
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2026

by Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 October 2026

Appeal Ref: 6011445

Land to the East of, 5 The Hem, Shifnal TF11 9PS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by R Cooke against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 26/01405/PIP.
 - The development proposed is permission in principle for the construction of up to two dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on the 17 August 2026. I have determined the appeal in the context of this revised Framework.
3. The proposal is for permission in principle. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these 2 stages.
4. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent technical details consent application if permission in principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises a narrow, sloping paddock accessed via an unnamed road off the A4169. It is within the open countryside and is predominantly surrounded by open fields. However, there are also a number of dwellings nearby, including one immediately adjoining the site and a group on the opposite side of the brook at the bottom of the site. The appeal site is not within a settlement for the purposes of the Framework but, is also not isolated.

7. Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (the ACS) and Policies MD1 and MD7a of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (the SAMDev) direct new residential development to Shrewsbury, Market Towns, Key Centres, community hubs and community clusters. The appeal site is not within any of these locations. Where outside of these locations proposals can be supported where they meet particular local needs, identified by the appellant, are for an exception site or provide rural worker housing. On a plain reading, the location of this appeal site does not comply with the spatial strategy for this use and would not meet any of the relevant exceptions set out within the above policies.
8. The Framework, under Policy S5, sets out exceptions for where residential development in the countryside can be acceptable. In this case, exceptions (e), (h), and (j) of Policy S5(1) are of relevance to this appeal.
9. However, given the site's relationship to the surrounding development, it could not be said that the proposed dwellings would comprise infilling. Moreover, the appeal site is some significant distance from Telford, Shifnal and their respective stations. It is not, therefore, within a reasonable walking distance of, or physically well-related to, these. Consequently, the proposal does not fall within exceptions (e) or (h).
10. It is agreed by the parties that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and therefore, there is an unmet need for housing. Nevertheless, as noted above, the appeal site is not physically well-related to an existing settlement. In light of this the proposal also does not comply with exception (j).
11. It is clear from the above that the proposal does not fall within any of the relevant categories of Framework Policy S5. S5(4) therefore requires that such a proposal should only be approved in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of the proposal substantially outweigh the adverse effects. Particular regard is had to sustainable patterns of movement and the character of the countryside, these matters reflect the concerns of the Council, and I have considered them in turn below.
12. There are no services or facilities provided within The Hem, and I understand that the closest opportunities for these are within Telford and Shifnal. Future occupiers would therefore be required to travel to either of these to meet typical needs such as employment, education, shopping as well as reach other services and facilities.
13. The appeal site is some distance from either settlement and, given the distance, it is unlikely that future occupiers would walk. Moreover, the route from the appeal site to Telford is not served by a footpath or street lighting and so future occupiers would be required to walk in the carriageway or, where possible, on the verge. From my site visit, I noted what appeared to be a continuous footpath leading towards Shifnal. This is also unlit and would require future occupiers to cross the road which is covered by the national speed limit. Given the highway speeds walking along the carriageway or crossing it would be unsafe for future occupiers. This would be particularly so where pedestrians are more vulnerable, including children or those wheeling, and at times of poor visibility, such as overnight or during inclement weather.
14. The appellant has identified the main road as a cycling route, and it is likely that some cyclists would make use of this road. However, given the character of the

road set out above, future occupiers would be required to cycle in the carriageway amongst vehicles traveling at up to the national speed limit, and with no street lighting. I therefore find it would not be an attractive prospect for future occupiers to make regular use of in reaching their typical daily needs. The route would also have the potential to be unsafe should these needs require traveling in poor visibility or with vulnerable users. Therefore, while some cycling may occur, it would not comprise a realistic or viable option for future occupiers.

15. No public transport options, such as buses, have been identified that would be safely accessible, and so future occupiers would be reliant upon private motor vehicles to reach their typical needs. I am mindful that, when driven, the distance between the appeal site and the edge of nearby settlements is relatively short, but this distance is not to services and facilities which would require driving further. Moreover, I cannot be certain of any future occupier's social habits, nor require that they work from home and rely upon home deliveries. The proposal would therefore, by way of its location, be reliant upon private motor vehicles and not promote sustainable patterns of movement.
16. The proposal would introduce two new dwellings within the countryside adjacent to an existing group of residential development. The appeal paddock and its surroundings are primarily characterised by the rural and agricultural nature but, given the presence of the small number of dwellings, this character is not complete. I cannot consider the design of the proposed dwellings or their location within the site as this is a matter for the technical details consent stage. Nevertheless, I find that the presence of up to two additional dwellings in this location would affect the character of the area.
17. However, the appeal site is located within a somewhat discrete location away from the main road within a bowl surrounded by mature vegetation. Given this, any visual impact of the scheme would be limited to close views read against the existing sporadic development. I am content that given the above and the small scale of the proposal, only providing up to two dwellings, the effect on the character of the immediate area would not be so significant as to harm the rural character of the countryside.
18. Nevertheless, and having regard to its location and proposed land use, the appeal site is not suitable for residential development. The proposal therefore conflicts with the Council's spatial strategy and, as future occupiers would be reliant upon private motor vehicles to reach services and facilities, would not promote sustainable patterns of movement. The proposal therefore conflicts with ACS Policies CS1 and CS5 and SAMDev Policies MD1 and MD7a as set out above. The proposal would also conflict with the Framework, and particularly Policy S5 as above.

Conclusion

19. The Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of housing, and the proposal would provide between 1 and 2 dwellings. These would contribute towards the Council's identified under supply of housing. The scheme would also lead to a small and time-limited economic benefit during the construction phase, as well as some very limited social and economic benefits resulting from future occupiers. Given the small scale of the proposal and mindful of the Framework, including Policy HO7, these matters, at most, attract substantial weight.

20. Conversely, the proposal's location, poor access to sustainable transport options and reliance upon private motor vehicles would result in harm, and conflict with both local and national policies. I find this also attracts substantial weight and therefore the benefits of the proposal would not substantially outweigh the adverse effects of the proposed development. Consequently, the proposal does not benefit from the exceptional circumstances set out under Framework Policy S5(4).
21. The proposal would therefore conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweighs this conflict. Therefore, for the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR