



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2026

by **S Sharp BSc(Hons) BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1153/W/25/3369266

Land SE of Huckleberry House, Pigs Leg Lane, Bridestowe, Okehampton EX20 4ER

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs T Warren against the decision of West Devon Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 1177/25/PIP.
 - The development proposed is permission in principle for a self-build single dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for residential development comprising a minimum of one and a maximum of one dwelling at land SE of Huckleberry House, Pigs Leg Lane, Bridestowe, Okehampton EX20 4ER in accordance with the terms of the application reference 1177/25/PIP.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's decision notice states the appeal site's location as "land adjacent Huckleberry House, Bridestowe" whereas the wording used on the application form is "Land SE of Huckleberry House, Pigs Leg Lane, Bridestowe, Okehampton EX20 4ER". I have used the latter within my decision.
3. The development is described on the application form as "planning in principle for new dwelling suitable for young or elderly persons (may be self-build)". However, this was subsequently amended by the appellants' agent in an email to the Council dated 22/04/2025. The amended description is "permission in principle for a self-build single dwelling". I have used this description accordingly.
4. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that permission in principle is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second (technical details consent) stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these 2 stages.
5. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent technical details consent application if permission in principle is granted. Details of a proposed dwelling's siting, floor plans and elevations were submitted with the application, but they were all marked "indicative", were not listed in the plans considered by the Council and would apply to the technical details consent stage. I have disregarded them in my decision.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether the site is in a suitable location for one dwelling, having regard to the land use and relevant policies for the location of housing and the development plan's spatial strategy.

Reasons

7. The development plan's spatial strategy is provided within policies of the Plymouth and South Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 (JLP). Policy SPT1 provides overarching support for sustainable growth and change, and this is complemented by a series of criteria in policy SPT2. Policy TTV1 sets out the distribution of development based on a hierarchy of settlements, Bridestowe being defined as a Sustainable Village. Policy TTV25 sets out that development in such settlements should be provided through neighbourhood plans, unless such provision would conflict with other policies of the JLP.
8. The made Bridestowe and Sourton Neighbourhood Plan (NP) does include policies and allocations to meet the levels of growth identified in the JLP. In addition to 2 allocations for residential development, the NP defines a Settlement Boundary (SB). The appeal site is adjacent to but falls outside of this boundary. Policy H2 directs development to sites within the SB and the allocations but does not restrict it beyond the SB per se. In such instance support must be afforded by accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), other relevant policies of the JLP and NP.
9. Bridestowe retains a shop/post office, a primary school, places of worship and a public house. I observed that the shop sells convenience goods including everyday items such as bread and milk. Pigs Leg Lane and Rectory Road between the appeal site and the school do not have a segregated footway, but I observed that vehicular traffic was relatively light and there is street lighting for the whole route. Beyond the school, along Fore Street and Station Road, there are segregated footways and street lighting linking to the shop/post office, the Methodist Church, St. Bridget's C of E Church and a public house. These characteristics and the relatively short distance to the shop/post office and other services would be conducive to future occupiers accessing them from the appeal site by foot. A moderate incline would be encountered on the return trip but would not dissuade people from walking.
10. Furthermore, the appeal site is on the opposite side of the road to one of the allocations in the NP that is deemed to be within a location with adequate access to the shop/post office and services, and adjacent to a site within the SB that is, likewise, also close to them. It would therefore be illogical to conclude that the appeal site was in a location where future occupiers would rely on cars to access the shop/post office and services, in contrast to the accessibility by foot of the allocation and sites adjoining it inside of the SB. The appeal site is therefore in a location accessible to the shop/post office and other services in Bridestowe by foot.
11. It is also visually contained, abutting existing residential development on two sides. As such, the location of a dwelling here would read as part of the built settlement envelope rather than a detached and incongruous addition to the countryside. The use of Grade 4, poor quality agricultural land would be acceptable for this

development and there is no evidence before me that the one dwelling proposed would place any harmful pressures on the settlement's infrastructure.

