



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 November 2025

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/A2470/W/25/3370329

Rocott Lodge Barn, Melton Road, Langham, Rutland LE15 7ER

- 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 K Wellman-Smith against the decision of Rutland County Council.
- The application reference is 2024/1040/FUL.
- The development proposed is the erection of three holiday pods.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal represents a suitable location for tourism development.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located off the A606 around two miles outside of the village of Langham. The proposals relate to Rocott Lodge Barn, which is adjoined to, but separate from, Rocott Lodge and its associated outbuildings and agricultural barns. The site is accessed by a long drive from the main road and sits in an area of expansive countryside comprising rolling fields demarked by hedgerows. The proposed pods would be located in a field just beyond the existing parking area of Rocott Lodge Barn, on sloping land falling away from the dwelling.
4. The Council cites conflict with various development plan policies relating to the location development generally and tourism development in particular. Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy (July 2011) (the CS) expects new development to be located where it minimises the need to travel and wherever possible where services and facilities can be accessed safely on foot, by bicycle or public transport.
5. Policy SP25 of the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document (October 2014) (the SAP) relates to various forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation, which would include the proposed pods. The policy permits such development outside of the Rutland Water and Eyebrook Reservoir Areas where various criteria are met, including that they are located with convenient access to supporting facilities; do not result in an unacceptable increase in the amount of car travel; and are well related to an existing tourism attraction or recreation facility.
6. Policy SP7 of the SAP supports non-residential development in the countryside where certain criteria are met. Tourism is not specifically listed, with the closest potential criterion being development essential in the countryside for provision of visitor facilities, though the context of this appears to be facilities related to existing

sports or recreation venues, rather than tourism. Even so, the policy similarly requires development to be in an accessible location and not generate an unacceptable increase in the amount of traffic movements including car travel.

7. Not cited in the reason for refusal, but still relevant, is Policy CS15 of the CS, which sets out the Council's strategy for tourism. This supports new developments in existing settlements and which utilise existing historic buildings in the countryside (adjacent or closely related to the towns, local services centres and smaller services centres) while respecting their character.
8. Also relevant is the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Paragraph 88 supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, whilst Paragraph 89 acknowledges that local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.
9. The above policies place emphasis on accessibility of the site to local facilities by sustainable modes of transport where possible. The appellant argues these policies conflict with the approach of the Framework to rural development as they adopt a more restrictive approach than Paragraphs 88 and 89. However, the policies of the Framework should be read as a whole and against the overarching purpose of achieving sustainable development. In this respect, there is also an expectation at Paragraph 109 that proposals should identify and pursue opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use, whilst at Paragraph 110 recognising that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.
10. In this context, Policies CS1, CS15, SP7 and SP25 are consistent with the overall approach of the Framework. The criteria of each policy are not unduly restrictive of development in the countryside, but rather strike a balance that reflects other priorities of the Framework, including promoting sustainable transport, protecting the environment and maintaining the vitality of existing settlements. As such, I consider that these policies should still carry significant weight.
11. The site is located in the open countryside, well beyond the limits of the nearest settlements, Langham to the south-east and Whissendene to the north. Accessibility to each would require travel along the A606, a busy, undulating main road with a 60mph speed limit and no pedestrian footways or lighting. The speed and volume of traffic I observed would make walking and cycling fraught with danger, and very likely to deter guests of the proposed accommodation, who would consequently rely on the private car for virtually all trips to and from the site. This would include accessing the closest visitor facilities in Langham and Whissendene, which are limited in scope, both villages having a public house and church and the latter having a small convenience store and post office. In practice, guests would have to travel further for many basic needs such as groceries, likely to Oakham in the first instance.
12. I accept that, given its rural character, visitors to Rutland are likely to travel by car to the area and it is unreasonable to expect they would not make use of their car whilst there, especially when partaking in outdoor activities requiring sports and other equipment. I also accept that the attraction of accommodation such as holiday pods lies in their often tranquil rural locations away from busy urban areas.

