

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Appeal by Richborough Estates

LAND SOUTH OF BLAKESLEY HILL, GREENS NORTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Local Planning Authority Reference: S/2020/1376/MAO

Planning Inspectorate Reference: APP/Z2830/W/21/3267906

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

May 2021

1. This Summary Proof of Evidence is made on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council (“**the Council**”) to give evidence to this inquiry in respect of an appeal by Richborough Estates (“**the Appellant**”) under Section 78(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against the Council’s refusal to grant “*Outline application for up to 69 dwellings, with associated access, landscaping, open space, and drainage infrastructure (all matters reserved other than access)*” at Land South of Blakesley Hill, Greens Norton.
2. The application was considered at a meeting of the Council’s Planning Committee on 3rd December 2020, recommended for refusal, and refused by a decision notice dated 4th December 2020 for three reasons.
3. The appeal site lies:
 - Within South Northamptonshire Area part of West Northamptonshire (and outside the part of South Northamptonshire Area that is in the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA))
 - Outside the village confines of Greens Norton, a “secondary service village – third category”, and in particular a Secondary Village (A).
 - 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. Greens Norton and its surrounding countryside are subject to the JCS housing requirement for South Northamptonshire (excluding the NRDA). The very recent Middleton Cheney appeal decisions demonstrate that more than 5 years housing land supply applies to the appeal site. Therefore relevant housing supply policies in the development plan are up-to-date.
6. The JCS and LPP2 are not time-expired and its policies conform with the NPPF (2019). Full weight is given to their relevant housing supply policies. The LPP2 is recently adopted, having been found sound by the LPP2 Inspector in his report in June 2020. Consequently, paragraph 11d of the NPPF does not apply to the appeal proposal.

- 7 The first refusal reason contains two main objections: 1) location outside the village confines of Greens Norton, in the open countryside and 2) the scale of development (69 houses) is not appropriate to the village.
- 8 The proposal constitutes residential development on attractive, un-allocated greenfield land located outside the village confines of Greens Norton, in the open countryside. The development plan only supports development beyond town and village confines in limited circumstances, none of which apply in this case. Spatial strategy policies for rural areas apply, namely JCS policies S1 and R1 and LPP2 policies SS1 and LH1. Arising from its location outside village confines, in the open countryside, and its excessive scale, the appeal proposal is in clear conflict with those policies.
- 9 The second refusal reason involves localised landscape harm, adversely changing the character of the west side of Greens Norton. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies S1D(1 and 4) and R1(B) of the JCS and Policy SS2(1a) of the LPP2 and NPPF paragraph 170(b).
- 10 In respect of both these reasons for refusal, conflict with the development plan is substantial and goes to the heart of the Joint Core Strategy Vision and Objectives about the appropriate focus for new development. The proposal does not comply with the Vision and Objectives for the same reasons that there is conflict with the JCS and LPP2 policies mentioned above.
- 11 Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states that where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.
- 12 The combined benefits of the proposal, which include market and affordable housing, attract significant weight in favour of the appeal. On the other hand, there is harm to strategic planning policies (relating to the type, location and scale of development in rural areas) and harm to the local landscape and the setting of Greens Norton. Greens Norton is not a strategic priority for growth, unlike Northampton, Brackley and Towcester. Applying the planning balance, the material considerations do not indicate that the plan should not be followed.

13 If, contrary to the Council's case, the "tilted balance" of NPPF paragraph 11d applies due to a shortfall of housing land supply, then the delivery of market housing will attract significant weight as a benefit. Adverse impacts to be considered arise from:

- Conflict with a raft of policies in the Development Plan (S1, R1, SS1 and LH1) relating to the strategy for development and rural areas, its excessive scale and conflict with the Spatial Vision and Objectives associated with those policies. Significant weight
- Localised landscape harm, adversely changing the character of the west side of Greens Norton. Associated conflict with policies S1D(1 and 4) and R1(B) of the JCS and Policy SS2(1a) of the LPP2. Significant weight.

14 The adverse impacts of granting planning permission 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.

Mr Andrew Murphy
Stansgate Planning