



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 June 2025

by **P Barton BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/25/3363048

Land to the west of Deans Lane, Charter Alley

Grid Ref Easting: 459471, Grid Ref Northing: 157798

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr A Freeman against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02867/OUT.
 - The development proposed is outline planning application with all matters reserved, except the means of access and layout, for the erection of three dwellings with ancillary vehicle parking, amenity space and other associated infrastructure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal scheme relates to an outline proposal, with access and layout to be considered at this stage, and with all other matters reserved for future consideration. I have considered the appeal accordingly.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the appeal site would be a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to the spatial strategy in the Development Plan, and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Location

4. The appeal site is an undeveloped parcel of land positioned to the corner of a field located adjacent to the small settlement of Charter Alley. The proposal is for 3 dwellings, in the form of a detached and a pair of semi-detached houses, utilising the existing access off Deans Lane.
5. Policy SS1 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (BDLP) sets out the spatial strategy for housing delivery during the plan period, which focuses on development within defined Settlement Policy Boundaries and allocated sites, as well as a quantum of housing allocated through the neighbourhood planning

process. The appeal site falls outside of any of these and as such is located within the countryside.

6. Policy SS6 of the BDLP sets out a criteria-based approach to the provision of new housing in the countryside. The relevant part of BDLP Policy SS6 to this proposal is part e) and will only permit small scale residential proposals that are of a scale and type that meet a locally agreed need.
7. The Council's guidance on the interpretation of BDLP Policy SS6 e) identifies that proposals should meet a specific and clearly identified unmet need in the local area in terms of number, size, type, and tenure, and refers to the need being with the Parish, Village, or settlement. Whilst the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites, this does not demonstrate a locally agreed need, as it relates to the whole area covered by the Local Plan. Further evidence before me is also limited to demonstrate that the proposal is of a scale and type to meet a locally agreed need.
8. Policy WSL5 of the Wootton St Lawrence Parish Neighbourhood Plan (WSLPNP) requires compliance with BDLP Policy SS6 for new housing in Charter Alley. Moreover, the appeal site would fail the policy's infilling requirements of occupying a gap not exceeding a width of 30m, when measured between the buildings on either side, and within an otherwise continuous built-up frontage to the public highway.
9. The appeal site is not isolated, insofar as it is located to the opposite side of existing properties on White Hart Lane, which form part of Charter Alley. This small settlement has limited services and facilities, including a village shop/café and a garage/MOT centre. However, future occupants would need to travel further distances to meet day-to-day needs such as schools and health care.
10. I observed that the surrounding roads have limited suitability for walking and cycling as they were unlit with no footway and White Hart Lane was particularly narrow. The nearby public right of way was also unlit and unsurfaced. Little information is before me on public transport provision in the area and I saw what appeared to be a former bus shelter on Monk Sherborne Road that is being used as a community book swap. Due to a lack of genuinely sustainable travel choices, the occupants of the development would be heavily reliant on private motor vehicles to access services and facilities on a regular basis.
11. My attention has been drawn to an appeal decision¹ relating to an approved residential development on Monk Sherborne Road. The Inspector recognised that occupiers of the development would be largely reliant upon cars in order to access many day-to-day services, which weighed against the scheme, but this was tempered by the existing dispersed patterns of rural settlements in large parts of the BDLP. There are noticeable differences with the approved scheme and the proposal before me, including a greater number of houses, and the Inspector concluding that the effect on the character and appearance of the area would be acceptable, in part due to the consolidation of the existing built-up section of the settlement. However, each case must be dealt with on its own merits.
12. Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) acknowledges opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban

¹ Appeal Refs: APP/H1705/W/20/3261247

and rural area, this does not give reason to locate development within inherently inaccessible locations by means other than private motor vehicles. In light of the above, there would be conflict with the Framework in this regard and this weighs against the scheme.

13. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would not be in a suitable location, having regard to the spatial strategy in the Development Plan. This would conflict with Policy SS6 of the BDLP and Policy WSL5 of the WSLPNP, which seek, amongst other things, new housing in the countryside to meet a locally agreed need, including how the types of dwellings provided will help meet the housing needs of the Parish.

