



Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Appeals by:

**(A) The Danetree Consortium Land to the east of
Daventry and North of the A45 Road**

**(B) Capel House Property Trust Lt on Land at
Monksmoor Farm Welton Lane Daventry**

**(C) Croudace Homes Ltd
On Land at Church Fields, Long Buckby Road, Daventry**

Appeal Refs: APP/M9570/A/08/2071505 (WNDC)

And APP/Y2810/A/08/2071504 (DDC)

Appeal Reference: APP/M9570/A/08/2082894

Appeal Reference: APP/M9570/A/08/2083327/NWF

Linked Appeal: APP/Y2810/A/08/2083322/NWF

Summary of Evidence of:

Christopher J Simkins MRTPI on behalf of WNDC

Housing Land and Prematurity

Prepared by:

Christopher Simkins

Reference: JWE0345

Date: 22nd December 2008

Suites 55 & 58
Cherry Orchard East
Kembrey Park
Swindon
SN2 8UQ

Tel 01793 818100

Fax 01793 818101

Email rpssn@rpsgroup.com

1. In Section 2 of my evidence I review the position in respect of the five year housing land supply in Daventry District. I acknowledge that there is a significant shortfall and thus all three appeal proposals should be considered in the context of paragraph 71 of PPS3.
2. I also note that, at the time of exchange of evidence, there was not agreement on the detailed calculation of the five year shortfall but that the parties would continue to discuss the matter with a view to agreeing as much as possible.
3. In Section 3 of my main proof I address the issue of prematurity arising from the final putative reason for refusal.
4. With reference to paragraph 17 of PPS1GP I conclude that all three of the appeal schemes are substantial both individually and cumulatively.
5. In identifying a prematurity reason for refusal in relation to Danetree but not MM and CF however, the Development Corporation are attempting to strike an appropriate balance between the need to deliver new housing and retaining a meaningful role for the Development Plan. This approach is also based on the conclusion that the Danetree proposal is objectionable in terms of basic land use considerations.
6. Paragraph 19 of PPS1GP looks to planning authorities to demonstrate clearly how granting planning permission would prejudice the outcome of the DPD process where a prematurity reason for refusal is involved. I explain in my evidence that, in addition to permitting MM and CF, releasing the Danetree proposal now would largely resolve the question of strategic housing provision in Daventry District to 2026 and beyond, leaving little latitude for the West Northampton Core Strategy (WNCS) to address this important matter.
7. Having regard to paragraph 18 of PPS1GP I go on to conclude that the programmed date for submission of the WNCS to the Secretary of State of March 2010 can be regarded as an early prospect of submission for examination. I also note in relation to this part of the advice that not all the land currently under consideration is proposed to be delayed.
8. The Development Corporation's overall approach on this matter is thus based on the proposition that releasing the numbers of dwellings associated with all three

of the appeal proposals before the inquiry would be premature to the extent that it would leave little or no scope for the Development Plan process to address housing provision issues in Daventry District in any significant sense for a substantial period.

9. Section 4 of my main proof of evidence focuses on three housing trajectories all of which are based on an annualised housing provision figure for Daventry District of 540 dwellings per annum extending uniformly from 2001 to 2006 in the approved and emerging versions of RSS8. The first part of this section summarises the general position on numerical aspects of policy and deals with the Secretary of State's proposal to refer to housing control levels in the RSS8 review as minima. On the latter issue, I conclude that the emphasis is on meeting these levels rather than under cutting them.
10. Before discussing trajectories in detail I also review the general approach to them. I note in this regard that the use of trajectories as set out in PPS3 is directed principally at the DPD process and not at the consideration of major proposals in the context of the development control system. I suggest that this needs to be taken into account, particularly in relation to the role of windfall sites.
11. I also identify the relevance of housing trajectories in supporting the prematurity case, specifically insofar as they demonstrate the degree to which permitting all three appeal schemes at this time would predetermine the allocation of housing land in Daventry District.
12. The three trajectories I refer to are firstly that which is included in the Daventry District Council 2006/2007 Annual Monitoring Report. The AMR trajectory covers the 2001 to 2021 period and demonstrates how regional housing control levels could be achieved to 2021 based, inter alia, on annualised rates for urban extensions to Daventry and an allowance for windfall sites for each year across the forward trajectory.
13. The second trajectory is a variant of the DDC AMR 2006/2007 version produced by the Danetree Village Consortium (DVC) in April 2008. This extends the span of the trajectory to 2026. Its other key features are a different approach to windfall sites involving a far lower contribution than the 2006/07 AMR and the inclusion of the three specific appeal schemes rather than a generalised projection for urban extensions to Daventry.

