
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2025

by **A Phillips MPlan BA CertHE MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F3545/W/25/3368446

Jubilee Farm, Vicarage Farm Lane, Great Barton, Suffolk IP31 2QF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mike Long against the decision of West Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/24/0490/FUL.
 - The development proposed is for change of use from timber yard to farm shop.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have updated the development description to provide a more precise wording of the proposal.
3. The West Suffolk Local Plan 2024-2041 July 2025 (Local Plan) has been adopted since the Council determined this development. I have considered the appeal against the policy requirements of the new Local Plan. Given the similarities in the principal policies in relation to this appeal between the previous and new Local Plan, it is not considered to materially affect the main issue.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the shop directly related to the farm.

Reasons

5. The site is set outside of the settlement boundary on a parcel of land last used as a timber yard. It is located on the corner of Vicarage Farm Lane and the bridleway off Mill Road. The wider site (identified by the blue line on the location plan) includes farmland and a dwelling.
6. From the evidence in front of me, it is stated that the proposed farm shop seeks to sell 60% of produce from its own holding, 35% produce from within 15 miles of the site and 5% of produce from within a 40 miles radius.
7. Policy LP25 of the Local Plan requires that any retail use on a farm must be directly related to the farm unit. With the stated 60% of the planned produce being sold in the retail use coming from the farm unit, it is not considered that the retail use is directly related to the farm unit. While it is accepted that the majority of the produce being sold is from the appellant's farm, there is still a significant proportion of the produce coming from off site.

8. The appellant has suggested a condition relating to controlling the sale of produce from the site. However, it is firstly noted that the produce from the holding has been reduced to a majority, therefore only just above 50%. Secondly in my judgment it does not meet all the six tests for conditions as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, with specific reference to enforceability. I do not see any amendment to this suggested condition that would lead me to a different view.
9. The appellant has stated that the site would now benefit from Class E, due to the timber yard having been granted for Class B1, B2 and B8. However, a copy of the decision notice for this proposal has not been provided. Therefore, I cannot be confident that there are no conditions that might limit or remove rights from the timber yard. In addition, this appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the Act) and it is not ordinarily the role of such appeals to examine the lawful use of land or buildings. Indeed, it is open to the appellant to apply to have such matters determined under sections 191 or 192 of the Act. Any such matter would be unaffected by my determination of this matter.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal is not a farm shop directly related to the farm unit. On this basis the proposal does not comply with Policies LP25, LP29 and SP25 of the Local Plan, which requires that any retail use on a farm must be directly related to the farm unit, and directs retail development to local centres and town centres.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has put forward that the site will act as a tourist destination. However, while this could provide additional economic viability to the farm there has been very little evidence to demonstrate who might visit the site or the benefits to the farm and local community. Therefore, only limited weight is granted in favour of the proposal on this basis.
12. The proposal would also likely create a few local employment opportunities. This economic benefit is likely to be small and on this basis is given limited weight in favour of the proposal.
13. The proposal could lead to an improvement in biodiversity in the local area, through either direct improvements or via sustainable farming practices. Limited weight in favour of the proposal is granted based on potential environmental improvements.
14. Further limited weight in favour of the proposal is given on the basis that the proposal would provide a retail unit that can provide relatively local food to the residents of Great Barton. However, it is noted that there is no guarantee that people would travel to the retail unit by sustainable means given its rural location. On this basis, the limited benefits from potential tourism, local employment, biodiversity enhancement and local produce does not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

15. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.

A Phillips

INSPECTOR