



EDITH WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

4 Normanton Cottages, Empingham Road,
Normanton, LE15 8RW

31 August 2022

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OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 2022/0903/MAO.
LAND OFF PENNINE DRIVE, EDITH WESTON.

Edith Weston Parish Council (EWPC) objects to the above planning application for a number of reasons.

It appears to EWPC that the application is a speculative application for up to 60 houses with c21 affordable homes and the applicant is using the current status of Rutland County Council (RCC) Local Plan (LP) and Edith Weston Neighbourhood Plan (EWNP) as an excuse for coming forward with this now.

The applicant would have been aware of the call for sites and could and should (if they have not already done so) have nominated the area in the call for sites to allow RCC to assess it on its merits against other nominated sites, but the applicant is, it would appear, trying to circumvent the situation and obtain a decision without that due process taking place.

In summary, the grounds for objection are that the application:-

- is on a greenfield site and is grade 3 agricultural land,
- is outside the permitted limit of development of Edith Weston (EW),
- does not comply with a number of existing adopted policies,
- is premature as the emerging local plan is being progressed,
- the traffic assessment is considered inadequate both in relation to existing/calculated traffic numbers, the junction between Pennine Drive and Normanton Road and the proximity of the roundabout,
- could compromise security in relation to the MOD's married quarters,
- does not reflect recent housing needs assessments.

It should also be noted that the area was submitted along with additional land for the call to sites in 2012 and the applicant has included positive comments from its assessment at that time. However, following consideration by RCC the site was rejected as an allocated site.

It appears that the applicant has also been quite selective in the policies or parts of policies referred to concentrating on those aspects which would benefit the application.

The detail of the reasons for objection are listed below.

Rutland County Council (RCC) Local Plan (LP) & Edith Weston Neighbourhood Plan (EWNP)
Status

The applicant claims that the Local Plan (LP) has not been reviewed and is therefore out of date, stating that “the current Development Plan pre-dates the standard method and the most recent requirement for Rutland, utilising the Local Housing Need figure calculated in line with the PPG guidance figures results in the Council having only 4.1 years of housing land supply. This implies the strategic housing need and related spatial policies of the current Development Plan carry a materially reduced weight in decision making”

However, the LP is still the adopted plan and its policies still stand and are considered to still be a material consideration even if the applicant is correct (which is debatable) in saying the weight of the policies is reduced. It is interesting that the applicant has calculated that the landbank is still 4.1 years which is not significantly below the required 5 years. Before the time that 4.1 years is used the new LP and new EWNP will be in place. In addition, even though not reviewed the LP includes figures to 2026.

The EWNP is also being updated but it is, like the LP, an adopted plan (for period 2012 to 2026) and its policies should still carry weight.

Therefore, the existing LP and EWNP policies should carry weight and the application should be considered against those policies (which are commented on below).

In any event, there has been a very recent independent housing needs assessment for EW which has been undertaken as part of the EWNP review. This report is available on the EWPC website (www.edithweston.com) and concludes that there is a need for only 21 new houses.

Emerging LP and emerging EWNP

The applicant states that “The Council is now working on a new Local Plan to address the issues that led to the withdrawal of the previously emerging Local Plan 2018 – 2036. This latest version of the Local Plan is at a very early stage – a ‘call for sites’ was undertaken in February 2022, and there is a current ‘Issues and Options’ consultation until September 2022. As such, given the very early stages of evidence preparation, this emergent plan carries no weight in the determination of this application” and rely on their earlier reference to the existing LP being of some age.

This application is premature in that the site should (as mentioned above) have been included in the call for sites rather than being submitted as an application, so that (as also mentioned above) it can be assessed against other sites put forward.

The new EWNP is also being reviewed and, although at early stages, has the benefit of a Housing Needs Assessment (July 2022) which indicates houses numbers (21) considerably below those proposed by the applicant are required during the period 2023 to 2041.

To deviate from local and national policy exceeding the growth strategy for the village would set a precedent for future development outside the permitted development area.

Assessing the application against existing LP & EW policies.

The applicant has referred to various policies or parts of policies but not all relevant policies.

