request that the results of these recent surveys be made available immediately via the public planning portal. The Council cannot fulfill its statutory duty to assess the impact on "non-designated heritage assets" if the evidence remains withheld from public and statutory consultee scrutiny.

2. Potential for Subterranean Heritage (Fulfen & Barber Legacy)

Given the site's immediate proximity to the historic **Fulfen Hamlet** and its documented links to the **Francis Barber legacy** and the **Old School House**, there is a high probability of archaeological remains that inform the social and industrial history of Burntwood.

- **The "Pre-Determination" Risk:** Granting outline permission before these survey results are published and independently verified by the County Archaeologist would constitute a failure of the planning process and a breach of **Paragraph 205 of the NPPF**, which requires "great weight" to be given to the asset's conservation.

3. Technical Inconsistency: The "Grey Belt" Contradiction

The developer's claim that the land is "limited in value" (Grey Belt) is technically inconsistent with the fact that they are currently investing in deep-level archaeological evaluations. If the land were truly of "limited value," such extensive heritage investigation would not be a requirement of the pre-application phase. This further reinforces our position that the site is a **High-Performing Green Belt** asset with significant historical and environmental value.

5.0 Conclusion

The application relies on incomplete archaeological data and contradictory land use descriptions.

1. The applicant admits the site **has not been mapped** by aerial archaeology projects.
2. The presence of **ridge and furrow to the north** suggests a historic landscape character that contradicts the "Cereal Crops" biodiversity classification.

3. The proximity to **Fulfin Cottage, 57 Church Road** and other listed assets demands a higher standard of evaluation than a simple desk-based assessment.
4. The application is unfit for determination without on-site Trial Trenching.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix H: STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Critique of the Applicant's Consultation Process & Response

DATE: January 2025

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

The applicant's *Statement of Community Engagement (SCE)* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-STATEMENT_OF_COMMUNITY_ENGAGEMENT_-_BLOOR_HOMES_BURNT WOOD-1180484.pdf) portrays a developer who has listened and adapted. However, a closer reading reveals that the consultation was a "tick-box" exercise designed to validate a predetermined outcome.

The SCE explicitly admits that **"the majority of respondents objected to the principle of development"**. Despite this overwhelming rejection of the principle, the applicant has proceeded with the application.

The purported "concessions" (removing the community hub, reducing unit numbers) are standard industry tactics used to make the final submission appear reasonable ("Anchoring"). The applicant has removed elements that were likely commercially unviable or strategic sacrifices, while ignoring the community's primary concerns regarding Green Belt loss, traffic safety, and heritage harm.

2.0 Critique of the "You Said, We Did" Narrative

The applicant claims to have made significant changes based on feedback. We contest the motivation and impact of these changes.

2.1 The "Anchoring" Tactic (Reduction from 300 to 250 Homes)

- **The Applicant's Claim:** "Number of homes reduced by at least 50, from the up to 300... to up to 250".
- **The Rebuttal:** This is a classic negotiation tactic known as "Anchoring." Developers often propose an inflated number at the consultation stage (300) solely to "concede" a reduction later.
- **The Reality:** 250 homes on the reduced site footprint results in a **higher density** development than originally implied. The community objected to the *urbanisation* of the site, not just the specific number. 250 homes still represent a major urban extension that destroys the Green Belt character.

2.2 Removal of the Community Hub

- **The Applicant's Claim:** "Community hub... removed in response to community feedback".
- **The Rebuttal:** The applicant cites that "residents commented that a community hub was not needed". In reality, this removal benefits the developer, not the community. A community hub is a significant cost to build and manage. By removing it, the developer **saves money** and increases the profitable residential area. Framing this cost-saving measure as a "concession to residents" is disingenuous.

2.3 Ignoring the "Principle of Development"

- **The Applicant's Admission:** The report admits that "**most respondents objected to the principle of development**" and the loss of Green Belt.
- **The Response:** The applicant has completely ignored this fundamental objection. Their response is simply that the site is "sustainable". They have engaged with the *details* (where the driveway goes) but ignored the *substance* (that the development should not happen at all).

3.0 Misinterpretation of Feedback

3.1 The "Affordable Housing" Spin

- **The Applicant's Claim:** The report implies validation by stating "Many respondents commented on the need for affordable housing".
- **The Rebuttal:** A general comment that "Burntwood needs affordable housing" is **not** an endorsement of *this specific Green Belt site* to provide it. The community has consistently argued for affordable housing on brownfield sites ("Brownfield First"), not on heritage-sensitive Green Belt land. The applicant conflates general local needs with specific site support.

3.2 Dismissal of Traffic Concerns

- **The Feedback:** Residents raised significant concerns about "increased traffic" and "highway safety".
- **The Response:** The applicant states simply that "Technical work... demonstrates that the proposed access is safe".
- **The Rebuttal:** This dismisses the lived experience of local residents who navigate these roads daily. "Computer model compliance" does not negate the reality of existing congestion and safety risks at the Church Road/Coulter Lane junction. The applicant has chosen to rely on theoretical capacity over local knowledge.

4.0 The Timing of the Submission

The applicant claims a commitment to "ongoing" engagement. However, the decision to submit the application on **December 2nd**, immediately prior to the Christmas holiday period, undermines this claim.

Launching a major Green Belt application when the Council and the community are winding down for the festive break—with the consultation window closing on **January 20th**—is a cynical strategic move designed to minimise effective public scrutiny. It suggests a desire to avoid engagement rather than encourage it.

5.0 Conclusion

The *Statement of Community Engagement* documents a process of **notification**, not **consultation**.

The applicant asked for views, received a resounding "NO" regarding the principle of development, and proceeded anyway. The changes made (removing the hub, shrinking the boundary) are superficial adjustments that improve the developer's commercial viability or density metrics, while the fundamental issues of Green Belt loss, heritage harm, and traffic safety remain unaddressed.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix H Part 2: BURNTWOOD ACTION GROUP - RESIDENTS FEEDBACK SURVEY

1.0 Executive Summary

This report summarises the feedback collected from local residents consulted in May 2025 regarding the proposed development at Church Road / Coulter Lane. The response was overwhelmingly negative, with near-unanimous opposition to the scheme. See included Bloor-Homes-Responses.pdf

The feedback reveals a community that is deeply concerned not just about "change," but about specific, material planning failures: **heritage harm, infrastructure collapse, Green Belt erosion, traffic safety, and environmental destruction.**

Crucially, when asked "What benefits do you see in the development?", the vast majority of respondents answered **"None."** This directly contradicts the applicant's Statement of Community Involvement, which attempts to paint a picture of a balanced proposal delivering public good.

2.0 Quantitative Analysis of Response

A review of the collected responses indicates a definitive rejection of the proposal:

- **Opposition Rate:** Over **95%** of respondents indicated "No" when asked if they support the development.
- **Perceived Benefits:** When asked to identify benefits, the most common answers were "None," "None whatsoever," or "Profit for the developer". This demonstrates that the proposed "community benefits" (e.g., new planting, play areas) are viewed by the actual community as superficial and unwanted.

3.0 Key Themes of Objection (Material Considerations)

The objections are not based on personal preference but align with key **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** grounds for refusal.

3.1 Infrastructure Deficit (Healthcare & Education)

The most consistent concern is the inability of existing infrastructure to cope with 250+ new families.

- **GP Access:** Residents report wait times of "4-6 weeks" for routine appointments. Multiple respondents state they "can't get a doctor's appointment now".
- **School Capacity:** Residents, including education professionals, cite that local schools (specifically Fulfen Primary and Erasmus Darwin Academy) are already "oversubscribed" and "bursting at the seams". One respondent noted: *"The recommended teacher-to-student ratio is 20:1... currently you are seeing an average of 28"*.
- **Conclusion:** The addition of ~1,000 new residents (based on avg. household size) without significant, *guaranteed* new infrastructure is viewed as unsustainable.

3.2 Highways Safety & Traffic Saturation

Residents identified specific hazards that the Transport Assessment appears to gloss over:

- **The "Lanes" Hazard:** Multiple respondents highlighted that **Coulter Lane**, **Farewell Lane**, and **Woodhouses Road** are narrow, single-track rural lanes with national speed limits, used by walkers, cyclists, and horses. Adding estate traffic to these lanes is described as a "disaster waiting to happen".
- **School Run Chaos:** The junction of **Church Road** and **Rugeley Road** is identified as a dangerous bottleneck, already "gridlocked" during school drop-off.
- **Rat-Running:** Residents predict that commuters will use the narrow country lanes as "rat runs" to avoid the congested A5/Lichfield Road, further endangering non-motorised users.

3.3 Green Belt & Landscape Character

The objection to the loss of Green Belt is based on its **function**, not just its aesthetics.

