
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2022

by A Berry MTCP (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/22/3292446

Land adjacent The Conifers, South View, Wrenbury Heath Road, Wrenbury Heath CW5 8EF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr K Cliffe against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 21/4701N, dated 7 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "outline application to erect two detached dwellings with garages and formation of new vehicular access points".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Outline permission is sought with access considered at this stage. Drawing 7064-01 includes details of appearance, scale and layout, matters which are reserved for future consideration. I have therefore treated the plan as illustrative in this regard. I have determined the appeal on this basis.
3. The address of the appeal site is given on the application form as Wrenbury Heath Road, as Heath Lane on the Council's decision notice, and as South View within the appellant's appeal statement and within the site description of the Council's Officer report. The lane is called South View on the submitted drawing. I shall therefore refer to it as South View in my reasoning.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed development would provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the rural location and relevant local policies.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a parcel of land that forms part of a field. It is proposed to erect 2 dwellings that would front onto South View, a quiet rural single width road with no pavement. It is not disputed between the main parties that the appeal site is not within a defined settlement boundary and so falls within open countryside as defined by Policy PG 6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030, adopted July 2017 (LP). This policy limits developments to certain appropriate types, including several exceptions such as limited infilling in villages, and the infilling of a small gap with one or two dwellings in an otherwise built-up frontage.

6. This part of rural Cheshire is characterised by the Local Service Centre of Wrenbury, interspersed with smaller hamlets, and clusters and linear groups of farms and houses positioned along the rural roads. The appeal site is separated from Wrenbury by numerous fields and therefore it does not form part of this Local Service Centre. Wrenbury Heath is located to the south of the appeal site and comprises a cluster of buildings that front onto Wrenbury Heath Road and the southernmost section of South View. The appeal site is separated from the hamlet of Wrenbury Heath by open fields. The appeal site is bounded by existing dwellings to the north and west, with the remainder of the field and another field located to the south, before the built-up extent of the hamlet of Wrenbury Heath begins. There is an absence of development to the south of the appeal site. Consequently, the appeal site is not a small gap within an otherwise built-up frontage and the proposal would not be within a village.
7. Wrenbury Heath has few, if any, local services. Whilst Wrenbury has a good range of services and facilities, including a primary school, convenience store, church, village hall, train station, medical centre, public house, the appeal site is remote from this Local Service Centre. Access between the two would be difficult on foot, given the lack of pavement, and it would not be a pleasant experience for walking or cycling given the speed and size of vehicles travelling along the road and the winding nature of the road. A bus stop is located on the crossroads of Wrenbury Hall Drive, Wrenbury Heath Road and Nantwich Road, but I have been given limited information about the regularity of the bus services or their destinations. In respect of the recommended distances to public transport, open space and services, as detailed within Table 9.1 of Policy SD 2 of the LP, the proposed development would comply with just one criterion, namely its distance to a Public Right of Way, which leads out into the open countryside in the opposite direction to Wrenbury Heath. The occupiers of the proposed dwellings would therefore be reliant upon the private car to access jobs, facilities and services.
8. In relation to the main issue, the proposed development would not be in a sustainable location for housing as it would be contrary to Policies SD 1, SD 2 and PG 6 of the LP, Policy HOU2 of the Wrenbury Cum Frith Neighbourhood Plan 2010 to 2030, and Saved Policies RES5 and NE2 of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011, that seek to encourage sustainable patterns of development, ensure developments are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and restrict development in the countryside, where public transport is more limited and there is a reliance upon the private car.

Other Matters

9. The appellant has provided 4 appeal decisions for developments involving infill plots that they consider are similar to the appeal proposal. From the information provided, I note that the Bridle Road, Foden Lane and 151 Moor Lane examples all involve gaps within far more built-up areas. The Byres example is within a loosely built-up area, but it is also clear from the decision that the Inspector considered that it is within a built-up frontage and was not unduly remote. These examples are therefore not directly comparable to the appeal proposal, and in any event, each application must be decided on its own individual merits.

10. The appellant has also provided examples of decisions issued by the Council for sites at Quintons Orchard and Butt Green House. From the information provided, it would seem that circumstances at the time of those decisions were very different as the Council could not demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land.
11. There would be some modest benefits from the proposal with respect to providing additional housing, although it is not demonstrated that it would meet a specific local need. Additional housing would support shops and services within nearby settlements, the provision of employment during construction and support local businesses if construction materials were purchased locally. These factors would provide additional limited benefits. The use of high levels of insulation and renewable energy sources would help to reduce the impacts of living in this location. However, these are neutral factors.

Conclusion

12. The other matters raised are insufficient to outweigh my conclusions on the main issue and that the development plan as a whole would not be complied with. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

A Berry

INSPECTOR