

15/00197/OUT

Land South Of High Street Milton Under Wychwood Oxfordshire

Erection of up to 70 dwellings, landscaping including change of use, formation of footpath and creation of ecological enhancement area, and ancillary infrastructure and enabling works.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board* **object** to this outline planning application for the following reasons:

- The emerging Local Plan directs most development to the three main settlements and larger towns (not villages of this size).
- The current Local Plan considers this to be a medium sized settlement (and under Policy H6) and is only suitable for infill, rounding off within the existing built up area and conversion.
- Therefore both in terms of scale and nature of development on a greenfield site, this will not be in accordance with Adopted or Emerging policy.
- The development of this site will have a negative impact on the character and special qualities of this nationally protected landscape through a clear urban extension out into an exposed open agricultural field outside the settlement boundary. The site is visible in the landscape from a variety of public viewpoints and rights of way whilst the existing settlement boundary in this location is relatively well landscaped creating a clear break between the urban area and open countryside. The development would therefore fail to meet the requirements of the CRoW Act 2000 that seeks the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.
- Paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF are relevant in this case (and paragraph 14 Footnote 9 applies given the AONB restrictions). The “presumption“ in favour of sustainable development does not apply, whilst the protection of the AONB is afforded “great weight.” I attach a very recent appeal decision from within the Cotswolds AONB at Broadway where the Inspector concluded that 70 homes in that case was “major development” based on local context and therefore Paragraph 116 of the NPPF applied. The concluding paragraph of the attached appeal decision states:

“Overall, however, the proposed development would be contrary to the development plan; there would be harm to the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB, to which the Framework advises that great weight should be given; and some less than substantial harm to the setting of the Conservation Area. Taken together, this amounts to a considerable degree of harm and I conclude that it is not outweighed by the other material considerations advanced in support of the development. I do not consider that the identified harm can be overcome by the imposition of conditions and so I dismiss this appeal.”

The Board therefore considers in relation to Paragraph 116 of the NPPF that there are no “exceptional circumstances” in this case to support this proposal; the conservation and enhancement of the AONB is in the public interest; there will be a significant impact on the landscape; housing need can be met in “some other way” and it would not have an overriding benefit on the local economy.

Andrew Lord
Planning & Landscape Officer
Cotswolds Conservation Board

**The Cotswolds Conservation Board (‘the Board’) was established by Parliament in 2004.*

The Board has two statutory purposes¹: a) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and b) To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB. In fulfilling these roles, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.