- **Loss of Identity:** Residents argue that this land performs the critical Green Belt purpose of preventing encroachment and maintaining the "semi-rural" character that distinguishes Burntwood from urban sprawl.
- **"Grey Belt" Rejection:** The community explicitly rejects the developer's "Grey Belt" characterisation, noting the land is active farmland and wildlife habitat. As one resident stated: *"They decided the land is Greybelt... Who do they think they are?"*.
- **Wildlife Impact:** Specific sightings of **deer, badgers, owls, bats, and pheasants** on the site were recorded. This contradicts the developer's implication that the land is low-value "scrub."

3.4 Flooding & Drainage

Local knowledge contradicts the flood risk models. Residents on **Farewell Lane** and **Church Road** report existing flooding issues, describing the area as a "flood plain" where gardens get "hugely bogged". There is deep concern that concreting over the upper fields (the proposed site) will exacerbate runoff into the existing homes below.

4.0 The "Community Benefit" Fallacy

The applicant argues that the "public benefits" outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and heritage assets. The community response—and the applicant's own revisions—prove this is a fallacy.

4.1 The "Vanishing" Community Hub

- **The Retreat:** The developer originally touted a "Community Hub" as a key benefit of the scheme. We note this has now been removed from the plans.
- **The Implications:** This removal validates the community's feedback that such a facility was neither needed nor viable. However, it also strips the proposal of one of its primary "social" justifications. The scheme is now revealed as a standard housing estate with diminishing public utility, yet the "Very Special Circumstances" argument for Green Belt release has not been adjusted to reflect this loss of benefit.

4.2 Unwanted Retail & Amenities

- **Retail Units:** Residents continue to object to the proposed "shops" or retail units. Far from being a benefit, the community views these as a threat to existing local businesses (e.g., the closure of Strawberry Fields café is cited as a contradiction) and a magnet for anti-social behaviour.

- **The Verdict:** When asked what benefits they see, the overwhelming majority of respondents answered "**None**," "**Zero**," or "**None whatsoever**". A "benefit" that the community explicitly rejects cannot be given weight in the planning balance.

5.0 Conclusion

The consultation responses demonstrate a unified community view: this development is **unsustainable, unsafe, and unwanted**.

The objections are rooted in material planning evidence:

1. **Highways:** The local road network (specifically the rural lanes) cannot safely accommodate the traffic.
2. **Infrastructure:** Critical health and education services are already beyond capacity.
3. **Green Belt:** The land performs a vital function that the community relies upon.

The "Social Objective" of sustainable development (NPPF Para 8b) has clearly not been met.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix I: ECONOMIC BENEFITS STATEMENT - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM
SUBJECT: Critique of Overstated Benefits & Lack of Justification
DATE: January 2026
PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

The applicant submits an *Economic Benefits Statement* claiming significant value creation (jobs, GVA, spending) to justify the development (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-ECONOMIC_BENEFITS_STATEMENT_R001V1_EC_-_COULTER_LANE_EBS_WITH_INFOGRAPHIC.PDF-1180927.pdf)

We submit that these benefits are **overstated**, **temporary**, and **generic**.

1. **Generic:** These benefits arise from *any* housing development; they are not unique to this site and therefore do not provide the "Very Special Circumstances" required to justify Green Belt harm.
2. **Leakage:** Due to the car-dependent nature of the site, household spending will likely "leak" to larger retail centers (Lichfield, Cannock) rather than sustaining Burntwood's local economy.
3. **Net Cost:** The report ignores the long-term fiscal cost of providing public services (health, education, waste) to 250 new households, which typically offsets the revenue from Council Tax.

2.0 Critique of Construction Benefits

2.1 Temporary vs. Permanent

- **Applicant's Claim:** The report highlights the creation of construction jobs (direct and indirect).
- **The Rebuttal:** Construction jobs are **transient**. Once the build is finished, these jobs disappear. A temporary boost in employment cannot justify the **permanent** destruction of Green Belt land and heritage assets.
- **No Local Guarantee:** There is no binding mechanism to ensure these jobs go to Burntwood residents. Developers often use regional contractors who travel to the site, meaning the wages do not stay in the local economy.

3.0 Critique of "New Resident Spending"

3.1 The "Commuter Dormitory" Effect

- **Applicant's Claim:** New residents will generate significant annual expenditure in the local economy.
- **The Reality:** As established in our *Transport Rebuttal*, this site is geographically isolated from Burntwood town center and poorly served by public transport.
- **The Leakage:** Future residents will likely be car-reliant commuters working in Birmingham or the West Midlands. Their retail habits will follow their commute—spending money at major supermarkets and out-of-town retail parks (e.g., Orbital, Designer Outlet) rather than

Burntwood High Street. The claim that this development will "revitalise" the local high street is economically unsound without connectivity improvements.

4.0 The "Tax Revenue" Fallacy

4.1 Revenue vs. Cost

- **Applicant's Claim:** The development will generate substantial Council Tax and New Homes Bonus revenue.
- **The Rebuttal:** This is a gross figure, not a net benefit. The report conveniently omits the **cost** of servicing these homes. 250 new families require:
 - School places (already under pressure).
 - GP appointments (already at capacity).
 - Road maintenance (potholes/wear and tear).
 - Waste collection and disposal.
- **Conclusion:** In many cases, the cost of service provision for low-density suburban housing exceeds the tax revenue generated. Presenting tax receipts as pure "profit" for the community is misleading.

5.0 Policy Weight: Generic Benefits are not "Very Special"

To build on Green Belt, the applicant must demonstrate "Very Special Circumstances" (VSC) that clearly outweigh the harm.

- **The Flaw:** The economic benefits listed (jobs, tax, spending) are **standard consequences of housing growth**. They would be achieved equally well by building 250 homes on a brownfield site or a non-Green Belt allocation.
- **The Conclusion:** Because these benefits are not *site-specific*, they carry limited weight in the planning balance against the *site-specific* harm to the Green Belt and Grade II listed buildings. You cannot use "standard" economic benefits to justify "exceptional" planning permission.

6.0 Conclusion

The Economic Benefits Statement presents a one-sided balance sheet. It highlights generic gross revenues while ignoring leakage, service costs, and the permanent loss of the site's natural capital and heritage value.

We submit that the economic case is insufficient to outweigh the significant environmental and heritage harm identified in our accompanying technical reports.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix J: HOUSING LAND SUPPLY ASSESSMENT - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM
SUBJECT: The Irrelevance of the "Tilted Balance" due to Protected Areas
DATE: January 2026
PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

The applicant submits an *Assessment of Lichfield's 5-Year Housing Land Supply* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-ASSESSMENT_OF_LICHFIELD_5YHLS_1.5-1180475.pdf) arguing that the Council has a significant shortfall in housing delivery. They contend that this shortfall triggers the "Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development" (the "Tilted Balance") under Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, mandating approval.

We accept that a shortfall may exist. However, we fundamentally dispute the applicant's conclusion that this mandates approval for *this specific site*.

Under **NPPF Paragraph 11(d)(i) and Footnote 7**, the "Tilted Balance" is **automatically disengaged** where specific policies protect assets of particular importance—namely **Green Belt** and **Designated Heritage Assets**. Since this application causes admitted harm to both, the housing shortfall does not override the protection of these assets.

2.0 The "Circuit Breaker" (NPPF Footnote 7)

The applicant's logic follows this path:

- *Step 1:* There is a Housing Shortfall.
- *Step 2:* Therefore, planning policies are "out of date."
- *Step 3:* Therefore, the "Tilted Balance" applies (permission must be granted unless harm is "significant and demonstrable").

The Rebuttal: This logic fails at Step 3. The NPPF contains a "Circuit Breaker" to stop developers using housing shortages to destroy protected landscapes.

- **The Rule:** Paragraph 11(d)(i) states that the presumption in favour **does not apply** if policies protecting specific areas provide a "clear reason for refusing the development."
- **The Trigger: Footnote 7** explicitly lists "**Green Belt**" and "**Designated Heritage Assets**" as areas where this protection applies.
- **The Application:**
 1. **Heritage:** The applicant's *Heritage Statement* admits the development causes harm to three Grade II listed buildings. This harm provides a "clear reason for refusal" under NPPF Chapter 16.
 2. **Green Belt:** The development constitutes "inappropriate development" in the Green Belt (by definition), which causes harm to openness.
- **The Result:** Because Footnote 7 is triggered, the "Tilted Balance" is **disengaged**. The housing shortfall is merely one material consideration; it does not carry the overriding "presumption" weight the applicant claims.

3.0 Housing Need is Not "Very Special Circumstances"

To build on the Green Belt, the applicant must prove "Very Special Circumstances" (VSC) that outweigh the harm.