Indeed, I made similar points in a decision of mine in Shropshire referred to by the appellant.¹

13. However, this does not mean that any rural location is capable of supporting this type of tourist accommodation, or that sites must be miles away from settlements to be attractive for visitors. Even if not within settlements themselves, suitable locations can exist closer to settlements, and the thrust of the aforementioned policies is to direct development closer to existing facilities and attractions such that other forms of transport become feasible and reliance on the car is not always required. I find that the appeal proposal does not accord with these aims, or that of the Framework to identify and pursue opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; but rather runs contrary to them due to the isolated location of the site and the inhospitable conditions on the A606 for walking and cycling. This also contrasts with the scenario in the Shropshire appeal, where the site was located on a smaller road within a couple of hundred metres walk or cycle of the town and its many facilities.
14. The appellant also points to the proximity of other venues in the area, such as a garden centre 2.2 miles away and Rutland Water some 6.6 miles away. However, all such venues could be described as accessible when using the private car, but it is the lack of realistic accessibility by other modes of transport to even basic services such as a shop that is the prevailing consideration in this case.
15. The parties have referred to other appeal decisions, though none of the actual decision letters have been put before me, only excerpts. As such, I cannot establish whether these other appeals are directly comparable in their circumstances. However, the assessment under appeal APP/J1860/W/23/3322958 of facilities being 'a relatively easy cycle ride along the existing road network' differs from my findings above. I am also told of an appeal having been dismissed for development of safari tents at Preston² wherein the Inspector concluded in similar terms to my findings, but in the absence of further information, I do not place weight on this as a determinative factor. This is also the case for a refused permission³ in 2017 on the appeal site for conversion of a barn to five holiday lets, for which I have no details beyond the stated reason for refusal; and Greendale Farm Caravan and Camping Park referred to by the appellant for which no other information has been provided.
16. The appellant also asserts compliance with Policy E8 of the Council's emerging Local Plan, but this is drafted in similar terms to existing policies, stating: *'Sustainable rural tourism development of an appropriate scale and use which utilises the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings in the countryside will also be supported where they are located adjacent to or closely relates to the towns and villages which respect the setting and character of the location.'* My findings are that the site is not well related to existing towns and villages in the area, and so does not gain support from this emerging policy. In any event, I have little information as to its current status, and so it attracts limited weight as a material consideration.

¹ APP/L3245/W/18/3195876

² APP/A2470/W/17/3189809

³ Council Ref 2017/0470/FUL

17. For the reasons set out above, therefore, I conclude that the appeal site would not represent a suitable location for tourism development, in conflict with the aforementioned aims of Policies CS1, CS15, SP7 and SP25.

Other Matters

18. The Council did not oppose the proposal in other respects, including character and appearance, highway safety, neighbours' living conditions and crime and disorder. I have no substantive evidence to conclude otherwise in these matters; my site visit having confirmed that the pods would be located close to the existing buildings and not prominent in the landscape. However, given the expectation that proposals accord with relevant development plan policies and the Framework in these respects, these are neutral considerations in the overall planning balance.
19. A neighbour raises objection to the increased use of a private driveway. The appellant indicates they have full rights of access. However, these are ultimately separate legal matters which are for the respective parties to address and which are not consequential to my decision.
20. The proposal would add to the range of tourist accommodation in the district, and would provide some economic boost through bookings, staffing opportunities on site and spending by visitors in the local area. However, given the modest scale of the development, the benefits in these respects would be very limited.

Conclusion

21. On the main issue, I have found that the proposal would result in conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole, to which I afford significant weight.
22. For reasons set out above, the relevant policies of the development plan are not out-of-date and, therefore, the tilted balance of Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is not engaged. Rather, my findings indicate that when considering the policies of Framework as a whole, the proposal would not represent sustainable development.
23. Other material considerations in this case, whilst affording some modest benefits, would not be sufficient to overcome the identified development plan conflict. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Savage

INSPECTOR