14. The third trajectory is my own variant of the AMR/DVC versions. It includes both the CF and MM proposals and a residual figure for urban extensions. It also reinstates the DDC AMR 2006/2007 approach on windfall sites and extends it to 2026.
15. The key comparison in relation to this exercise is between the DVC April 2008 trajectory and my own variant. This comparison demonstrates that:-
 - a) A deferral of about two years in relation to the balance of urban extensions to facilitate the progression of the West Northampton Core Strategy will not affect the achievement of regional housing requirements.
 - b) Any reduction in contribution towards the five year supply shortfall arising from such a deferral will be small and justifiable when balanced against the benefits of maintaining a clear role for the Core Strategy.
 - c) If Danetree is permitted now and windfall sites continue to come forward, as is likely, there will be a significant overrun against RSS housing control levels for Daventry District to 2026.
16. On the specific issue of windfall sites I refer to evidence relating to historic completions, existing commitments and the emerging Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for West Northamptonshire. Having regard to the advice in PPS3 and the purpose of trajectories in relation to these appeals, I conclude that it is appropriate to include an allowance for such sites. In coming to this conclusion I make reference to the split between urban and rural housing development in Daventry and particularly the need to acknowledge a continuing role for the rural areas.
17. Overall, my alternative trajectory confirms that releasing MM and CF at this stage would be likely to deal with the majority of housing provision in urban extensions to Daventry for the period to 2026 leaving it for the Core Strategy to address the remaining provision and the related important issue of the broad urban/rural split. This is a balanced approach that successfully reconciles the need to deliver housing in a timely manner with the importance of the Development Plan process in the planning system.
18. In Section 5 of my evidence I set out some concluding comments that I reproduce in full (paragraphs 19 to 25 below).

19. WNDC has sought to adopt a balanced strategy to the delivery of new housing in Daventry District and West Northamptonshire in its consideration of these three planning proposals. I consider this balance has been successfully achieved on the basis of a combined approach involving substantial releases of housing land immediately whilst retaining a meaningful role for the Development Plan process.
20. The administrative and policy related framework within which housing is to be delivered in West Northamptonshire is complex with three separate planning authorities directly involved. Whilst intended, in part, to speed up delivery this framework has undoubtedly contributed to some delay in progressing relevant Development Plan Documents. However, there is still ample time to allow the plan making process, including associated consultation, to address key issues that would otherwise be substantially predetermined if all three appeal schemes are permitted now.
21. As an authority with delivery as its principal role, the Development Corporation is fully supportive of the principle of accelerating the bringing forward of urban extensions to Daventry in advance of the Development Plan process. My evidence fully supports this principle. It demonstrates that the early release of CF and MM will provide a substantial source of immediate housing land supply that can be followed within a relatively short period by the balance of strategic provision in the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy.
22. Whilst WNDC is not the plan making authority, the primacy of the Development Plan as the preferred means of making decisions of the scale and impact associated with the appeal schemes (both individually and cumulatively) remains unaffected. Whilst delivery is thus a key factor, it does not in any sense diminish the relevance and importance of the statutory forward planning system. In this case I have demonstrated that the objectives in relation to both of these important matters can be successfully reconciled.
23. As I set out at the beginning of my evidence I do not touch upon the planning merits of the Danetree proposal. I have simply sought to demonstrate firstly that deferring the housing numbers associated with the Danetree scheme to allow the Core Strategy to progress would have only a small impact in relation to the five year supply position as referred to in the relevant putative reason for refusal. On the basis of the appellant's latest phasing information this effect would amount to

less than 3 months' supply of housing land. Whilst all potential contributions in the circumstances of the present significant shortfall are important, when set against the benefits of enabling the Core Strategy to address the important policy issues I have identified, this deferral is wholly justifiable.

24. Secondly, and with specific reference to the prematurity aspect of the putative reason for refusal that I have also addressed, I have shown how granting planning permission now for the Danetree proposal in addition to MM and CF would predetermine decisions on housing provision in Daventry District to 2026 and beyond, and would also reduce the scope for any potential redistribution within the West Northamptonshire Housing Market Area that might be considered in the Core Strategy. Furthermore, the capacity of the site is greater than required to meet likely residual housing requirements to be located in urban extensions to the town of Daventry to 2026 if an appropriate role for the rural areas of the District is assumed over this period.
25. Overall, I consider that the approach WDC are taking in respect of these proposals represents a practical and considered response to the situation that The Corporation faces. It should ensure that planned housing is delivered in an appropriately phased sequence without the degree of pre-determination that permitting all three appeal schemes now would involve. There is still ample time to facilitate the progression of the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy to allow it to deal with important issues affecting both Daventry District and the Housing Market Area as a whole whilst simultaneously urgently pursuing the process of delivering new homes.