- **The Precedent:** Planning case law and Ministerial statements have consistently established that **unmet housing need alone does not constitute Very Special Circumstances**.
- **The Logic:** If a housing shortage were enough to justify building on the Green Belt, then *all* Green Belt land would be vulnerable whenever a Council missed a target. This would render the Green Belt designation meaningless.
- **Conclusion:** The applicant cites the housing shortfall as their primary justification. This is insufficient to overcome the high bar of Green Belt protection.

4.0 Prematurity and the "Wrong Solution"

- **Strategic vs. Reactive:** Lichfield District Council is currently addressing its housing supply through the **Local Plan Review**. This is the correct, democratic mechanism for releasing land (if necessary), as it allows for a comparative assessment of all potential sites.
- **The "Queue Jumping" Attempt:** By submitting this application *before* the Local Plan is settled, the applicant is attempting to "jump the queue" using the supply shortfall as an excuse.
- **The Wrong Site:** Even if Lichfield needs more housing, it does not need it *here*. There are other sites (brownfield, non-Green Belt, or less heritage-sensitive) that can meet this need without the "severe" impacts identified in our accompanying technical reports (Transport, Heritage, Biodiversity).

5.0 Conclusion

The applicant's *Housing Land Supply Assessment* answers the wrong question. It proves that Lichfield needs homes, but it fails to prove that **this specific Green Belt site** is the right place for them.

1. **The "Tilted Balance" does not apply** because the site contains protected Heritage and Green Belt assets (NPPF Footnote 7).
2. **Housing Need is not a "Very Special Circumstance"** sufficient to justify Green Belt destruction.
3. **The application is premature** and undermines the strategic Local Plan process.

We respectfully request that the Council assigns the appropriate weight to the protection of the Green Belt and Heritage Assets, which legally outrank the housing supply shortfall in this context.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix K: AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Critique of Defective Data Inputs & Health Risks

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the *Air Quality Assessment* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-AIR_QUALITY_ASSESSMENT_29551-ENV-0402.PDF-1180929.pdf) submitted by the applicant.

The conclusion that the development will have a "negligible" impact on local air quality is fundamentally flawed because it relies on the defective traffic data challenged in our *Transport Technical Rebuttal* (Appendix E). By underestimating vehicle movements and congestion spikes, the Air Quality model underestimates the resulting pollution load.

Furthermore, the assessment relies on "averaging" pollution levels over 24-hour periods. This methodology conceals the acute, dangerous spikes in Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM) caused by idling traffic during the "School Run," specifically affecting the vulnerable population at **Fulfen Primary School** and the residents of Church Road.

2.0 The "Garbage In, Garbage Out" Flaw

The Air Quality Assessment (AQA) is a derivative document. It does not generate its own data; it inputs the traffic numbers provided by the Transport Assessment (TA).

- **The Defect:** As proven in **Technical Appendix E (Transport Rebuttal)**, the applicant's TA significantly underestimates trip generation (by using low national averages instead of local reality) and ignores the "rat-run" traffic flows through Woodhouses Road and past Prince's Park.
- **The Consequence:** Because the traffic inputs are artificially low, the predicted emission levels are artificially low.
- **The Rebuttal:** The AQA cannot be considered "sound" until the Transport Assessment is corrected. If the traffic generation is actually 20-30% higher (as local evidence suggests), the air quality impact shifts from "Negligible" to potentially "Moderate Adverse," particularly at key junctions.

3.0 The "School Run" Health Crisis

3.1 Averaging vs. Acute Exposure

- **The Applicant's Method:** The AQA likely assesses air quality against annual or 24-hour mean objectives.
- **The Reality:** Air pollution in this location is not constant; it is **episodic**. The critical issue is the acute spike in pollution between 08:30–09:00 and 15:00–15:30.
- **The Hazard:** At these times, Church Road and Rugeley Road are gridlocked with stationary, idling cars. This creates a "canyon effect" of high-concentration exhaust fumes exactly when hundreds of children are walking to **Fulfen Primary School**.

- **The Impact:** Adding 250 new households (likely car-dependent families) will disproportionately increase traffic *during these specific peak windows*. The AQA fails to model the health impact of this intensified "pollution cloud" on children's lungs, hiding the danger behind safe-looking "annual averages."

4.0 Construction Dust & Heritage Assets

4.1 Threat to Listed Buildings

- **The Risk:** The development requires massive earthworks to plateau the site and install drainage basins. This generates significant dust (PM10).
- **The Target:** **57 Church Road** (Grade II) and **Fulfen Farmhouse** (Grade II) are immediately adjacent to the site. Historic building fabric (timber, porous brick, thatch) is highly sensitive to dust deposition, which can cause chemical and abrasive damage.
- **The Mitigation:** The report likely suggests "standard dust suppression" (spraying water). We argue this is insufficient given the proximity (less than 20m) of the earthworks to these designated heritage assets.

4.2 Nuisance to Residents

- **The Wind Direction:** The prevailing wind will carry construction dust directly towards the existing homes on Church Road and the school grounds. For a build program lasting several years, this represents a severe, long-term degradation of residential amenity that "standard" conditions cannot fully mitigate.

5.0 Loss of the "Green Lung"

- **Current Function:** The 12+ hectares of pasture and hedgerows currently act as a "Green Lung," absorbing CO2 and filtering particulates from the existing road network.
- **Proposed Loss:** Replacing this active biological filter with hardstanding (roads, roofs) and 500+ additional cars (assuming 2 per household) creates a "double hit": **removing the filter** while **increasing the source** of pollution. The claim that planting a few new trees compensates for the loss of established pasture functionality is scientifically weak in the short-to-medium term (10-20 years).

6.0 Conclusion

The Air Quality Assessment is a theoretical exercise based on flawed data.

1. It relies on **underestimated traffic figures**, rendering its conclusions invalid.
2. It ignores the **acute health risk** to schoolchildren caused by intensified idling traffic during peak hours.
3. It undervalues the **dust risk** to adjacent Grade II heritage assets.

We request that the Council rejects the "Negligible" conclusion and requires a specific "School Run Impact Assessment" measuring acute NO2 exposure risks for pupils.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix L: NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Critique of "Averaged" Data & Loss of Rural Tranquility

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the *Noise Impact Assessment* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-29551-ENV-0401-A-ACOUSTICS_ASSESSMENT.PDF-1180930.pdf) submitted by the applicant.

The assessment concludes that the acoustic environment is suitable for residential development. However, this conclusion is reached by treating the site as a generic suburban plot rather than a sensitive rural fringe.

The report fails to adequately assess the **change in acoustic character**. Replacing a silent pasture with a 250-home estate introduces a permanent "suburban hum" (vehicle movements, domestic activity, mechanical plant) that destroys the tranquility currently enjoyed by the Grade II listed **Fulfen Farmhouse** and **57 Church Road**. Furthermore, the assessment relies on the flawed traffic data challenged in our *Transport Rebuttal*, meaning the predicted road traffic noise levels are underestimated.

2.0 The "Suburban Hum" vs. Rural Tranquility

2.1 Change in Acoustic Character

- **Current Status:** The site is currently agricultural pasture. Its acoustic character is defined by natural sounds (wind in trees, bird song) and intermittent agricultural activity. This quiet backdrop is a key element of the setting for the adjacent listed buildings.
- **Proposed Status:** The development introduces a new, constant noise source: the "suburban hum." This includes:
 - 500+ car doors slamming daily.
 - Delivery vans and refuse trucks reversing.
 - Lawnmowers, domestic chatter, and music from 250 gardens.
- **The Objection:** The Noise Assessment focuses on whether the noise is "loud enough to annoy new residents" (BS8233). It fails to assess the **damage to the existing character**. Even if the decibel level is "acceptable," the *nature* of the noise is alien to the rural setting and harms the heritage significance of the area.

3.0 Flawed Traffic Noise Predictions

3.1 Reliance on Defective Data

- **The Link:** The Noise Assessment calculates future road traffic noise based on the traffic flow predictions in the *Transport Assessment*.
- **The Flaw:** As proven in **Technical Appendix E**, the Transport Assessment underestimates trip generation and ignores the school-run congestion spikes.
- **The Consequence:** Because the traffic inputs are artificially low, the predicted noise contours are too small. The "Noise Impact" on existing residents along Church Road and

Coulter Lane will be significantly higher than the report suggests, particularly during the acute morning peak.

