
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

by R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F2605/W/25/3372686

Land at Airfield Way, Griston, Norfolk IP25 6PX

- 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 Robert Lond-Caulk of RSLC Developments Limited against the decision of Breckland Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/0708/FMIN.
 - The development proposed is new dwelling and garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. From the evidence the address of the site was formerly known as Low Meadow Park and is now named Airfield Way. I have therefore taken the address from the decision notice and appeal form in the banner heading above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would accord with the Council's development plan strategy for the location of housing with regard to the accessibility of services and facilities; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on habitats sites.

Reasons

Location

4. The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary of Griston. Although Griston benefits from some services and facilities, including a day care centre for the elderly, a pub, a church and employment opportunities at a prison, it does not offer facilities for day-to-day needs.
5. Watton is a larger settlement with a wider range of services and facilities such as shops, schools and medical centre. However, these services are not accessible by walking. Although a cyclable distance, as at least part of the route to Watton lacks streetlights, future occupiers would be unlikely to cycle to Watton for daily requirements. A bus stop is sited a short walk from the site and provides services to Watton. Part of the route from the site to the bus stop lacks a footpath and

streetlights such that it is more likely that future occupiers would drive to Watton and surrounding settlements than take a bus or cycle.

6. I note the new footpath and cycling route that runs alongside the Watton airfield. However, access to the new route appears to be some distance from the site such that future occupiers of the proposal would nonetheless be reliant on the private vehicle for daily needs, particularly during colder months.
7. Consequently, the proposal would not accord with the Council's development plan strategy for the location of housing with regard to the accessibility of services and facilities. Therefore, it would conflict with Policies GEN01, GEN03 and GEN05 of the Breckland Local Plan September 2023 (LP) which seek developable land that seeks to provide access to homes, employment, retail, leisure and other facilities and directs new development towards larger settlements. As the site does not lie immediately adjacent to a village with boundaries, LP Policy HOU 04 is not relevant to this appeal.

Habitats sites

8. The appeal scheme proposes a dwelling on a site that lies within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of multiple habitats sites (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework)) in Norfolk. New housing development within the Zoi would be likely to increase the number of recreational visitors to the habitats sites, potentially resulting in disturbance to the integrity of the habitats of qualifying features. In combination with other developments, it is likely that the proposal would have significant effects on the designated sites.
9. A Unilateral Undertaking (UU) has been submitted which secures financial contributions toward mitigation measures as set out in the Norfolk Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Action Plan. However, as the UU is not signed or dated, I cannot attribute it any weight.
10. LP Policy ENV02 seeks, among other things, that the highest level of protection will be given to European Sites. I will return to the appropriate assessment, if necessary, in my planning balance.

Planning balance

11. The Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing. Accordingly, the tilted balance in the terms of paragraph 11dii of the Framework is engaged.
12. The proposal would have negative social and environmental effects through the use of private vehicle for daily requirements. In addition, the proposal would conflict with development plan policies that direct new development towards larger settlements. LP Policies GEN01, GEN03 and GEN05 are consistent with the Framework and the conflict with these policies are therefore attributed significant weight. Given the above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole.
13. Balanced against this harm, the proposal would contribute a single dwelling to the local housing supply. There would be limited temporary economic benefits during the construction phase and future occupiers would provide some contribution to the local community. An environmental uplift through Biodiversity Net Gain would also carry some weight in favour of the proposal. These benefits would be limited given the scale of the proposal.

14. I note the sustainability features of the proposed building. However, as these would mitigate the effects of the building, this matter carries neutral weight. Any lack of harm with regard to the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the area also carries neutral weight.
15. I have not carried out an appropriate assessment to consider whether there would be harm to the integrity of the habitats sites. On the basis that I would have given the appellant the opportunity to submit an executed planning obligation that may have overcome any harm to integrity had I been otherwise minded to allow the appeal, I will give neutral weight to this consideration.
16. I note the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and the evidence regarding previously developed land as well as that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. However, given the harm identified compared with the limited weight attributed to the benefits, 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, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations.

Conclusion

17. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan as a whole and in the absence of material considerations to indicate otherwise, the appeal is dismissed.

R Sabu

INSPECTOR