

Core Document NCC 5

Northamptonshire County
Council

Daventry Planning Inquiry (April 2009) to consider the following appeals:

**Appeal by Capel House
Property Trust Ltd. – Land at
Monksmoor Farm, Welton
Lane, Daventry. PINS ref:
APP/M9570/A08/2082894**

**Appeal by Croudace Homes
Ltd. – Land at Church Fields,
Long Buckby Road, Daventry.
PINS ref:
APP/Y2810/A/08/2083322/NWF
and; APP/M9570/A/08/2083327**

**Appeal by The Danetree
Consortium – Land to the East
of Daventry and North of the
A45. PINS ref:
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**NCC 5 - Summary
Proof of Evidence of
Graham Reeve, BSc
(Hons), MSc, CEng,
MICE**

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22nd April 2009

This report takes into account the
particular instructions and requirements
of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be
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Job number 117420-07

Contents

	Page
1 Experience and Qualifications	1
2 Introduction and Extent of Evidence	1
3 Transport Policy and Guidance	2
4 Existing Transport Networks in Daventry	3
5 Previous Transport Studies	4
6 Accessibility of the Appeal Proposals	5
7 Travel Plans and Mode Shift Targets	6
8 A45 Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford (WFUH) By- pass	7
9 Mitigation and Developer Contributions	8
10 Recommendations	9

1 Experience and Qualifications

- 1.1** Details of my experience and qualifications are given in my main proof of evidence.

2 Introduction and Extent of Evidence

- 2.1** My evidence will consider all three Appeal proposals in this single proof of evidence. My colleague Andrew Bamforth is giving supporting evidence on the details of the traffic modelling work.
- 2.2** NCC's starting point is that given the potential cumulative scale of the three proposed developments, they should only be allowed to proceed once the full transport impacts are known and the necessary mitigation has been identified and appropriately secured.
- 2.3** My evidence at this inquiry is based on the NCC recommendations and Rule 6 statements.

3 Transport Policy and Guidance

- 3.1** The aim of all the national, regional and local policies is to reduce the transport impact of development and promote development which encourages sustainable growth.
- 3.2** It is clear that to deliver development in Daventry in line with policy, the development sites must show that they will reduce the need to travel by car, by promoting the use of walking, cycling and public transport.
- 3.3** The MKSM Sub-Regional Strategy (CD1.10) suggested that Daventry should be expanded to a population of 40,000 by 2021. DDC have estimated that this equates to approximately 6,200 new dwellings to be built in Daventry town by 2021(CD3.36).
- 3.4** The NCC adopted Transport Strategy for Growth (TSfG) (CD2.3) provides policy input for the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) for west Northamptonshire, as well as the Area Action Plans for town centres and development areas.
- 3.5** The TSfG encourages the use of public transport, walking and cycling, and supports the development of town centres which provide easy access to jobs and other facilities. The TSfG states that achieving a substantial rate of modal shift will be key to ensuring that growth can be delivered sustainably.
- 3.6** The TSfG has two modal shift targets; 20% for new development and 5% for existing areas. They have been chosen as challenging but realistic targets following a review of best practice.
- 3.7** The CSS is intended to set out and plan for the growth in the west of Northamptonshire initially up to 2026, which includes the optimum scale and location of growth in the major growth towns, including Daventry.
- 3.8** The CSS has yet to be completed and therefore all of the sites under consideration at this inquiry are premature as there is no policy basis for assessing the transport implications of the Appeal proposals.
- 3.9** In the absence of a local development framework, the Daventry Infrastructure Strategy (DIS) (CD4.7) has been developed by WNDC to consider the most appropriate locations for growth in Daventry.
- 3.10** The main DIS report produced an ‘optimal development scenario’, based on minimising infrastructure costs and maximising sustainability and suggests that there are sites within and on the edge of Daventry that are more suitable locations for growth in Daventry than some of the Appeal sites.
- 3.11** Therefore, endeavours should be made to develop in these locations first rather than some of the sites which are subject to this Appeal.

4 Existing Transport Networks in Daventry

- 4.1** Pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre and central shopping area from outlying areas is via a combination of routes following both the main road network and quieter residential streets.
- 4.2** Daventry is reasonably well served by a network of existing cycle routes which are a combination of on-road routes and traffic free cycle routes.
- 4.3** Only 2% of internal trips in Daventry are currently made by bus and services generally operate with an hourly frequency. Most of the services do not operate in the evenings or on Sundays.
- 4.4** The nearest rail station to Daventry is at Long Buckby about 7 kms from the town.
- 4.5** The road network is characterised by a radial road network focused towards the town centre, with a ring-road around the town centre.
- 4.6** Within the town centre, a mix of free short and long-stay parking is available. Data provided by DDC indicates that on a typical Friday, the short-stay spaces are well used with over 90% occupancy at the busiest times, with the longer stay spaces having significant spare capacity.