Character and appearance

14. There is a vehicular access off Deans Lane which provides a view of the site and the wider field. I observed further views between gaps in the vegetation along White Hart Lane, from the Public Right of Way along the field's western boundary as well as travelling south along Deans Lane, where ground levels rise before Charter Alley is entered.
15. The junction between White Hart Lane and Deans Lane marks a very clear boundary between the built-up parts of Charter Alley and the open countryside. The contrast between either side of White Hart Lane is a significant contributing factor to the setting of Charter Alley as well as the character and appearance of the area.
16. The introduction of the proposed residential development into this corner of the larger field would erode the existing open and rural nature of the site. Moreover, extending the built-up area of Charter Alley to the northern side of White Hart Lane would lessen the very clear distinction between the settlement and the open countryside.
17. The creation of buffer zones and enhanced hedging along White Hart Lane and Deans Lane would assist in screening some elements of the urbanising impact of the development. However, it would still be visually intrusive when viewed from various vantage points, including from the access point off Deans Lane.
18. It is suggested that roads separating houses is a natural pattern of development. Nevertheless, I have found the settlement edge along White Hart Lane to be very distinctive, with different characteristics to either side of the road.
19. It is also claimed that Little Wyford Farm, to the north of the appeal site, would be seen as the end of the village and that planning permission has been granted in the adjacent field for an equestrian development, thereby adding to the built form in this location. I observed that there is a noticeable gap between Little Wyford Farm and the properties along White Hart Lane. The proposal would significantly reduce this gap, compounding the harm I have found with the erosion of the open and rural nature of the site. Moreover, limited details of the approved equestrian development are before me, and I observed no evidence of an equestrian use in the field. Notwithstanding that, an equestrian use would hold a different character and appearance to that of a residential development. As such I have given this limited weight in my consideration.

20. For the above reasons, the proposed development would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies EM1 and EM10 of the BDLP and Policy WSL 5 of the WSLPNP. Together these policies require that proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned, including having regard to the setting of a settlement.

Planning Balance

21. I give significant weight to the conflict with Policies SS6(e), EM1 and EM10 of the BDLP, which are consistent with the Framework in supporting housing developments that reflect local needs, directing development to sustainable locations and ensure that development is sympathetic to local character. As a result, I find that there is conflict with the development plan as a whole.
22. The council has stated that the current housing land supply figure is 2.9 years, and the appellant has referred to a land supply of 2.78 years. In either case, paragraph 11 of the Framework is engaged. In such cases, paragraph 11 d) ii) of the Framework identifies that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies including directing development to sustainable locations and securing well-designed places.
23. Moreover, whilst the WSLPNP became part of the development plan in December 2019, in light of the above, it can no longer meet its identified housing requirement. As such, the protection given to conflicts with Neighbourhood Plan policies in paragraph 14 of the Framework does not apply in this case.
24. The proposed development would make a positive contribution in the delivery of what has been indicated would be three family homes, which would support local services and facilities, and that there are spaces at the local primary school. The appellant asserts it would provide for a more efficient use of land. There would be associated social and economic benefits during the period of construction and once the houses are occupied. The proposal would also result in a significant gain to biodiversity on the site.
25. Applying the appellant's lower housing land supply figure for the purpose of my assessment, I afford the provision of 3 houses, along with the other benefits listed above, moderate weight in favour of the proposed development, due to its scale. I have considered the economic, social and environmental objectives of the Framework referred to, as well as paragraphs 61 and 73, which emphasises the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and the important contribution small and medium sized sites can make to meeting the housing requirements of an area.
26. Whilst it is argued that to meet the housing need there is a requirement to develop greenfield, edge of village sites, that is not to say that this scheme should automatically be found to be acceptable in terms of meeting a locally agreed need or being sympathetic to local character.
27. It is also asserted that the appeal site is not at risk of flooding and there are no overriding contaminated land matters. Moreover, it is contended that the proposed development would have no adverse impact upon highway safety, the living conditions of existing residents or any ecological, landscape or heritage

designations, provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers, achieve the relevant water efficiency standard and be constructed to current energy efficiency standards. However, a lack of harm in these respects are neutral considerations that weigh neither for nor against the proposal.

28. On the other side of the balance, the proposal would not be located in a suitable location, having regard to the spatial strategy, and there would be an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area, which would be contrary to paragraphs 82 and 135 of the Framework. Given the long-lasting nature of such effects, I attribute significant weight to this conflict.
29. Therefore, I conclude that the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11 d) of the Framework does not apply.

Conclusion

30. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

P Barton

INSPECTOR