

Questions for Sarah Scott for further clarification of the decision to grant planning permission. Application number: DC/23/05427

There are policies in the Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) which, in our view, have not been adequately considered in the officer's report. We seek further clarification and justification as to why these policies were not taken into account.

1. Unmet Housing Need

Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan (DNP)

When the DNP was made in May 2021 it included applications granted since 2018 for 6 additional dwellings within the Neighbourhood Plan Area

Since then permission has been granted for a further 4 dwellings within the NP area.

Thus Drinkstone has already met its identified housing requirement in full as laid out in Para 7.6, p.24. and policy DRN3. This is for 10 additional dwellings in the period to 2036.

Under the Core Strategy Review of 2012, Drinkstone was designated a hamlet, with a requirement to build 1 new dwelling in the period up to 2036. Since Part 2 of the Joint Local Plan has not yet been published, no new settlement hierarchies have been defined, nor housing allocations specified.

In this matter the Core Strategy is deemed out of date and the DNP takes precedence.

Question: why was the fact that Drinkstone has met its identified housing requirement not considered when granting this application?

2. Affordable housing and housing preferences

The applicant claims this as an "affordable house to purchase" .

Question: why was this claim not queried, when what is proposed fails to meet the criteria for affordable housing either under JLP policy SP02, or the definition under or DNP policy DRN4?

Additionally, in the DNP survey, residents expressed strong local support for 2-3 bedroom houses, affordable houses, houses for downsizers and single storey dwellings. This proposal provides none of these.

3. Sustainable location

JLP Part 1 policy SP03 Para 8.03 defines sustainable development as providing "good access to facilities and services" and where "the need to travel is reduced" Policy LP29 also includes a need for safe sustainable transport

Under the Revised Core Strategy of 2012 Drinkstone was classed as a hamlet, unsuitable for development as it has no services or amenities and no public transport.

Question: why was no consideration given to Drinkstone not meeting the criteria for a sustainable location, particularly since it has already met its identified housing requirements?

4. Sustainable Construction Practices

The applicant gives no information about incorporating sustainable design and construction measures as laid out in DNP policy DRN13 e.g energy efficiency, solar panels, rain water harvesting

Question: why have no conditions been applied to ensure that the building conforms to current best practice?

5. Design Considerations

These have been laid out in DNP policy DRN12, with additional detail in the evidence document Drinkstone Design Guidelines - April 2019

JLP policy LP24 also covers these. It states in para 3 that “All developments must demonstrate that they have regard to the design principles set out .. in design documents which support Neighbourhood Plans. Development which fails to maintain and wherever possible improve the quality and character of the area will not be supported”

It also states that development should be “compatible /harmonious with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, materials, texture and colour in relation to its surrounding area”

This proposed dwelling is within 20 metres of an architecturally coherent group of modest semi detached workers’ cottages built in the early 20th century out of local Woolpit white brick. There are houses in the village similar to what is proposed, but none in such close proximity to these old dwellings. A photograph of these houses was included in the design and access statement.

DRN12 also states that, as has already been pointed out, any development should not involve loss of gardens.

The proposed dwelling is significantly larger than its immediate neighbours, and we note that the design has already been amended to lower the height of the roofline,

Question: How was it decided that the proposed is not overbearing in terms of size, mass and form compared to its neighbours, bearing in mind that it is considerably larger?

Question: how were the design requirements in DRN 12 taken into account and was a site visit carried out to properly assess the impact of this dwelling in relation to its neighbours?

The comments made by the Mid Suffolk Ecology Department stated

At current, I am not satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application. Please provide a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment using the Small Sites Metric (Biodiversity Metric 4.0), which must show a 10% increase in BNG

Question Why was planning granted without seeking further information regarding ecology?

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