3.2 The "School Run" Spike

- **Methodology:** The assessment likely uses LAeq,T (average noise levels) over 16-hour or 8-hour periods.
- **The Reality:** Averaging noise levels "smooths out" the extreme peaks. It hides the intense, stressful noise event that occurs twice a day during the school run (idling engines, shouting, acceleration/braking). Adding 250 families to this specific time window will exacerbate this disturbance to an unbearable level for existing residents, a factor the "average" figures completely miss.

4.0 Construction Noise & Vibration

4.1 Threat to Heritage Assets

- **The Risk:** The development involves significant earthworks and infrastructure installation immediately adjacent to **57 Church Road** (Grade II).
- **The Omission:** Older buildings (shallow foundations/thatch roof) are highly susceptible to vibration damage from heavy plant machinery. The report offers standard mitigation but fails to recognise the specific fragility of the adjacent heritage assets.
- **Requirement:** We request a specific **Vibration Impact Assessment** for the listed buildings before any permission is granted, rather than leaving it to a Condition.

5.0 Conclusion

The Noise Assessment answers the wrong question. It asks, "Is it quiet enough to build houses?" instead of "Will building houses destroy the quiet?"

1. **Loss of Tranquility:** The proposal permanently replaces the rural soundscape with suburban noise, harming the setting of listed buildings.
2. **Underestimated Traffic Noise:** The report relies on flawed transport data.
3. **School Run Impact:** The methodology masks the acute noise peaks that already plague the area.

We submit that the urbanisation of the acoustic environment constitutes a significant harm to the amenity of existing residents and the setting of heritage assets.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix M: SHADOW HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA) REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Failure of On-Site Mitigation & Impact on Cannock Chase SAC

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

The applicant submits a *Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment (Part 2)* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-SHADOW_HABITAT_ASSESSMENT_EDP8982_R006_SHRA_PART2.PDF-118 0921.pdf) to address the impact of the development on the **Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**.

The site lies within the **15km Zone of Influence** for the SAC. Evidence confirms that new housing in this zone increases recreational pressure (dog walking, hiking, mountain biking) on the fragile heathland, causing erosion and nutrient enrichment.

The applicant proposes to mitigate this by:

1. Paying a financial contribution (SAMM).
2. Providing on-site Green Space (SANGS equivalent) to "intercept" dog walkers.

We submit that the **on-site mitigation is functionally inadequate**. The proposed "Green Space" serves dual purposes (drainage/amenity) and lacks the scale ("wildness") required to deter residents from visiting Cannock Chase. Consequently, the development will result in a residual adverse impact on the integrity of the SAC.

2.0 The Failure of "Alternative" Green Space (SANGS)

To stop residents driving to the Chase, the on-site green space must be a **"Suitable Alternative."** Guidance states it must provide a "natural" experience similar to the SAC.

2.1 "Parkland" is not "Heathland"

- **The Applicant's Proposal:** The on-site green space is described in the *Landscape Strategy* as containing "play areas," "allotments," and "attenuation basins" (SuDS).
- **The Failure:** This is a **suburban park**, not a natural or semi-natural habitat. A dog walker seeking a 2.5km circular walk in a "wild" setting (the primary attraction of Cannock Chase) will not be satisfied by a short, paved loop around a drainage pond overlooked by 250 houses.
- **The Result:** The on-site provision fails the "quality" test. It will not divert recreational trips. Residents will simply use the on-site space for "convenience" breaks and still drive to Cannock Chase for "experience" walks, increasing the net pressure on the SAC.

2.2 Conflict of Use (Dogs vs. Ecology)

- **The Contradiction:** In the *Biodiversity Metric* (Appendix B), the applicant claims this green space delivers "Biodiversity Net Gain." In the *HRA*, they claim it serves as a "Dog Walking Route."

- **The Rebuttal:** You cannot have both. High levels of dog walking (disturbance, fouling/nutrient enrichment) are incompatible with high-value biodiversity habitats.
 - If the space is for dogs (to save the Chase), the Biodiversity score must be downgraded to "Poor Condition."
 - If the space is for Wildlife (to get Net Gain), dogs must be restricted, meaning residents *will* drive to the Chase.
 - **Conclusion:** The applicant is "double-counting" the land, claiming it solves two conflicting problems at once.

3.0 The "In-Combination" Effect

- **Cumulative Harm:** Cannock Chase is already approaching its carrying capacity. The "death by a thousand cuts" caused by incrementally approving 250 homes here and 100 homes there undermines the protection of the SAC.
- **The Argument:** Financial contributions (SMM) maintain paths and signage, but they do not physically expand the SAC. You cannot "pay away" the damage caused by hundreds of extra feet and paws on a finite, eroding landscape. Given that the on-site alternative is weak (as detailed in 2.0), the residual impact remains significant.

4.0 Conclusion

The Shadow HRA relies on a flawed assumption: that a **manicured housing estate park** is a viable substitute for a **world-class heathland landscape**.

1. The on-site space lacks the "wild" character required to divert visits.
2. The dual use of land for "High Biodiversity" and "High Recreational Use" is contradictory.
3. The development will inevitably increase pressure on Cannock Chase SAC.

We submit that the Authority cannot conclude "No Adverse Effect on Integrity" and must refuse the application under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix N: ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM
SUBJECT: Critique of Categorisation & Long-Term Tree Survival
DATE: January 2026
PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the *Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Part 1)* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-EDP8982_R005_PART1-1180471.pdf) submitted by the applicant.

While the survey categorises trees according to BS5837:2012, we submit that it **undervalues the collective landscape function** of the site's trees and hedgerows. Many trees classified as "Category C" (low quality) play a critical role in screening the development from the Green Belt and maintaining the rural character of Church Road and Coulter Lane.

Furthermore, the assessment fails to adequately account for the **"Spatial Conflict"** between the proposed high-density housing and the retained trees. Placing homes too close to mature canopies will result in overshadowing, leading to inevitable pressure from future residents to prune or fell these trees, thereby destroying the "Green Buffer" the applicant relies upon for mitigation.

2.0 Critique of Tree Categorisation

2.1 The "Category C" Downgrade

- **The Applicant's Approach:** Developers frequently classify boundary trees and field trees as **Category C** (Low Quality) to justify their removal or to deprioritise their protection.
- **The Rebuttal:** In a Green Belt context, a tree's value is not just arboricultural (health); it is **functional**. A "Category C" Hawthorn or Ash tree might be individually unremarkable, but as part of a continuous hedgerow, it is vital for:
 - **Visual Screening:** Hiding the urban edge from the open countryside.
 - **Heritage Setting:** Contributing to the rural "tunnel effect" of the historic lanes.
- **Conclusion:** We argue that the collective value of these boundary groups elevates them to **Category B (Moderate Value)**. Their removal or degradation to facilitate "access visibility splays" would constitute a significant landscape harm.

3.0 Threats to Long-Term Retention

3.1 The "Visibility Splay" Conflict

- **The Risk:** The *Transport Assessment* requires safe visibility splays for the new access points on Church Road.
- **The Impact:** Achieving these sightlines often requires the removal or severe pruning of roadside trees and hedgerows that define the roads character. The Arboricultural Report often shows trees as "retained" on the constraints plan, while the Highways Plan requires them to be cleared.
- **Demand:** We request a **Superimposed Plan** showing the exact Visibility Splays overlaid on the Tree Retention Plan to expose the true extent of the required removal.

3.2 "Death by a Thousand Cuts" (Root Damage)

- **The Proposal:** The development requires extensive earthworks, drainage installation (SuDS), and utility runs.
- **The Reality:** Even with "Root Protection Areas" (RPAs) marked on a map, the practical reality of a construction site often leads to root compaction and severance.
- **Hydrological Change:** As detailed in our *Flood Risk Rebuttal*, the development will alter the drainage of the site. Diverting groundwater away from established hedgerows to drainage basins can cause "drought stress" in mature oaks and hedgerows, leading to their slow decline and death years after the houses are built.

4.0 Future Pressure (The Shading Issue)

4.1 Incompatible Layout

- **The Flaw:** To fit 250 homes into the reduced developable area, the density has increased. This forces housing units closer to the boundary trees.
- **The Consequence:** Mature trees cast significant shade. If a tree blocks the sunlight to a new "affordable" family garden, the resident will reasonably petition the Council to have it pruned or felled.
- **The Result:** The "Green Buffer" that protects the setting of **57 Church Road** and **Fulfen Farmhouse** is unsustainable. It will be eroded over time by residential amenity complaints. A layout that relies on trees surviving in small back gardens is poor design.

5.0 Conclusion

The Arboricultural Assessment treats the trees as obstacles to be built around, rather than essential assets that define the site's character.

1. **Undervaluation:** It downgrades the screening value of "Category C" boundary groups.
2. **Hidden Removal:** It fails to explicitly reconcile tree retention with the destructive requirements of Highway Visibility Splays.
3. **Unsustainable Relationship:** The high-density layout creates a conflict between residents and trees that will inevitably lead to the loss of the "Green Buffer."

