

SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Appeal by Manor Oak Homes
Land South of Grange Park, Quinton Road
Northampton

Local Planning Authority Reference: S/2019/0856/MAO

Planning Inspectorate Reference: APP/Z2830/W/20/3251622

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE
OF
ANDREW MURPHY BA (HONS) MSC MRTPI

September 2020

1. This Summary Proof of Evidence is made on behalf of South Northamptonshire Council (“**the Council**”) in respect of an appeal by Manor Oak Homes (“**the Appellant**”) under Section 78(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against the Council’s refusal to grant planning permission for “*Outline application for up to 300 dwellings and land for a new school (up to two forms-of-entry) along with open space, drainage, footpath improvements, new off-site footpath links, vehicular access and all matters reserved other than access*” at Land South of Grange Park Quinton Road Northampton.
2. The application was considered at a meeting of the Council’s Planning Committee on 6th February 2020 and refused by a decision notice dated 19 February 2020. The third refusal reason, relating to air and noise pollution, has been withdrawn by the Council.
3. The appeal site lies:
 - Outside but adjacent to the Northampton-Related Development Area (NRDA). The NRDA includes the Northampton Principal Urban Area, undeveloped land (with and without the benefit of planning permission for development), proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions and villages such as Grange Park.
 - Outside the village confines of Grange Park, a “secondary service village – third category”.
 - In open countryside.
4. The Development Plan comprises:
 - West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (December 2014); **the ‘JCS’**, and
 - South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (July 2020), **the ‘LPP2’**.
5. The first two reasons for refusal are related to each other, insofar as they both address the relationship of the appeal site to the Northampton Related Development Area.
6. The spatial strategy of the JCS is one of concentrating additional development within the existing towns as far as possible and in a small number of large development areas called SUEs. The appeal proposal is not located within Northampton town nor at a SUE. It constitutes major development on un-allocated greenfield land outside the village confines of Grange Park. There is no policy in the Development Plan

which expressly permits major development on unallocated sites outside the Northampton Related Development Area.

7. The proposal cannot comply with Part A of Policy S1 of the JCS unless, in the first place, it complies with S4. Part D of Policy S1 also applies. However, the appeal proposal does not support the ambition of Part D. It is not “limited” and it fails to “shorten journeys and facilitate access to jobs and services.”
8. JCS Policy S4 is the key policy for the appeal. If the proposal complies with S4, then other policy objections and refusal reasons 1 and 2 fall away and the appeal should be allowed. The appeal proposal constitutes “*additional development to meet Northampton’s needs*”. Some of the market and affordable housing needs of Northampton can be accommodated at the appeal site. This delivery is a significant benefit of the appeal scheme, particularly as there is a significant shortfall of housing in the NRDA. However, it does not follow that building houses on land adjacent to the NRDA complies with Policy S4. It is not the case that development on any land outside the NRDA constitutes sustainable development provided that it meets any of Northampton’s needs. The Holly Lodge Drive appeal decision supports the Council’s view that there is not a buffer around the NRDA available to meet the needs of Northampton, whether or not there is a housing shortfall in the NRDA. Paragraph 3.1.10 of the LPP2 confirms there are only limited circumstances when development adjacent to the NRDA will comply with Policy S4. This appeal proposal is not one of those limited circumstances.
9. To be supported by Policy S4, it is necessary to consider the “vision, objectives and policies of this Plan”. The relevant Plan policies are S1, S10 and C2. The Council recognises the proposed development would be visually well contained and would not appear as an arbitrary or artificial extension of Grange Park. However, this visual integration is weaker than the Boughton appeal and Wootton Fields granted developments, as is evident from the approved plans in each case. Visual integration is not enough to constitute sustainable development. In terms of sustainable travel, the appeal proposal is not well integrated with Grange Park nor the rest of the NRDA. More specifically, there is conflict with Policy S4 because:
 1. The site is located within a reasonable cycling distance of Grange Park services and facilities. However, walking distances from the proposed houses are too far to be sustainable. For example, it is unreasonable to expect future residents to

walk to the nearest food shop, health centre, community centre or bus stop. This is not a 'walkable neighbourhood' as defined by 'Planning for Walking' (CIHT, April 2015) and the National Design Guide (October 2019), both of which give an 800m walking benchmark. JCS Policy S10 and LPP2 Policy SS2 require that development proposals are located within easy reach of a range of services; that is not the case here.

2. The site cannot be made sustainable by the developer subsidising a limited, infrequent community bus service for three years whilst the site is under construction. This bus service is unlikely to be viable in the long term.
 3. Grange Park already exhibits high levels of car and van travel and the appeal proposal is likely to experience high levels of car use, notwithstanding the aspirations of the Travel Plan. A modal split of 68% car/van use after three years is highly ambitious and unrealistic, given the appeal site is located further away from shops, services and facilities at Grange Park than existing houses, which currently experience 85% car/van use. Even if 68% car use is achieved after 3 years, the appeal proposal will have worse sustainability credentials than the allocated SUE's at Northampton, that are "aspiring to achieve a modal split of no more than 40% of trips being made by car."
 4. Long and convoluted road journeys to/from the NRDA. There is no direct or convenient road access to Grange Park or anywhere else in the NRDA. Instead, journeys by car to the NRDA will be lengthy and convoluted. For example, the shortest drive between the centre of the appeal site and the nearest food shop is 3.7km and to the employment buildings located in Cheaney Drive the distance is 3.3km. In both examples the journey involves roads outside the NRDA.
 5. Increase in congestion of the road network in and around the NRDA, as mentioned in JCS paras 4.47 and 4.48.
 6. Social exclusion for those future residents without a car or bicycle.
10. Given the proposal does not comply with Policy S4, it is not supported by Policy S1(A), which states "*Development will be concentrated primarily in and adjoining the principal urban area of Northampton.*" Nor does the proposal comply with Policy S1(D), insofar as its scale is not "limited" and it fails to "shorten journeys and facilitate access to jobs and services." Similar conflict arises with LPP2 Policy SS2: General Development and Design Principles.

11. The second refusal reason arises from failure to comply with JCS Policy S4. The site is located in a rural area and there is clear conflict with policies for the rural area, namely JCS Policy R1 and LPP2 policies SS1 and LH1.
12. The combined benefits of the proposal attract significant weight in favour of the appeal. This weighting is consistent with the inspector's conclusions in the Holly Lodge Drive and Rothersthorpe appeals. Conversely, there is also harm from developing this greenfield site in a rural area.
13. The site is located in a rural area where more than a five year housing land supply applies. The proposal is not 'for the NRDA' and it fails to comply with policies S4 and S1. With reference to paragraph 12 of the NPPF, the planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan and material considerations, such as the benefits and harms, do not indicate that permission should nonetheless be granted.
14. If, contrary to the Council's primary case, the "tilted balance" of NPPF paragraph 11d applies, the adverse impacts of granting planning permission in relation to conflict with the JCS and LPP2 development strategy and other harms would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits identified, when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole.
15. In conclusion, the appeal should be dismissed.