12. There is harm resulting from the location outside of the NP's SB and, as a result, conflict with policy TTV25 of the JLP. There is also a degree of conflict with policy H2 of the NP because of its aim of primarily locating development inside of the SB. However, the level of harm is tempered by the locational, land use and lack of infrastructure impact characteristics I have identified.
13. Against this harm, the proposal would contribute to the sustaining of the shop/post office and services offered by Bridestowe, derived from spend in the local economy. There would also be a benefit derived from a boost in the housing stock in the JLP area where there is a significant shortfall.¹ Furthermore, there would be employment generated during the construction phase of the proposal.
14. I acknowledge that the proposal is for a maximum of one dwelling and the NP already plans for growth of up to 55 dwellings which is 25 more than that envisaged for the village by policy TTV25 of the JLP. Nevertheless, there is accordance with the broader support for sustainable growth and development in villages such as Bridestowe found within policies SPT1, SPT2 and TTV1 of the JLP. Overall, I find that there would be conflict with the development plan as a whole because of the location of the appeal site outside of the SB, conflict with policy TTV25 of the JLP and the degree of conflict with policy H2 of the NP, but the level of harm would be minor in scale because of the support found elsewhere in the plan.

Other Matters

15. Interested parties raise a number of other matters. These are that the appeal site is visible from Rectory Road. I viewed the site from Rectory Road, which is effectively a continuation of Pigs Leg Lane and for the reasons already detailed in this decision, find a minor degree of harm afforded by the location outside of the NP's SB. They also raise an objection in relation to the impact on wildlife, but this matter is beyond the scope of what I can consider at this permission in principle stage.
16. An interested party also states that the proposal will be followed by development of the rest of the field beyond the appeal site, and this would have harmful impacts on wildlife, the character and appearance of the area and heritage, specifically the experience from the churchyard of the listed St. Bridget's C of E Church. However, my decision can only be based upon the appeal proposal before me without speculation as to the appellants' future intentions.
17. I also acknowledge the same interested party's comments in relation to the previous environmental degradation of the site. I have no evidence before me in relation to this matter and my decision is based on my observations of the site at the time of my site visit. Further comments from the interested party raise matters of the Council's handling of applications by the appellants in comparison to proposals elsewhere in Bridestowe. This is not a matter that I can consider under a Section 78 planning appeal and does not alter my findings, in which I have had regard solely to the planning merits of the proposal.

¹ 2.53 years measured against the Standard Method set out in national planning practice guidance (PPG).

18. Finally, the description of development describes the proposal as a self-build dwelling. Although there is support in the Framework and PPG for such development, there is nothing in the evidence before me on the extent of the Council's self-build register, or the mechanism by which this specific proposal would be secured as a self-build scheme. I have therefore afforded this matter negligible weight with it having no bearing on my decision.

Planning Balance

19. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan's spatial strategy, specifically in relation to the location outside of the NP's SB. However, I have identified that the appeal site is in a location that is accessible by foot to a shop/post office and other services to cater for the everyday needs of future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. I have also found that the use of poor-quality agricultural land would be acceptable and there is no evidence before me that the single dwelling proposed would result in any harmful pressures on existing infrastructure.
20. There is common ground between the parties that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites.² There is also common ground that, the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date for the purpose of paragraph 11 d) of the Framework. These are the policies I have already identified in this decision. I have no evidence before me to disagree with the parties. I also have no evidence before me that application of policies within the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance³ provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. As such it is the presumption at paragraph 11d) that is applicable.
21. Paragraph 14 of the Framework directs that, where it applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the NP is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. In this instance, such is the shortfall in the housing supply, I find that there is a justified exception to this likelihood. One dwelling would make a minor but useful contribution as indicated by paragraph 70 of the Framework. Furthermore, great weight should be given to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. In the context of the locational and land use characteristics already identified, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, the adverse impacts derived from the site's location beyond the NP's SB, do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of an additional home in this location, accessible by foot to the shop/post office and Bridestowe's other services.
22. Consequently, there are material considerations, including the Framework, of significant weight that outweigh the conflict I have found with the development plan when taken as a whole, and I conclude that permission in principle should be granted.

Conditions

There is no scope to impose conditions when granting permission in principle. Any necessary conditions would need to be imposed at the technical details stage.

² Ibid

³ Footnote 7 of the Framework.

Conclusion

23. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S Sharp

INSPECTOR