We submit that the retention of the site's tree cover cannot be guaranteed under the proposed layout.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix O: ARBORICULTURAL PLANS & PROTECTION CRITIQUE

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Feasibility of Tree Retention & Root Protection Area (RPA) Incursions

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the *Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Part 2)* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-EDP8982_R005_PART2-1180472.pdf) submitted by the applicant.

The Tree Protection Plan (TPP) presented in this document relies on "best case scenario" construction practices that are rarely achieved in reality. The plans show residential units and hardstanding positioned perilously close to the **Root Protection Areas (RPAs)** of retained trees.

We submit that the proposed "Construction Exclusion Zones" are insufficient to accommodate the necessary working space (scaffolding, machinery access, material storage) for a development of this density. Consequently, the "retained" trees are at high risk of **construction-phase decline** (due to root compaction) and **post-occupation removal** (due to safety and shading concerns).

2.0 Critique of the Tree Protection Plan (TPP)

2.1 The "Working Room" Deficit

- **The Plan:** The TPP likely shows protective fencing placed exactly on the line of the RPA.
- **The Reality:** Building a house requires 1-2 meters of working space *around* the footprint for scaffolding, bricklayers, and mixing areas.
- **The Conflict:** Where the TPP shows housing plots abutting the RPA fence line, there is zero tolerance for construction activity. In reality, workers will move the fences to erect scaffolding, compacting the soil and severing roots. The plan assumes a precision of construction that is incompatible with standard site operations.

2.2 Incursions into Root Zones

- **The Proposal:** The plan may propose "No-Dig" construction or "Cellular Confinement Systems" for driveways/paths that encroach into RPAs.
- **The Rebuttal:** While theoretically sound, these engineering solutions are notoriously difficult to install correctly and prone to failure. They change the hydrology of the soil, often drying out the roots they are meant to protect. Relying on "special engineering" to justify squeezing houses closer to trees is a sign of an over-developed layout.

3.0 Critique of the "Retained" Landscape

3.1 The "Shadow" Map

- **Visual Evidence:** The plans in Part 2 confirm the proximity of proposed housing blocks to mature tree canopies.
- **The Impact:** This visual evidence supports our "Shading" objection. Future residents in these specific plots will live in permanent shadow during summer months. The TPP

preserves the tree *physically* during the build, but the layout condemns it *politically* after occupation, as residents will inevitably petition for its removal/reduction.

3.2 The "Swiss Cheese" Hedgerows

- **The Plan:** The plans likely show "punctures" in the existing hedgerows to create pedestrian links, cycle paths, and road access.
- **The Cumulative Loss:** While each individual gap seems small on the plan, the cumulative effect is the fragmentation of a continuous wildlife corridor. The hedgerow changes from a "linear habitat" to a series of disconnected ornamental bushes. This undermines the connectivity claims made in the *Biodiversity Metric*.

4.0 Conclusion

The Part 2 report presents a "Paper Shield" for the trees. It relies on:

1. **Unrealistic Construction Discipline:** Assuming builders will not encroach on fences that restrict their working room.
2. **Unproven Engineering:** Using "No-Dig" solutions to justify overcrowding.
3. **Short-Termism:** Ignoring the long-term pressure from residents to fell trees that shade their homes.

We request that the Council requires a revised layout that moves all built form (including hardstanding) at least 2 meters OUTSIDE the Root Protection Areas to guarantee tree survival.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix P: ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EcIA) - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Omission of Protected Species & Breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

LEAD AUTHOR: Charley Scattergood (National Trust Ranger / BSc Conservation Scientist)

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the applicant's Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-EDP8982_R002_REDUCED-1180470.pdf). We contend that the EcIA is fundamentally defective, relying on "snapshot" surveys that missed significant populations of protected and priority species.

By combining **professional conservation science** with **verified long-term local records**, we demonstrate that the site is a critical ecological "stepping stone" between **Gentleshaw Common SSSI** and **Cannock Chase SAC**. The destruction of this habitat, particularly the breeding grounds for Red-List species, places a **lawful question mark** over this development under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**.

Furthermore, we highlight the **"Badger Paradox"**—the irreconcilable contradiction between the applicant's "Grey Belt" (degraded land) justification and the verified existence of high-functioning protected mammal communities on site.

2.0 The Badger Paradox: A Statutory Failure of Grey Belt Classification

The applicant seeks release of this land under the 2026 NPPF "Grey Belt" criteria, which requires land to be "previously developed" or "degraded."

- **The Evidence:** The LDC Ecology Manager's response (Jan 2026) confirms the presence of **three established badger setts (S1-3)** that require legal closure via a Natural England license.
- **The Paradox:** As a Conservation Scientist, I state that a site supporting three active badger communities is, by definition, **high-performing, functional habitat**. It is impossible for a site to be "degraded/Grey Belt" and "High-Functioning Protected Habitat" simultaneously.
- **The Conclusion:** The admission of these setts by the Council's own expert disqualifies the land from Grey Belt reclassification.

3.0 Professional Methodology Rebuttal: The "Functional Linkage"

While the site is not statutorily designated, it is functionally connected to **Gentleshaw Common SSSI** (approx. 1.2km away).

- **SSSI Buffer:** The site acts as a "stepping stone" for rare species. The EcIA fails to address the "wildlife disturbance impact" which extends to at least a two-mile radius.
- **Habitat Mosaic:** The site is not "low-value." It is a mosaic of semi-natural habitats including transitional heathland characteristics that support the long-term integrity of the nearby SSSI and SAC.

4.0 Verified Species Evidence (Omitted or Misrepresented by Applicant)

4.1 Ground-Nesting Birds (Red-List & Wildlife & Countryside Act)

- **Lapwing (Red List):** The applicant's report admits to two established breeding pairs.
- **Skylark (Red List):** Confirmed breeding on the open pasture.
- **The "Dispersal Fallacy":** The suggestion that these site-faithful birds will "disperse" to surrounding arable land is scientifically illiterate. These birds avoid the intensive monocultures of the surrounding landscape. Without proven carrying capacity in adjacent fields, "dispersal" equals **local extinction**.



Breeding Habitat for Red-List Species. The expanse of open, low-disturbance grassland shown here is the specific habitat required by the **two established breeding pairs of Lapwing** and **Skylarks** identified on site.

Urbanising this specific landscape represents a total loss of functional breeding ground, which is a material consideration under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

4.2 Protected Mammals & Raptors (The "Top Predator" Gap)

- **Polecat (Protected):** Verified local sightings confirm this protected mammal uses the site's hedgerows. The EclA missed this top predator entirely.
- **Raptors:** The site is a primary hunting ground for **Kestrels (Amber List)** and **Sparrowhawks** nesting at the adjacent Christ Church. Lighting from 250 homes will sever "dark corridors" and "starve" these nesting sites.

5.0 Failure of Mitigation: The "Soggy Park" Conflict

The applicant proposes "Biodiversity Areas" within Public Open Space (POS). As a Ranger, I confirm this is a failed strategy:

- **Incompatibility:** You cannot host Red-List ground-nesting birds (Lapwing/Partridge) and shy mammals (Polecat/Badger) in a high-disturbance "public park" filled with domestic dogs and lighting.

- **Habitat Fragmentation:** Fragmented estate "mitigation" cannot replicate the ecological value of long-established, contiguous semi-natural grassland.

6.0 Conclusion & Recommendation

The development represents an unsustainable and ecologically damaging use of land. The "Badger Paradox" alone proves the site is high-performing Green Belt. **We formally request:**

1. **Refusal** on the grounds that the development cannot demonstrate a genuine 10% BNG when the "Pasture" baseline is corrected.
2. **A "Holding Objection"** until a full-season survey for Polecats and breeding birds is conducted to resolve the "Dispersal Fallacy."

Signed: *Charley Scattergood (National Trust Ranger / BSc Conservation Scientist), Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix Q: AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Critique of Delivery Viability & Heritage Impact

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the *Affordable Housing Statement* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-EP009_AFFHOUSING_BURNTWOOD_FINAL_051125-1180485.pdf) submitted by the applicant.

The applicant proposes 43% affordable housing (up to 108 homes) as a key "Public Benefit" to justify the development. We submit that this benefit is **unsecured, inappropriate in form**, and insufficient to outweigh the significant harm to the Green Belt and heritage assets.

Crucially, the applicant relies on emerging "Grey Belt" concepts to justify release but fails to meet the typical **50% affordable housing benchmark** associated with such release, offering only 43%. Furthermore, the high density required to achieve these numbers forces the affordable units into locations that compromise the setting of **57 Church Road** and **Fulfen Farmhouse**.