5 Previous Transport Studies

- 5.1** It is important to emphasise that in selecting the 'preferred' development option, DDC did not consider transportation or sustainability issues.
- 5.2** In order to assess the transportation impacts and mitigation measures of the options presented in the draft Daventry CSS, NCC commissioned Arup to assist with preparing the Transport Technical Report for the DIS (CD 4.2).
- 5.3** The Daventry Sustainable Development Study (DSDS) (CD3.44) was prepared by Arup and identified the most appropriate locations for growth based on accessibility and sustainable criteria as the south and west corridors. The least favoured location being the A45 corridor in the south-east, the proposed location of the Danetree proposal.
- 5.4** The residential allocation in the vicinity of the Monksmoor and Church Fields proposals, identified in the optimal development scenario recommended in DIS, is 2,500 dwellings. The Monksmoor and Church Fields Appeal proposals would provide a combined residential development of 5,000 dwellings.
- 5.5** Within the DSDS, Arup analysed the Census data for journeys to work. The census data shows that overall about 83% of journeys to work by Daventry residents are made by car with over 90% by car for those commuters either working in Daventry and living outside or living in Daventry and working elsewhere.
- 5.6** For internal journey to work trips within Daventry there are two main modes of transport; private car, with 68% mode share and walking, with 25% mode share.
- 5.7** When considering the relative accessibility of development sites they should be prioritised in locations which allow residents to access the town centre and employment areas on foot.
- 5.8** Even if bus frequencies are increased from the current level it would be difficult for bus services to compete with private car trips as the journey times would be considerably lower for car trips. Trips by Daventry residents to Northampton are predominantly made by car.

6 Accessibility of the Appeal Proposals

- 6.1** Only the DIS has looked at locating growth in the most sustainable locations and only the Monksmoor site is potentially included in its entirety in the optimal development scenario. Part of the Church Fields site and the whole of the Danetree development are not part of the DIS optimal development strategy.
- 6.2** Discussions with NCC regarding the walking, cycling proposals and improved bus services are ongoing with each Appellant.
- 6.3** All three of the Appellants propose significant investment in new bus services to serve their developments, however the existing town centre bus station would become overloaded before all the services were implemented.
- 6.4** The Monksmoor and Church Fields developments link directly into the existing footway/ cycle network and therefore the developments would be accessible to the rest of the Daventry pedestrian and cycle network.
- 6.5** Danetree lies to the east of Borough Hill and is physically separated from Daventry and is not one of the optimal sites in the DIS study. It is clear from the latest design guidance that the proposed Danetree cycle and pedestrian links to Daventry would be unattractive and intimidating for both pedestrians and cyclists and would not be well used.
- 6.6** Unlike the Monksmoor and Church Field proposals, Danetree would not have acceptable links to the existing cycle or pedestrian networks in Daventry and cannot be considered to be a sustainable location regarding its relationship to the existing urban area. Danetree is intending to rely on improved bus services and increased car sharing to achieve the required modal shift.
- 6.7** While the proposed bus service improvements are very welcome and necessary, door to door bus journey times would not compare favourably to comparable trips made by car. The bus is likely to be unattractive as an alternative to the car for most journeys.
- 6.8** None of the three sites in totality are well located in relation to walking to the town centre, existing employment centres and other facilities. However, in order to meet regional housing requirements, it is accepted that sites will need to be developed which will be some distance from the existing town centre and employment facilities. A balanced view will have to be taken.
- 6.9** Should the Inspector wish to recommend approval of one or more of the applications being considered at this Inquiry, then in terms of accessibility, Monksmoor is acceptable.
- 6.10** For Danetree, I support the NCC recommendation of refusal for the Danetree application, because its location and scale is such that it would encourage significant trips by private car.
- 6.11** The northern part of Church Fields is relatively remote and, considering the site as a whole, I do not regard Church Fields as an acceptable development in terms of a sustainable urban extension.
- 6.12** None of the Appellants have yet demonstrated that their traffic can be adequately accommodated with their proposed access arrangements.