Policy CS1 – Sustainable development principles

New development in Rutland will be expected to:

- a) minimise the impact on climate change and include measures to take account of future changes in the climate; (see Policy CS19 and 20)
- b) maintain and wherever possible enhance the county's environmental, cultural and heritage assets;(see Policies CS21 and 22)
- c) be located where it minimises the need to travel and wherever possible where services and facilities can be accessed safely on foot, by bicycle or public transport; (see Policy CS4 and CS18)
- d) make use of previously developed land or conversion or redevelopment of vacant and under-used land and buildings within settlements before development of new green field land;(see Policy CS4)
- e) respect and wherever possible enhance the character of the towns, villages and landscape; (see Policies CS19, 20, 21, 22)
- f) minimise the use of resources and meet high environmental standards in terms of design and construction with particular regard to energy and water efficiency, use of sustainable materials and minimisation of waste; (see Policies CS19 and 20)
- g) avoid development of land at risk of flooding or where it would exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere (see Policy CS19);
- h) contribute towards creating a strong, stable and more diverse economy (see Policies CS13, 14, 15, 16, and 17)
- i) include provision, or contribute towards any services and infrastructure needed to support the development (see Policy CS8)

Comment: The application does not conform to subsections:

- c) the majority of residents will be commuting by car to employment in Oakham, Stamford, Uppingham and likely also to larger employment areas further afield. The traffic assessment does not adequately cover the existing and likely car use for this specific site and does not address anything as regards highways beyond the site's junction with Pennine Drive. It does not assess the dangers of the junction of Pennine Drive with Normanton Road being close to the Normanton/Manton and Edith Weston road roundabout.
- d) It is a greenfield site (currently in agriculture and comprising grade 3 agricultural land) and does not make use of previously developed or unused land as required by this subsection.

Policy CS2 - The spatial strategy

The spatial strategy is to provide for sustainable development to help create safe and healthy communities and meet the needs of the local economy through:

- a) focussing new development in the most sustainable locations, primarily in the towns and the local service centres away from areas prone to flooding and ensuring that development is accessible by other modes of transport without reliance upon the private car; (see Policies CS3, 4)

The application does not comply with the above subsection a) as the majority of residents will no doubt commute to employment further afield.

Policy CS3 - The Settlement Hierarchy

The Settlement Hierarchy for Rutland is:

Main Town – Oakham. This is the main town with a range of job opportunities, higher order services including retail, leisure and health facilities for the surrounding rural area and has good public transport links.

Small Town – Uppingham. This is the second largest town with a range of job opportunities, convenience shopping, education, community and health facilities but with more limited public transport links.

Local Service Centres – Cottesmore, Edith Weston, Empingham, Greetham, Ketton, Market Overton, Ryhall. These comprise of seven of the largest villages with a range of facilities and access to public transport .

Smaller Service Centres – Barrowden, Belton-in-Rutland, Caldecott, Essendine, Exton, Glaston, Great Casterton, Langham, Lyddington, Manton, Morcott, North Luffenham, South Luffenham, Tinwell, Whissendine, Wing. These comprise of sixteen of the smaller villages with a more limited range of facilities than the Local Service Centres.

Restraint Villages – Ashwell, Ayston, Barleythorpe, Barrow, Belmesthorpe, Bisbrooke, Braunston-in-Rutland, Brooke, Burley, Clipsham, Egleton, Hambleton, Little Casterton, Lyndon, Pickworth, Pilton, Preston, Ridlington, Seaton, Stoke Dry, Stretton, Teigh, Thistleton, Thorpe by Water, Tickencote, Tixover, Toll Bar, Wardley, Whitwell. These comprise of the smallest villages with few services and facilities.

Countryside – Open countryside and villages not identified in settlement categories.

The commentary to the above policy states in para 2.18 that:

The local service centres will be the focus for small scale level of development outside the two towns reflecting the range of facilities and access to public transport available and their role as serving surrounding minor settlements. Small scale development for unallocated sites is defined as being up to 9 dwellings, provided that proposals of this scale can be sensitively developed within Local Service Centres. The location and appropriate scale for allocated sites will be determined through the Site Allocations and Policies DPD.

60 dwellings, as the applicant states, is a major development not small scale so it does not comply with policy CS3.

In addition, The commentary to the above policy states in para 2.22 that:

Development in the countryside will be strictly limited to house extensions, replacement dwellings, agricultural and forestry worker dwellings, conversions of appropriately located and suitably constructed buildings to dwellings and employment uses and other development normally acceptable in the countryside. The core strategy aims to continue to protect the countryside but also recognises the social and economic needs of rural communities.

The site is not within the planned limits of development and therefore comes under countryside, so the application does not comply with CS3 for that reason.