2.0 Critique of the "43%" Offer

2.1 The "Viability" Trap

- **The Proposal:** The applicant offers "up to 43%" affordable housing.
- **The Risk:** The phrase "up to" is a significant caveat. Developers frequently reduce affordable housing numbers at the Reserved Matters stage by submitting a **Viability Assessment** claiming unexpected costs (e.g., ground conditions, drainage, heritage materials).
- **The Rebuttal:** Without a binding Section 106 agreement that locks in the 43% *in perpetuity* regardless of future viability challenges, this figure is a theoretical maximum, not a guaranteed reality. We request that the Council treats this figure with extreme caution unless it is legally non-negotiable.

2.2 Failure to Meet "Grey Belt" Criteria

- **The Policy Context:** The government's emerging "Grey Belt" policy framework typically requires a benchmark of **50% affordable housing** to justify the exceptional release of Green Belt land.
- **The Shortfall:** The applicant offers only **43%** (28% policy compliant + 15% addition).
- **The Conclusion:** The proposal attempts to capitalise on the "Grey Belt" release mechanism without meeting the full "Grey Belt" obligation. It captures the harm (Green Belt loss) without delivering the requisite policy benefit (50% affordable).

3.0 Inappropriate Tenure & Form

3.1 Density vs. Heritage

- **The Conflict:** To fit 108 affordable units into the reduced buildable area (while avoiding flood zones and easements), the development density must be relatively high.
- **The Impact:** Affordable housing delivery often relies on terraced blocks or maisonettes to be viable. Placing these higher-density typologies adjacent to the Grade II listed **57 Church Road** (a vernacular cottage) creates a jarring visual clash. The "heritage setting" requires loose-knit, lower-density housing, which is often financially incompatible with the high-volume affordable housing model proposed.

3.2 "Affordable" vs. "Local"

- **The Reality:** The definition of "Affordable" (often 80% of market rent/value) may still be out of reach for local Burntwood families on average incomes, especially in a premium "Green Belt edge" location where market values are elevated by the rural setting.
- **The Need:** The statement relies on district-wide housing need figures. It fails to demonstrate a specific, acute need *within Burntwood itself* that cannot be met by other pipeline sites (e.g., brownfield allocations).

4.0 Procedural Error in Affordable Housing Calculation

The applicant and the Council appear to be utilising a "hybrid" calculation method that draws from conflicting policy frameworks to justify a **43% affordable housing provision**. We submit that this is a procedural error.

- **The 50% Statutory Requirement:** Under the current **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026** and the associated **Green Belt Release Criteria**, the baseline requirement for affordable housing on high-performing Green Belt sites (misclassified by the applicant as "Grey Belt") is **50%**.
- **Policy "Cherry-Picking":** Utilising lower percentage figures from outdated frameworks or unrelated local sub-policies to achieve a 43% target is a "cherry-picking" exercise. This artificially lowers the developer's obligations while failing to meet the "Very Special Circumstances" threshold required for Green Belt development.

4.1 Failure to Meet the "Very Special Circumstances" (VSC) Test

To justify the "substantial harm" to the Green Belt, the benefits must be overwhelming.

- **Dilution of Public Benefit:** By failing to meet the **50% baseline**, the applicant is significantly diluting the primary social benefit used to justify the destruction of 12 hectares of countryside.
- **The "Profit vs. Policy" Conflict:** Providing only 43% represents a prioritization of developer profit margins over statutory policy compliance. A "discounted" affordable housing offer cannot, as a matter of law, outweigh the permanent loss of high-performing Green Belt land.

4.2 Rebuttal of the "Affordability" Model (Shared Ownership/Leasehold)

As noted in resident testimony (Robertson et al.), the "Affordable" element of this scheme is further undermined by the proposed use of **Shared Ownership and Leasehold** models.

- **Economic Sustainability:** These models often include escalating rents and service charges that render the homes "unaffordable" to local Burntwood families in the long term.

- **Calculation Inequity:** If the Council accepts a 43% figure that is also comprised of low-quality "affordable" tenures, the "Social Objective" of the **NPPF Paragraph 8(b)** is entirely unfulfilled.

5.0 Conclusion

The Affordable Housing Statement presents a headline number (43%) to distract from the fundamental harm caused to the Green Belt.

1. **It fails the 50% benchmark** required for Green Belt release discussions.
2. **It is unsecured**, leaving it vulnerable to future viability reductions.
3. **It forces high density** into a heritage-sensitive location, worsening the impact on listed buildings.

We submit that the affordable housing offer, while numerically significant, does not constitute the "Very Special Circumstances" required to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix R: INFORMAL PLANNING ADVICE NOTE

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Principal Material Considerations Weighing Against Permission

PROVIDED BY: Ben Scattergood (Planning Officer)

STATUS: Professional Advice provided in a personal capacity

DATE: January 2026

I urge the Local Planning Authority to refuse the proposal for the following planning reasons, constituting the principal material considerations that together weigh decisively against the grant of permission:

i) Heritage Impact The proposed development would cause substantial harm to the significance of multiple designated, locally listed, and non-designated heritage assets, as well as to their wider setting. A heritage review confirms that this part of Burntwood contains an unusually high concentration of heritage assets whose significance is closely tied to their semi-rural character, open landscape setting, and the historic pattern of low-density settlement along Church Road, Coulter Lane and Farewell Lane.

BURNTWOOD HERITAGE MAP

This map illustrates the concentration of heritage assets surrounding the proposed residential development of up to 300 dwellings (25/00497/SCREE) on Green Belt land off Coulter Lane, northeast Burntwood. The site adjoins areas of historic significance (Burntwood Green, Edial, and Woodhouses) where the majority of Burntwood's heritage assets are located.

The proposal undermines foundational Green Belt purposes, specifically to (a) check unrestricted urban sprawl and (d) preserve the setting and special character of historic towns (NPPF, 2025). Given its clear contribution to these functions, the land cannot be reclassified as 'Grey Belt', and the principle of the development should be considered unsustainable in planning terms.

Burntwood Heritage Assets

Building Reference/Address/Status

1	Nags Head Inn, Rugeley Road	Locally Listed
2	Fulfen House, Rugeley Road	Listed (Grade II)
3	The Burnthouse, Rugeley Road	Listed (Grade II)
4	Burntwood Memorial Institute (obelisk), Rugeley Road	Locally Listed
5	White Swan Inn, 2 Cannock Road	Locally Listed
6	40 Rugeley Road	Locally Listed
7	The Old School House, Scholars Gate, Church Road	Locally Listed
8	Fulfen Cottage, 57 Church Road	Listed (Grade II)
9	62 Church Farm House, Church Road	Non-designated
10	59 Church Road	Non-designated
11	45 Farewell Lane	Non-designated
12	Christ Church, Church Road	Listed (Grade II)
13	Fairfield Cottages, 99-113 Farewell Lane	Locally Listed
14	Upfields Cottages, 1-8 Upfields	Locally Listed
15	Prince's Park, Farewell Lane	Locally Listed
16	2-12 Farewell Lane	Non-designated
17	1-4 Peggs Row, Coulter Lane	Locally Listed
18	Former Sunday School, Coulter Lane	Locally Listed
19	23 Coulter Lane	Non-designated
20	Church View, Farewell Lane	Locally Listed
21	St. Matthews Cemetery	Non-designated
22	28 Coulter Lane	Non-designated
23	22 Coulter Lane	Locally Listed
24	St. Matthews Hospital, Nightingale Walk	Locally Listed
25	St Matthews Hospital Church, Shaftsbury Drive	Locally Listed

Key

**SAVE OUR
GREEN BELT**

**“WRONG TIME,
WRONG PLACE!”**



Fulfen House



Fairfield Cottages



Christ Church & Prince's Park

Author: Benjamin Scattergood
References: Historic England, Lichfield District Council,
The Burntwood Family History Group, MHCLG.



The assets that share a strong visual, spatial, or experiential relationship with the site and would be most adversely affected include:

- **Christ Church**, Church Road (Grade II Listed)
- **Fulfen Cottage**, 57 Church Road (Grade II Listed)
- **Fulfen House**, Rugeley Road (Grade II Listed)

- **Locally Listed:** 1–8 Upfields; 99–113 Farewell Lane; Prince’s Park; Former Sunday School (Coulter Lane); 1–4 Peggs Row; 22 Coulter Lane; Church View (Farewell Lane).
- **Non-Designated:** 62 Church Road; 2–12 Farewell Lane; St Matthews Cemetery; 23 & 28 Coulter Lane.

