

Shropshire Local Plan Review Examination

Stage 2: Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 14: Ellesmere Place Plan Area

Hearing Statement on behalf of the Trustees of the Late Mrs V M Davies

Wednesday 20 November 2024

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The ISSUE posed by the Inspectors in relation to Matter 22 is,

“Whether the proposed Place Plan Area and site allocations within it are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.”

1.2 This Statement is prepared in order to set out the position of the Trustees (the Representor) with regard to the proposals in the Draft Local Plan (Policy S.16.2) as far as they relate to development in Longden are concerned.

1.3 The Inspectors will recall that representations were made at the Regulation 19 stage of the Local Plan process and at the time of the Stage 1 Examination. Representations on the effect of Policies SP2, SP7, SP8 and SP10 have already been made at the Stage 2 Examination Hearing in relation to Matter 2, the proposed development strategy for the County.

2.1 Policy S8: Ellesmere Place Plan

2.2 The main concern expressed earlier in this Hearing in relation to the proposed development strategy is that the proposal to designate Cockshutt as a Community Cluster is unsound, as the basis for that designation is a “points scoring” system which does not reflect accurately or flexibly the situation in any particular village and does not allow for changes in that situation within the Plan period. Cockshutt failed to achieve the necessary points total to become a Community Hub because at the time the Council carried out its assessment the village had lost its convenience shop. It’s point score, then, fell just short of the necessary score for the village to

be regarded as a Community Hub. However, a shop has been opened up in the village community hall and is open seven days a week. With the points attributable to a shop Cockshutt would score sufficient points to be regarded as a Community Hub, which would mean it would be expected to accommodate a significant number of new houses and have a development boundary.

2.3 Cockshutt is, by Shropshire standards, a reasonably sized village with (in 2016) an estimated population of 859 people. The local Council has shown itself, over the past twenty years or so to be opposed to development, and that leads in the SAAMDev Plan to a very small number of small sites being allocated for development in the village. Very likely, in turn, this led to the closure of the village shop for a short while, thus making the settlement less sustainable than it had been.

2.4 As the village is designated a Community Cluster in the Draft Local Plan it has no newly allocated sites for housing development and has no development boundary. Very little development has taken place in the village over the past ten years or so, and this is unusual for a village of 850+ residents. If the village is not permitted to grow it will likely find it difficult to retain what services it has at present, which in turn will lead to residents having to travel to Ellesmere or Shrewsbury to obtain services and facilities that might be provided in other similar sized villages. This is contrary to the objectives of national policy, which is to make settlements more sustainable.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The Trustees are concerned, then, quite apart from the issues they identified in the Hearing into Matter 2 on the 16 October, that the designation of Cockshutt as a Community Cluster will lead to the village becoming, over time, less sustainable than it is at present, forcing residents to travel elsewhere for goods and services.

4.0 Questions posed by the Inspectors

4.1 Cockshutt, being designated a Community Cluster in the Draft Plan, has no new allocated sites.

4.2 The Representor, then, is unable to make any comments in answer to the questions posed by the Inspectors. The 'site' to be discussed, as far as the Trustees are concerned, is the area of the village designated as a Community Cluster which, they believe, is not justified, will not be an effective means of making the village more sustainable and is thus not in compliance with national policy.