

DDNP REPORT 28/10/24

A Planning Application for 112 dwellings (106 detailed and 6 outline for self-build) at Norwich Road Scole was approved by South Norfolk DC on 25th October 24.

50 dwellings were allocated in the DDNP (which was well in excess of local need) and this was supported by Scole PC. The current scheme was unanimously objected to.

Approval of this application completely undermines the process and benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Attached is a copy of the Scole PC Representation to the Planning Committee.

Richard Goodchild

Scole Representation at Planning Committee

23 October 2024

The Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan Management Group (DDNP MRG) strongly objects to this application being approved on grounds that it does not conform with the national policy framework.

The committee report recommends the application is approved on the basis that it demonstrates overriding benefits. This judgement is based on recognition that the proposal is contrary to Policy DDNP10, but there is no consideration of the significance of this. The NPPF however makes it clear that the impact of allowing development that conflicts with a neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that:

In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:

- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and*
- b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 67-68).*

This is not the basis upon which the officer has made their judgement with respect to the proposal. The planning officer's judgement is therefore flawed. Even in a situation where the planning authority is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, Para 14 of the NPPF would still apply and be fully considered in any Appeal decision.

In addition, the overriding benefits of the proposal, as stated in the officer's report are that it provides sports pitches, informal recreation space and a financial contribution towards a car park. At no point has a proven need for these been demonstrated, the Planning Statement simply refers to this as a community desire following engagement with the Parish Council. Without an evidenced and proven need, it is incorrect to assume this an overriding benefit that outweighs the significant harm of going against the policy set in the neighbourhood plan.

Neighbourhood Plans are encouraged to allocate in the NPPF to meet local housing need and the DDNP fully embraced this. The housing allocations within the DDNP in Scole far exceed the indicative housing requirement set by the planning authority. This was fully supported by the community when developing the Plan, which is evident from the Consultation Statement and referendum results. DDNP is a great example of neighbourhood planning in this respect, with a community positively planning for its own growth. Approving this application for an additional 56 homes within Scole at a time when the development plan can be given full weight undermines the whole neighbourhood planning process. It sets a really poor example for planning and strategy making, especially for neighbourhood planning groups.

Should this application be approved on the flawed reasoning and judgement set out within the committee report, the DDNP MRG is prepared to take it to judicial review.