

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6 July 2016

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number: S/3190/15/OL

Parish(es): Orwell

Proposal: Outline planning application for up to 49 dwellings, community car park and coach drop-off facility, pumping station and associated infrastructure.

Site address: Land at Hurdleditch Road, Orwell

Applicant(s): K B Tebbit and Davidsons Development

Recommendation: Refusal

Key material considerations: The main issues are whether the proposed development would provide a suitable site for housing, having regard to housing land supply, the principles of sustainable development, scale of development and impact on townscape and landscape character, drainage issues, services and facilities, access and transport, heritage assets and ecology.

Committee Site Visit: 31 May 2016

Departure Application: Yes

Presenting Officer: Rebecca Ward, Senior Planning Officer

Application brought to Committee because: The application proposal raises considerations of wider than local interest.

Date by which decision due: 27 June 2016

Update to Report

Recent Appeal Decisions - paragraph 216 et seq.

1. Paragraph 222 of the main report refers to another appeal decision (App/W0530/W/15/3138791) has recently been issued in respect of Duxford. The appeal was allowed and grants outline planning permission for a development of up to 35 dwellings (use class C3).
2. One of the main issues considered by the inspector, which is relevant to the determination of this application, was the whether the proposed development would provide a suitable site for housing having regard to the principle of sustainable

development and the supply of housing.

3. In coming to this view the inspector had specific regard to objective ST/b, policy ST/2 and ST/6 of the Core Strategy and policy DP/7 of the Local Development Framework. Objective ST/b is to locate development where access to day-to-day needs for employment, shopping, recreation and other services is available by public transport, walking and cycling thus reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car. The inspector also recognised that the Council could not demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land.
4. At the date of the hearing into that appeal (15 March 2016) both the Council and the appellant, agreed within their Statement of Common Ground that none of the above policies were up to date and that the proposal should be considered in the context of paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
5. Like the Foxton and Swavesey appeals, the submission of the statements and the hearing for Duxford took place prior to the Court of Appeal decision (Richborough v Cheshire East and Suffolk Coastal DC v Hopkins Homes) dated 17 March 2016. As such the local authority's evidence and the inspectors assessment of this did not benefit from this decision and in particular the recognition by the Court of Appeal that out of date housing supply policies can still be given weight – even considerable weight – if they still maintain a planning function. The inspector did not subsequently ask the Council for a view on the implications of the Court's decision.
6. Whilst this decision does not fundamentally change an assessment of this application in terms of the weight that can be applied to the planning function of the policies, consideration should be given to the general assessment of sustainability.
7. In relation to this specific matter the inspector concluded the following key points:

Services - There would be limited access to essential shops and services needed on a day to day basis. The village is served by a primary school although not a secondary school. Nevertheless some rural centres do not have secondary schools (paragraph 20).

Employment - Duxford has good access to wide range of employment opportunities within 5 miles of Duxford. A number of the most recent employment facilities are located within walking distance of the appeal site. In addition to these opportunities The inspector found that Duxford has good access to a wide range of employment opportunities within a short distance (paragraph 21)

Transport –There is no segregated cycle route from Greenacres to Whittlesford Parkway Station and the use of the public right of way would be limited. Nevertheless, for pedestrians the route has a footpath along Moorfield Road and is lit although the distance of approximately 1.1 miles is long. The village is also served by a Citi7 bus service with links to Sawston, Saffron Walden and Cambridge.
8. In accordance with the main aims of Core Strategy Policy ST/b the inspector found the appeal site would provide a sustainable location for development. However, the inspector did clearly specify this was an on balance decision. As such, it's not reasonable to assume that all group villages are the same in what they offer and they do need to be considered on their individual merits and circumstances.
9. In this instance paragraphs 144 - 157 of the main officer report make reference to the services, transport links and employment opportunities in Orwell and its relationship to

the surrounding villages and service centres.

10. This states that Orwell is served by relatively few services and facilities and residents are required to commute outside the village to access many day-to-day services. There are very limited employment opportunities within the village itself, and in nearby villages. There is a limited bus service through Orwell with limited connections to service centres or railway stations. As such residents of the new development are unlikely to use the bus as an alternative to the private car for most day-to-day journeys. Whilst the provision of bus stop shelters and a footpath/cycle link will improve accessibility and usability of the existing services, officers are of the view that it will not materially increase numbers choosing to travel by alternative modes of transport to the car.
11. By virtue of the relatively number of new dwellings proposed, the limited range of services and facilities in the locality, the limited bus service, the inability for residents to reasonably walk/cycle to other service centres and the limited local employment opportunities, officers do not consider the site to be sustainable location for development of this scale.
12. Officers therefore consider that the decisions in respect of Duxford can be treated on their individual merits.
13. Notwithstanding the sustainability argument on this particular site, it is considered that the Core Strategy DPD objectives (ST/a –K) and the associated suite of policies ST/2 - ST/7 and Development Control Policies policy DP/7 still maintain an important and valid planning function because they ensure that development is sustainably located and unsustainable locations are avoided. Policy ST/6 in particular can still be afforded significant weight.
14. The appeal decision at Duxford does not therefore change the officers' recommendation to refuse this application.

Background Papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning File Ref: S/3190/15/OL

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