These assets derive considerable significance from their semi-rural setting, including long-established field patterns, historic routeways, and open views across the application site - elements that contribute substantially to the legibility of Burntwood’s historic core.

The introduction of large-scale built form would result in a degree of urbanisation that would amount to the loss of countryside and one of the last remaining open gaps that articulate the settlement’s historic morphology. It would disrupt key sightlines, diminish separation between cottages and historic lanes, and erode the ability to appreciate these heritage assets in their proper landscape context. Consequently, the proposed development would pose substantial harm to the significance of these assets and their settings, failing to conserve or enhance Burntwood’s most valued historic landscape.

The proposal is therefore contrary to **Chapter 16 of the NPPF**, which requires great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets and their setting. It also fails to comply with **Lichfield Local Plan Core Policy 14 (Historic Environment)** and **Policy BE1 (High Quality Design)**, which seek to safeguard the significance of heritage assets and ensure new development responds positively to local character.

ii) Green Belt For the reasons set out above, the proposal conflicts with the fundamental purposes of the Green Belt as set out in **paragraph 143 of the NPPF**, notably:

- (a) preventing unrestricted urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open;
- (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and
- (d) preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

The application site forms an integral part of the open, semi-rural landscape that preserves the setting of Burntwood’s historic core and maintains a clear distinction between this and the rest of the urban settlement. Resultingly, in line with **paragraph 155 of the NPPF**, the demonstrable heritage function and spatial contribution of the land means that it cannot reasonably be categorised as ‘Grey Belt’ or treated as land whose release would not compromise the strategic purposes of Green Belt protection.

In addition, the application submission has not demonstrated the ‘exceptional circumstances’ required by **NPPF paragraphs 145-146** to justify altering Green Belt boundaries, nor has it sufficiently shown that the substantial harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets is sufficiently outweighed by public benefits in the manner required by **NPPF paragraph 214**.

Conclusion

Accordingly, the proposal is fundamentally unsustainable in planning terms. It conflicts with key principles of the NPPF, materially harms Burntwood’s most valued historic landscape, and is contrary to the strategic aims of Lichfield’s adopted Local Plan. The application should therefore be refused.

Appendix S: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE & SUSTAINABILITY REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Cumulative Impact (925 Homes), Infrastructure Deficit & The "Sustainability Myth"

AUTHOR: Alec Revitt (Burntwood Action Group Committee)

DATE: January 2026

1.0 Executive Summary

This report serves as a technical rebuttal to the applicant's claims regarding sustainable growth. It highlights the catastrophic cumulative impact of this proposal when viewed alongside other speculative "pipeline" developments currently targeting the Burntwood/Hammerwich boundary.

The current proposal ignores the critical deficit in local infrastructure. Burntwood is a settlement that has expanded rapidly without commensurate investment in town center facilities, secondary education, or healthcare. Adding 250 homes to this fragile network is irresponsible; adding them alongside the other current speculative bids is a recipe for systemic collapse.

2.0 The "925-Home" Burden (Cumulative Impact)

2.1 The Speculative Surge The proposal for 250 homes on Church Road is not an isolated application. It is the first wave of a coordinated attempt by developers to bypass the local plan. The cumulative burden now facing the community is:

- **Church Road / Coulter Lane (Bloor):** 250 homes
- **Rake Hill / Meg Lane (Anwyl):** 225 homes
- **Hammerwich / Highfields Rd (Cameron):** 450 homes (Screening stage)
- **TOTAL CUMULATIVE BURDEN: 925 new households**

2.2 The "Grey Belt" Gamble We note that these developers are attempting to rebrand productive, high-performing Green Belt pastures as "Grey Belt." This is a strategic misrepresentation. The cumulative loss of these 925 home sites would result in the permanent urbanisation of the rural buffer that prevents Burntwood from merging with neighbouring settlements.

3.0 Infrastructure Collapse

3.1 Education Crisis

- **Secondary Capacity:** The Erasmus Darwin Academy (EDA) is consistently oversubscribed. Adding children from 925 households—approximately **400-500 additional pupils**—will swamp the system.
- **Primary Saturation:** Local schools, including Fulfen Primary, already report teacher-to-student ratios of **28:1**. The physical sites are at capacity; "financial contributions" (S106) cannot build new classrooms where there is no land.

3.2 Healthcare at Breaking Point

- **Primary Care:** Residents currently face **4-6 week waits** for routine GP appointments. Adding over **2,200 new residents** (from the cumulative 925 homes) to just two local practices will lead to a total service failure.

- **Emergency Services:** With no secondary health provision in Burntwood and the nearest A&E 15 miles away, increasing population density in an underserved area is negligent.

4.0 The "Sustainability Myth"

4.1 Transport Isolation & Car Dependency The applicant claims a "sustainable extension," yet the site is functionally isolated.

- **Bus & Rail:** Burntwood has no rail station. Bus services are convoluted and offer no evening connectivity.
- **Forced Driving:** The lack of integrated transport forces the estimated **1,850 additional vehicles** (from 925 households) into private car use for every journey. This violates LDC policy, which states that developments wholly dependent on car travel will not be supported.

4.2 Economic Leakage & the "Dormitory" Effect Burntwood lacks major local employment. New residents will inevitably commute to Lichfield, Cannock, or Birmingham.

- **Retail Drain:** Household spending will not support Burntwood's local economy but will "leak" to out-of-town retail parks along commuter routes.
- **The Hub Loss:** The developer has removed the "Community Hub" from the plans, confirming this is a standard commuter enclave with **zero tangible benefit** for existing residents.

5.0 Waste of Green Belt Land (Density Failure)

If Green Belt land must be released—which we fundamentally dispute—it must be used efficiently to minimise land take.

- **NPPF Target:** The National Planning Policy Framework typically seeks a density of **35 homes per hectare**.
- **Proposal Density:** The Bloor proposal delivers only **11.76 homes per hectare**.
- **The Rebuttal:** This is a "land-hungry" and wasteful estate. It consumes vast amounts of the countryside to provide a relatively small number of homes, failing the NPPF "Efficient Use of Land" test.

6.0 Conclusion

The proposal is in the wrong place at the wrong time.

1. **Infrastructure:** It overloads schools and GPs already at the breaking point.
2. **Transport:** It creates a car-dependent enclave with no connectivity.
3. **Efficiency:** It wastes high-performing Green Belt land with an unjustifiably low density.

The cumulative impact of 925 homes on Burntwood's infrastructure significantly outweighs any theoretical housing supply benefit. We urge the Council to refuse this application.

Signed: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

Appendix T: PLANNING STATEMENT & POLICY REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: The "Tilted Balance" Fallacy & Prematurity

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a planning policy rebuttal to the *Planning Statement* (Document: 25_01485_OUTM-EP009_PLANSTAT_BURNTWOOD_FINAL_241025-1180489.pdf) submitted by the applicant.

The applicant's case relies heavily on the assertion that the "Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development" (the "Tilted Balance" under NPPF Paragraph 11) dictates approval due to an alleged housing land supply shortfall.

We submit that this legal interpretation is flawed. Under **NPPF Paragraph 11(d)(i) and Footnote 7**, the "Tilted Balance" is **disengaged** (does not apply) because the application causes harm to designated Heritage Assets and the Green Belt. Therefore, the standard planning balance applies.

When weighed correctly, the **admitted harm** to heritage assets, the loss of Green Belt, and the technical failures regarding biodiversity and transport significantly outweigh the generic benefits of housing delivery. Furthermore, approving this major application now would be **premature**, undermining the emerging Local Plan process.

2.0 The "Tilted Balance" Does Not Apply

2.1 The "Footnote 7" Circuit Breaker

- **Applicant's Argument:** The Planning Statement argues that because the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-Year Housing Land Supply, permission *must* be granted unless adverse impacts "significantly and demonstrably" outweigh benefits.
- **The Policy Reality (NPPF Para 11d):** This presumption is automatically switched off if policies in the NPPF that protect specific areas provide a "clear reason for refusing the development."
- **The Trigger: Footnote 7** explicitly lists "**designated heritage assets**" and "**Green Belt**" as protected areas that trigger this switch-off.
- **The Rebuttal:** The applicant's own *Heritage Statement* admits that the development causes harm to **three** Grade II listed buildings (Christchurch, Fulfen, 57 Church Road). This admission alone provides a "clear reason for refusal" under NPPF Chapter 16. Consequently, the "Tilted Balance" is disengaged. The Council is **not** forced to approve this scheme.

3.0 Critique of "Very Special Circumstances" (Green Belt)

To build on Green Belt, the applicant must demonstrate "Very Special Circumstances" (VSC) that outweigh the harm.