Policy CS4 - The location of development

In order to contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development and meet the vision and the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy:

Development in Rutland will be directed towards the most sustainable locations in accordance with the settlement hierarchy of Oakham, Uppingham, Local Service Centres, Smaller Service Centres and Restraint Villages. The rest of Rutland, including settlements not identified in settlement categories will be designated as countryside.

Oakham will be the key focus for new development mostly on land allocated to the north west of the town. This is considered to be the most sustainable location to accommodate significant levels of growth, about 69 dwellings per annum up to 2026. Uppingham will be a focus for more moderate growth mostly on allocated sites to the west or north west of the town. Uppingham has the capacity to accommodate about 16 dwellings per annum up to 2026.

The Local Service Centres can accommodate a level of growth mainly through small scale allocated sites, affordable housing sites, infill developments and conversion or reuse of redundant suitable rural buildings, approximately 24 dwellings per annum in this settlement category up to 2026.

The Smaller Service Centres can accommodate a minor scale level of development mainly on previously developed land on a limited scale appropriate to the character and needs of the village concerned, comprising affordable housing sites, infill developments and conversion or reuse of redundant suitable rural buildings.

The Restraint Villages are not considered sustainable locations to accommodate further development unless it is development normally acceptable in the countryside. Development in the Countryside will be strictly limited to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside and will be restricted to particular types of development to support the rural economy and meet affordable housing needs.

The conversion and re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed rural buildings for residential and employment-generating uses in the countryside will be considered adjacent or closely related to the towns, local services centres and smaller services centres provided it is of a scale appropriate to the existing location and consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment and would contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area.

New development will be prioritised in favour of the allocation and release of previously developed land within or adjoining the planned limits of development where it can support sustainable patterns of development and provides access to services by foot, public transport and cycling.

The application does not comply with policy CS4 in that it is not classified as a small scale site and is not even allocated and new development will be prioritised in favour of previously developed land.

Under Policies CS9 and CS11, the applicant acknowledges that RCC have 4.1 years of supply. The new LP will be in place and extra need addressed in advance of that to provide the ongoing 5 year supply.

The recent housing needs assessment indicates a far lower requirement to 2041 than the 60 indicated by this application and a the level of affordable housing would be likely to be unviable.

Policy SP6 - Housing in the countryside

1. New housing development

New housing development will not be permitted in the countryside except where:

- a) it can be demonstrated to be essential to the operational needs of agriculture, forestry or an established enterprise requiring a rural worker to live permanently at or near to their place of work in the countryside; or
- b) affordable housing would meet an identified local housing need as set out in Core Strategy Policy CS11 (Affordable housing); (these sites may also include small numbers of market homes where exceptionally permitted by Policy SP10 (Market housing within rural exception sites).

The development itself, or cumulatively with other development, should not adversely affect

any nature conservation sites, or the character and landscape of the area, or cultural heritage

The application does not comply with this policy.

Edith Weston Neighbourhood Plan

Policy EW1. Housing Development

In managing future housing growth new development will be expected to:

- a) fall within the boundary of planned limits of development for the village unless it relates to a small scale allocated site, small scale affordable housing, the re-use and adaption of a rural building, an extension to an existing dwelling, a replacement dwelling, or a new dwelling to meet an essential operational need, or there are proven exceptional circumstances , and
- b) be of a size and scale to minimise the impact on the character, infrastructure and environment of the village and any development site on unallocated sites should not exceed nine dwellings, and
- c) prevent the development of larger sites on a piecemeal basis. The accumulative effect of piecemeal development should be considered through the application of the Site Allocations and Policies DPD, and
- d) respect and, where possible, enhance the character of the village, using traditional materials, where required, and
- e) meet the requirements of the relevant Core Strategy and other development plan policies.

The application does not comply with the above policy, particularly subsections a), b), potentially c), e).

Policy EW4. Countryside and Open Space

The countryside and open spaces will be protected as a matter of priority from unnecessary or inappropriate development and development in these areas will only be acceptable in accordance with other Neighbourhood Plan and development plan policies or in exceptional circumstances and where the development clearly enhances these areas, for example landscaping and planting schemes.

Any development in these areas will also be required to meet the requirements of relevant Core Strategy and other development plan policies

Clearly, the application does not comply with this policy.

I look forward to your acknowledging receipt of our comments.

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Kind regards,

Cathie Gwilliam

Edith Weston Parish Council Clerk



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