
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 January 2026

by **N Bromley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 January 2026

Appeal Ref: 6000501

Brookside Farm, Dorrington Lane, Woore, Shropshire CW3 9RR

- 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 and Mrs O'Donovan against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00963/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of three-bedroom affordable house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address on the application form includes reference to 'Dorrington Farm Junction With London Roads B5026 To College Fields'. This is a description of the location, rather than part of the address. For this reason, I have omitted this from the banner heading.
3. The Government launched a consultation on reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in December 2025, but as the proposals are still subject to change, they carry little weight. Accordingly, the decision was made with reference to the December 2024 version of the Framework.

Main Issue

4. Whether the proposed development accords with the development plan strategy for housing and would be in a sustainable location.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises garden land associated with the host property, Brookside Farm. The site is located along a quiet country lane, primarily set amongst other residential dwellings which are grouped together, close to the junction with the busy B5026, London Road. Aside, from groups of residential dwellings, the area nearby has a rural character, with open agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows, an abundance of trees and occasional agricultural and equine buildings.
6. Policy CS1 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy 2011 (the CS) outlines the strategic approach to development across the County. The strategy includes seeking to ensure that rural areas will become more sustainable through a rural rebalance approach, which includes accommodating around 35% of the area's residential development in rural areas over the plan period. Such development will be located predominantly in Community Hubs and

Community Clusters. Outside these settlements, development will primarily be for economic diversification and to meet the needs of the local communities for affordable housing.

7. As the appeal site is outside the settlement boundary of Woore, Irelands Cross and Pipe Gate, which are listed as a Community Hub in Policy MD1 of the Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan, December 2015 (the SAMDev), it lies within the open countryside.
8. Policy S11.2(vii) of the SAMDev states that Woore has provided for significant housing growth and there is therefore limited potential for development of approximately 15 dwellings over the period to 2026. These will be delivered through limited infilling, conversions and small groups of houses which maybe acceptable on suitable sites within the villages, avoiding ribbon development along the A51.
9. Outside the settlements, Policy HOU1 of the Woore Neighbourhood Plan, 2016-2036 (the NP) states that new development will be strictly controlled in line with the development plan and national policies. Paragraph 6.13 of the NP also states that to prevent fragmented development, windfall development adjoining the village is not acceptable, unless it is an exception site for affordable housing, or other development that is normally allowed in the countryside.
10. Policy CS5 of the CS, allows new development in the open countryside only where it maintains and enhances countryside vitality and character and improves the sustainability of rural communities, particularly where it relates to certain types of development. One such type of development is the provision of affordable housing / accommodation to meet a local need. Policy MD7(a) of the SAMDev, amongst other things makes provision for exception site dwellings where they meet evidenced local housing needs.
11. The proposal is submitted as an affordable housing unit. However, it would be occupied by the appellants who reside and own Brookside Farm. Therefore, it is not clear how the proposal would be secured as affordable housing and how it would meet a local housing need. Likewise, there is no substantiated evidence which demonstrates that the proposal would be an exception site dwelling that would meet the exception sites criteria set out in the Council's Type and Affordability of Housing Supplementary Planning Document, 2012. In these circumstances, the appeal scheme would not be a type of development listed in the policies of the development plan and it would be for an open market dwelling in the open countryside.
12. Irelands Cross is a short distance from the appeal site but services and facilities within the settlement appear to be a notable distance away. In order for future occupiers of the proposal to access services, facilities and public transport opportunities on offer nearby, they would be required to walk along the B5026 to access the edge of the settlement. The road carries fast moving traffic and there is no pavement or street lighting for a large proportion of the route. Forward visibility is also poor in parts and due to safety concerns, future occupiers of the proposed development would be discouraged from walking to the settlement, especially during hours of darkness and in poor weather conditions. This would particularly be the case for families with young children, older people or those with mobility issues.

13. Cycling would be more attractive due to the distances involved but, again, due to safety concerns along the B5026, the prospect of future occupiers cycling to access services and amenities along the route is somewhat reduced. Nearby public footpaths would also not be reliable routes either due to variable ground conditions, especially during hours of darkness. As a result, the future occupants would be highly dependent on the use of private cars for their day-to-day needs.
14. The Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. Even so, I consider that the site is not readily accessible to the nearest settlements via a range of modes of transport. Consequently, the proposal would not enhance or maintain the vitality of the nearby community.
15. Reference has been made to other houses that have recently been constructed nearby. The full details of these cases have not been provided, and a proper comparison has therefore not been possible, and I have determined the case before me on its own merits.
16. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development does not accord with the development plan strategy for housing, and it would not be in a sustainable location. It would thereby conflict with Policies CS1 and CS5 of the CS, Policies MD1, MD7(a) and S11.2(vii) of the SAMDev, and Policy HOU1 of the NP. It would also conflict with the overall plan-led approach of the Framework.

Other Matters

17. There is a suggestion that the proposed dwelling would be self-build. However, although the Framework supports small sites to come forward for self-build housing, evidence of the demand and supply of self-build housing within the area has not been provided. Likewise, no details regarding the mechanism for securing the plot as self-build housing has been submitted. Accordingly, I attach limited weight to the matter.
18. I acknowledge the appellants frustrations with regard to the planning process, but I have nevertheless considered the proposed development on its planning merits.

Planning Balance

19. The Council accept that they cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. At 4.73 years, even though the shortfall is modest, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out at Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework applies. In these circumstances, paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework states that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse effects of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
20. The Framework makes it clear that weight should be afforded to policies of the development plan according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. In this regard, the Framework seeks rural housing to be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. The Framework also seeks to direct development towards locations with good access to services and facilities and ensure that sustainable transport modes are prioritised. As such, Policies CS1 and CS5 of the CS, Policies MD1, MD7(a) and S11.2(vii) of the SAMDev, and Policy

HOU1 of the NP are broadly consistent with the Framework and should be given significant weight.

21. A single infill dwelling on garden land would make efficient and effective use of underutilised land, which could also be delivered relatively quickly. Therefore, the proposal would contribute to boosting the supply of new housing as referenced in the Framework. The proposal would also provide social and economic benefits to local services during the construction phases and following occupation of the dwelling, without conflict with neighbouring land uses. A new dwelling could be designed to be energy efficient and would also help the appellants to downsize and remain in the community, providing private benefits for them. There are also no objections from neighbouring properties.
22. I acknowledge that the proposed access arrangements are acceptable and no concerns are raised in respect of ecology or the effect on wildlife, heritage assets, contamination, flooding or drainage. Also, there are no concerns raised with the design of the scheme or the effect on the character and appearance of the landscape, with the site screened by trees. Even so, these are requirements of planning policy and taken together they are neutral matters that carry limited weight.
23. Even in combination, the identified benefits, due to the small-scale nature of the proposed development, are modest. Consequently, the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

24. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would conflict with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that the development should be determined otherwise than in accordance with it. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

N Bromley

INSPECTOR