3.1 Housing Need is Not "Very Special"

- **Applicant's Claim:** They argue that the delivery of market and affordable housing constitutes VSC.
- **The Rebuttal:** Unmet housing need is a general issue, not a site-specific "special circumstance." Standard housing delivery does not justify the permanent destruction of Green Belt land that serves the fundamental purpose of preventing encroachment into the countryside.

3.2 The "Grey Belt" Misinterpretation

- **Applicant's Hint:** The statement (and website) references "Grey Belt" policy.
- **The Reality:** "Grey Belt" refers to low-quality, previously developed land (like car parks or wasteland) in the Green Belt.
- **The Evidence:** As detailed in our *Biodiversity Rebuttal* and *Heritage Statement*, this site is **established agricultural pasture** with historic field boundaries. It is green, functional countryside. It is **not Grey Belt**. Attempting to rebrand historic pasture as "Grey Belt" is a misapplication of emerging government policy.

3.3 The "Doncaster Line" on Grey Belt

We draw the Council's attention to the emerging consensus among planning authorities that "Grey Belt" status must be rigorously audited. As demonstrated in the **Marr decision (Doncaster Council, 2025)**, land does not become "Grey" simply because a developer wishes to build on it. The Church Road site remains a high-performing Green Belt, and its release would represent an unlawful erosion of the settlement gap.

3.4 Disengaging the Tilted Balance

The applicant implies that the "Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development" applies here. It does not.

- **Green Belt Protection:** Under **NPPF Paragraph 11(d)i**, the "tilted balance" is explicitly disengaged because the site is protected Green Belt.
- **Heritage Protection:** The "Substantial Harm" caused to the setting of **Christ Church, Fulfen Farmhouse, Fulfin Cottage, 57 Church Road** and the **Francis Barber legacy site** provides a further clear reason for refusal.

4.0 The "Public Benefit" Fallacy

The applicant argues that the "Public Benefits" (affordable housing, economic spend) outweigh the "Less Than Substantial" heritage harm.

4.1 Affordable Housing Uncertainty

- **The Flaw:** The "43% affordable" promise is often diluted at the Reserved Matters stage due to "viability issues." Without a watertight Section 106 agreement locking this in *in perpetuity* at prices local people can actually afford, this benefit is theoretical.
- **The Weight:** Generic affordable housing does not justify specific harm to a unique 18th-century listed building (**57 Church Road**). You can build affordable housing elsewhere; you cannot replace a heritage setting once destroyed.

5.0 Prematurity & The Local Plan

5.1 Undermining Democracy

- **Current Status:** Lichfield District Council is currently formulating a new Local Plan and has issued a "Call for Sites."
- **The Risk:** Approving a site of this scale (250 homes) *before* the Local Plan is finalised bypasses the democratic process. It allows a developer to dictate the future of Burntwood's expansion rather than the Council and Community deciding strategically.
- **NPPF Paragraph 50:** Refusal on grounds of prematurity is justified where the development is so substantial that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process. This development fundamentally alters the settlement boundary of Burntwood, pre-determining the spatial strategy.

6.0 Conclusion

The Planning Statement attempts to bully the Council into approval using the "Housing Supply" argument. This fails because:

1. **Heritage Harm** disengages the "Presumption in Favour."
2. **Green Belt Harm** has not been justified by "Very Special Circumstances."
3. **The Site is Green, not Grey:** It is productive pasture, not wasteland.
4. **Prematurity:** Determining this now subverts the Local Plan.

We respectfully request that the application be REFUSED.

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*

Appendix U: DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT - TECHNICAL REBUTTAL

RELATING TO: Outline Planning Application 25/01485/OUTM

SUBJECT: Critique of Generic Design, "Anywhere" Architecture & Heritage Clash

DATE: January 2026

PREPARED BY: Burntwood Action Group & Residents

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides a technical rebuttal to the full *Design and Access Statement (Parts 1-6)* submitted by the applicant.

The DAS claims to deliver a "landscape-led" development responsive to local character. We submit that the proposal is, in reality, a **generic volume-housebuilder estate** dropped onto a sensitive rural site.

The design fails to respond to the **local vernacular** of Burntwood's historic edge. Instead of a loose-knit, organic hamlet style appropriate for a location next to Grade II listed farmhouses, the applicant proposes a **standardised suburban layout** with high-density clusters. Crucially, the layout fails to account for significant topographic differences, resulting in new dwellings that will physically tower over the adjacent listed buildings.

2.0 Critique of the Layout (Parts 2 & 3)

2.1 The "Cluster" Layout Flaw

- **The Applicant's Rationale:** The DAS argues for clustering homes to "preserve" the northern fields.
- **The Rebuttal:** This logic creates a self-inflicted problem. By squeezing 250 homes into a reduced footprint, the **Net Density** of the built area becomes inappropriately high for a rural edge.
- **The "Urban Island" Effect:** A rural edge should "feather out" with lower density and larger gaps. The DAS proposes a solid, impermeable block of housing that acts as a hard barrier between Church Road and the countryside. This is not a "transition"; it is a collision.

2.2 Inward-Looking Design

- **The Connectivity Deficit:** Despite claims of "permeability," the layout relies on a hierarchy of cul-de-sacs and winding estate roads. This design philosophy creates an inward-looking enclave that turns its back on the existing community, discouraging integration and walking.

3.0 Critique of "Character Areas" (Part 4)

The DAS proposes different "Character Areas" (e.g., "The Green Edge," "The Core") to imply variety. We argue this is superficial.

3.1 Standard House Types

- **The Reality:** The "Character Areas" rely on changing surface materials (e.g., render vs. brick) on the same standard house types used by the developer nationally.

- **The Failure:** This is not "placemaking." It is "product placement." The massing, roof pitches, and fenestration (window arrangements) of these standard units do not reflect the idiosyncratic, vernacular nature of the adjacent **57 Church Road** or **Fulfen Farmhouse**.
- **Impact on Local Identity:** Burntwood's historic identity is defined by individual, bespoke cottages. Importing mass-produced homes dilutes this identity, creating a "Anywhere-ville" aesthetic that could be in Milton Keynes or Manchester.

4.0 Scale, Massing & Heritage Interface (Part 5)

4.1 Topographic Dominance over Listed Buildings

- **The Topographic Reality:** The land designated for the new housing cluster adjacent to **57 Church Road** sits approximately **1.5 metres higher** than the ground level of the listed cottage itself.
- **The Compound Impact:**
 1. **Scale:** Modern homes are already significantly taller than vernacular cottages due to modern floor-to-ceiling heights and deep-plan roof pitches.
 2. **Elevation:** Placing these taller buildings on a raised platform (+1.5m) exacerbates their dominance.
- **The Result:** The proposed dwellings will loom over the listed cottage, appearing visually overbearing and destroying its sense of scale. A 2-storey modern house on a +1.5m ridge is effectively a 3-storey building relative to the historic cottage. The DAS fails to provide "street elevation" drawings that honestly depict this topographic relationship.

4.2 The "Buffer" as a Barrier

- **The Mitigation:** The DAS relies on "landscape buffers" to hide the new homes.
- **The Flaw:** Screening is an admission of failure. If the design was high quality and contextually appropriate, it wouldn't need to be hidden behind a hedge. By relying on screening, the applicant admits that the built form is visually harmful to the heritage setting. Furthermore, planting trees on ground that is 1.5m higher than the cottage creates an oppressive "wall of green" that blocks light and encloses the listed building, severing its historic connection to the landscape.

5.0 Critique of Access & Engineering (Part 6)

5.1 Over-Engineering of "Green Space"

- **The Proposal:** The DAS presents the "Green Infrastructure" as a natural amenity.
- **The Reality:** The plans reveal this space is heavily engineered with **attenuation basins (SuDS)**, headwalls, and maintenance tracks. These are functional utilities, not "natural" landscapes. The DAS uses "green infrastructure" as a euphemism for "drainage requirements," misleading the reader about the aesthetic quality of the open space.

5.2 Car Dominance

- **The Layout:** The street scenes show significant frontage parking and integral garages.
- **The Impact:** This design prioritises the private car over the pedestrian, reinforcing the "commuter dormitory" character of the development and contradicting the sustainability claims made in the Transport Assessment.

6.0 Conclusion

The Design and Access Statement describes a generic product, not a place-specific response.

1. **Generic Design:** It fails to reflect the unique historic character of the Church Road.
2. **Topographic Dominance:** The combination of taller modern homes on higher ground creates an overbearing relationship with **57 Church Road**.
3. **Heritage Clash:** The scale and massing of standard house types will dominate the adjacent listed buildings.

We submit that the design is of insufficient quality for this sensitive Green Belt location and should be refused under Local Plan Policy BE1 (High Quality Development).

Signed: *Burntwood Action Group & Residents*