



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2020

by Paul Cooper MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/19/3243548

Land off Manor Lane, Longden, Shrewsbury SY5 8EW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs D Jones against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02395/FUL, dated 27 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of 5 No bungalows and associated infrastructure (amended description).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The original description of development was for seven dwellings. During the lifespan of the application, this was modified to five dwellings and the description of development amended accordingly with the approval of both parties.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development provides a suitable site for housing with regard to planning policies in relation to the distribution of development.

Reasons

4. Longden is a relatively small village with facilities including a pub, shop and primary school. The appeal site is located off Manor Lane and is part of a larger field. Construction access would be taken from Plealey Lane across an agricultural field although access to properties would be taken from Manor Lane upon completion.
5. Longden is allocated as a Community Cluster Settlement (CCS) in Policy MD1 of the Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (2015) (the SAMDev). Limited residential development is allowed in the CCS via policy CS4 of the Shropshire Core Strategy (2011) (the CS)
6. Policy S16.2(xi) elaborates and states that Longden and other settlements for the CCS and development by infill, building conversion and groups of dwellings may be acceptable on appropriate sites within the CCS.
7. The proposal would extend the built footprint of the village into the agricultural field, into the open countryside. The proposal would not constitute infilling as per Policy S16.2(xi).

8. Policy S16.2(xi) sets a guideline figure through to 2026, of which the greater proportion should be in Longden village. Based on current completions and permissions, the guideline figure would be breached, and the Longden specific target would be met if this proposal were to go forward.
9. SAMDev policy MD3 gives the criteria for schemes that would breach the settlement limit, but that level is not a limit ceiling and Longdon should be the focus of growth in this area as the largest of the settlements.
10. I have also noted paragraph 3.21 of the SAMDev which states that breaching the guideline figure could result in unsustainable development that stretches existing infrastructure and tests the goodwill of the communities involved, which is shown by the level of objection to the proposal.
11. The guideline figure must be considered in the wider context to include the overall development strategy for the borough. The plan allows for a 'rural rebalance' to allow residential development in the rural areas, but this guideline figure has been exceeded above the level expected.
12. There is no doubt that some of the impacts of the proposal could be mitigated by appropriate use of conditions, but ultimately the proposal is an encroachment into open countryside, which Policy CS5 of the CS seeks to protect. In addition, Paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and I find that the proposal, on the edge of this agricultural field would reduce the character and beauty of the countryside.
13. I have noted the comments of the appellant in relation to the five year housing supply, but the Council can demonstrate this, and the proposal is not consistent with the development plan, and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as outlined in Paragraph 11 of the Framework, does not apply. The overall benefits of the scheme do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
14. Therefore, I find that that the appeal proposal would not provide a suitable location for housing having regard to local and national planning policy in respect of the distribution of development and the appropriate protection of the countryside. The proposal is in clear conflict with SAMDev Policies MD3 and S16.2(xi) regarding the scale and distribution of housing development in the area. There is further conflict with CS Policies CS4 and CS6 and Policy MD2 of the SAMDev which sets out, amongst other matters, additional detail on the scale and type of development which will be permitted in Community Clusters. In addition, there is further conflict with Paragraph 170 of the Framework which requires that development proposals recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Cooper

INSPECTOR