



Planning Inspectorate

APPEAL REF: APP/ Q1825/W/24/3350905

Land west of Hither Green Lane, Redditch

Case Management Conference to be held at 9.00 hours on Tuesday 5 November 2024

INSPECTOR'S PRE CONFERENCE NOTE

1. My name is Darren Hendley, I am a chartered town planner and will lead the case management conference. Instructions for joining the conference and the conference etiquette have been forwarded separately.
2. There will be no discussion of the merits of your respective cases and I will not hear any evidence. The purpose of the conference is to give a clear indication as to the ongoing management of this case and the presentation of evidence, so that the forthcoming event is conducted in an efficient and effective manner.
3. The Inquiry itself is scheduled to open at 10.00 on Tuesday 21 January 2025.

Main Issues

4. On the basis of the totality of the material currently submitted, I consider that the main issues are likely to be:
 - a) The effect of the proposal on green infrastructure provision with regard to designated open space and recreational use;
 - b) The effect on the character and appearance of the area, including design quality;
 - c) Transport matters by way of traffic impact and the use of modes of transport other than the car;
 - d) Planning balance (including housing land supply and the benefits of the scheme if not separate issues) and conclusion.
5. This assumes that an agreed/signed Section 106 agreement will be submitted containing planning obligations to secure the various provisions that relate to the Council's Planning Officer Committee Report. The Inspector also draws the parties' attention to the appeal representations made by the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Worcestershire County Council Education.
6. The Inspector will ask for the views of the parties' over whether there are any other topic areas which should also be treated as main issues and covered by the evidence.

7. I will refine the above as necessary but you are requested to give consideration in advance of the case management conference as to whether the identified matters encapsulate those most pertinent to the outcome of the appeal.

Dealing with the Evidence

8. The forthcoming conference will explore how best to hear the evidence in order to ensure that the Inquiry is conducted as efficiently as possible.
9. The Inspector will want to hear the parties' views on the best method of dealing with each of the main issues at the case management conference but his initial views are the effect of the proposal on green infrastructure provision with regard to designated open space and recreational use; and transport matters by way of traffic impact and the use of modes of transport other than the car, would be dealt with through formal evidence.
10. His initial view is that the effect on the character and appearance of the area, including design quality would be dealt with by way of a round table session.
11. Matters relating to planning policy, national planning policy, weight to be given to policies, housing land supply and any benefits of the proposal and the overall planning balance, would be best dealt with through formal evidence. The Inspector would expect that to be the case here unless the parties can present strong reasons why an alternative method would be preferable.
12. The appellant's evidence to the Inquiry will also need to cover any other matters raised by Interested Parties and in the planning application representations, which may not fall into the categories of any of the main issues. This should also cover the designated heritage assets that are set out in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the Council's Statement of Case, the Dagnell End Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest and protected species, as well as the custom build element to the development.
13. Planning obligations and conditions would be dealt with by way of round table sessions.
14. You are requested to give the above careful consideration in advance of the related discussion at the case management conference. Any request for evidence to be heard other than as currently envisaged will need to be fully justified.
15. The Inspector will also want to hear parties' views on whether to accept the amended plans and Design and Access Statement. The Inspector will seek to clarify the differences from those which were before the Council at the time of its decision, how they relate to previous versions of the plans, whether the changes are material and whether any party would be disadvantaged if these were to be accepted. This includes those who responded to the planning application.

16. The Inspector will also request clarification on the appellant details, in light of differences between the planning application and the appeal forms. He will also request an update on the position with the agreed Statement of Common Ground.
17. All the above points are included on the case management conference agenda.
18. The attached Annex sets out the preferred format and content of proofs and appendices, which should be observed.

Darren Hendley
INSPECTOR

1 November 2024

Annex A

Content and Format of Proofs and Appendices

Content

Proofs of evidence **should**:

- focus on the main issues identified, in particular on areas of disagreement;
- be proportionate to the number and complexity of issues and matters that the witness is addressing;
- be concise, precise, relevant and contain facts and expert opinion deriving from witnesses' own professional expertise and experience, and/or local knowledge;
- be prepared with a clear structure that identifies and addresses the main issues within the witness's field of knowledge and avoids repetition;
- focus on what is really necessary to make the case and avoid including unnecessary material, or duplicating material in other documents or another witness's evidence; and
- where data is referred to, include that data, and outline any relevant assessment methodology and the assumptions used to support the arguments (unless this material has been previously agreed and is included as part of the statement of common ground).

Proofs **should not**:

- duplicate information already included in other Inquiry material, such as the site description, planning history and the relevant planning policy; and
- recite the text of policies referred to elsewhere: the proofs need only to identify the relevant policy numbers, with extracts being provided as core documents. Only policies which are needed to understand the argument being put forward and are fundamental to an appraisal of the proposals' merits need to be referred to.

Format of the proofs and appendices:

- Proofs to be no longer than 3000 words if possible. Where proofs are longer than 1500 words, summaries are to be submitted;
- Proofs are to be spiral bound or bound in such a way as to be easily opened and read;
- Front covers to proofs and appendices are to be clearly titled, with the name of the witness on the cover;

- Pages and paragraphs should be numbered;
- Appendices are to be bound separately; and
- Appendices are to be indexed using **projecting tabs**, labelled and **paginated**.