7 Travel Plans and Mode Shift Targets

- 7.1** Travel Plans are now a well established method of examining the possibility for reducing the reliance on the car but it is important to understand that unacceptable development should never be permitted because of the existence of a Travel Plan.
- 7.2** NCC require all new developments to achieve a 20% modal shift to sustainable modes for journeys to work.
- 7.3** I understand that at the date of this proof of evidence the contents of the Travel Plans are broadly agreed with NCC, but the costs of the proposed measures have not yet been agreed.
- 7.4** The County mode shift target will be challenging for any urban extension of Daventry and the lack of car reduced developments makes the target more difficult for all of the Appeal sites.
- 7.5** The likely increase in the mode share by a combination of walk, cycle, bus and car sharing for Church Fields makes this target possible.
- 7.6** As Danetree's location would not encourage walking or cycling, the dependence on an increase in bus use and car sharing makes the mode shift target unrealistic.
- 7.7** The Monksmoor Application has failed to adequately demonstrate that the mode shift targets can be met, as no estimate of mode shift has been provided.

8 A45 Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford (WFUH) By-pass

- 8.1** It is accepted by all parties that the A5/ A45 junction requires improvement in both a no development scenario and in each of the development scenarios.
- 8.2** It is the opinion of NCC that the only solution would be the construction of the WFUH By-pass scheme, as any improvement at the A5/A45 junctions would not address the link capacity issues that will occur along the A45 corridor.
- 8.3** A key aspect of assessing the WFUH By-pass, is to understand the ‘trigger points’ at which improvements to the A45 corridor would be required. The results from the Arup studies give an indicative analysis.
- 8.4** NCC accept that the existing A5/ A45 junction at Weedon currently operates at capacity during the peak hours, but consider that some development based on the link capacity ‘trigger-point’ analysis can be permitted before the by-pass is constructed.
- 8.5** NCC is prepared to accept some short-term increase in traffic flows along the A45 only on the basis of a privately funded single carriageway scheme for the WFUH By-pass being a condition of any planning permission.
- 8.6** If all three Appeal developments are approved (Option 1), the link capacity is exceeded once 2250 units are constructed (Table 5.8 of CD NCC2). Therefore, the level of development should be limited to this number of units before the WFUH By-pass is implemented. However, no development should be allowed until a funding mechanism is put in place to deliver the WFUH By-pass.
- 8.7** In the absence of public funding, NCC’s view is that the single carriageway By-pass must be wholly funded by development and propose that be apportioned between each development on a per dwelling basis, the amount depending on the number of dwellings granted permission.
- 8.8** Upgrading from single to dual carriageway would require considerably less funding than the provision of the complete by-pass scheme. NCC anticipate that the second carriageway would be funded through public funding.
- 8.9** It is NCC’s view that the by-pass can be delivered by the usual statutory processes that are expected to accompany a major highway scheme.

9 Mitigation and Developer Contributions

- 9.1** The developer contributions are made up of five basic parts:
- Bus Service Improvements;
 - Walking and Cycling Infrastructure;
 - Travel Plan Initiatives;
 - Highway Mitigation in Daventry; and the
 - Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford By-pass.
- 9.2** Each Appellant would be expected to include the cost of their measures in the draft Section 106 agreements.
- 9.3** NCC expect the highway mitigation in Daventry and the WFUH By-pass to be funded by appropriately apportioned developer contributions to be embodied in Section 106 obligations. If a mechanism is not in place to deliver these contributions, then all three applications should be refused.

10 Recommendations

- 10.1** The detailed recommendations are described in my main proof of evidence, and in summary are:
- 10.1.1** None of the three sites are well located in relation to walking;
- 10.1.2** To meet regional housing requirements for the growth of Daventry, sites will need to be developed which are not well located, and a balanced view will have to be taken;
- 10.1.3** Permitting the Appeal sites may prevent development at locations which are more sustainable;
- 10.1.4** Monksmoor is the most sustainable of the three sites and is acceptable, subject to addressing satisfactorily the question of travel plans and mode shift;
- 10.1.5** Danetree should be refused, because its location and scale is such that it would encourage significant trips by private car;
- 10.1.6** Considering the Church Fields site as a whole, it is not an acceptable development in terms of a sustainable urban extension;
- 10.1.7** The County mode shift target will be challenging for any urban extension of Daventry;
- 10.1.8** Any Appeal site that is granted permission should contribute proportionately to the off-site highway initiatives;
- 10.1.9** If a mechanism is not in place to deliver these contributions, then all three applications should be refused;
- 10.1.10** It is accepted by all parties that a Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford by-pass is the only appropriate solution for the capacity and environmental problems affecting the A45 corridor;
- 10.1.11** The deliverability of such a scheme is key to releasing development in Daventry;
- 10.1.12** In the absence of public funding, NCC's view is that the single carriageway by-pass must be wholly funded by development;
- 10.1.13** NCC is prepared to accept some short-term increase in traffic flows along the A45 only on the basis of a privately funded single carriageway scheme for the WFUH By-pass being a condition of any planning permission; and
- 10.1.14** No development should be allowed until a funding mechanism is put in place to deliver the WFUH By-pass.