

**APPEAL REF: 6003106**

**Land East of Rugby Road, Clifton-upon-Dunsmore**

Appeal by Richborough Estates

Outline application (ref R25/0565) with some matters reserved for the demolition of all buildings and the residential development of up to 160 dwellings, and creation of associated vehicular access off Rugby Road, pedestrian/cycle access points, parking, landscaping, drainage features, open space, children's play area and associated infrastructure (all matters reserved except for vehicular access off Rugby Road).

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OPENING STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE  
LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

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1. The village of Clifton-upon-Dunsmore ("CuD") is planned to grow. The Parish of the same name has already seen significant housing growth which is continuing as the new community of Houlton progresses towards an eventual 6,200 dwellings. In the emerging Local Plan ("the eLP"), three sites in CuD are proposed totalling 150 dwellings<sup>1</sup>. All this is recognised in the referendum version of the CuD Neighbourhood Plan ("the NDP"). There has been no attempt by the Parish Council to stymie the growth of the village or growth in the parish. All the community asks is that the growth be in the right place.
2. CuD is a village which has grown organically since Saxon times. Its current inhabitants are proud of its history and identity. It's neighbour, Rugby, smaller than CuD in the Domesday Book is now, by comparison, enormous. To retain its separate identity, the eLP proposes development in the north and east of the village (away

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<sup>1</sup> The emerging Rugby Borough Local Plan 2025-2042 [CD5.25] was submitted for independent examination yesterday afternoon, 27 April 2026. The documents submitted can be found via [Submission Local Plan - Rugby Borough Council](#). The Council is now putting together 'clips' of documents on (a) representations in respect of the Area of Separation between Rugby and CuD, and (b) the three site allocations at CuD which we will submit to the inquiry as soon as possible.

from Rugby), and an “area of separation” on the south and west of the village. It is into this area that the Appellant brings its proposal for development, adversely affecting the separate identity of CuD. Sitting in this area of separation, the appeal site is poorly related to the nucleated settlement pattern of CuD. By contrast, the eLP sites have a much more comfortable relationship to the village and are better connected to it.

3. CuD is also a ‘hilltop’ settlement. The appeal site sits on the side of the hill as it slopes towards Rugby. A substantial part of the appeal site also lies in a recognised “important view” southwards from the recreation ground on the edge of the village. These facts give rise to adverse landscape character and visual impact effects. The difference between the parties is as to the significance of the adverse effects.
4. There are other adverse impacts discussed in the evidence before the inquiry.
5. On the other hand, and despite the impressive record of housing delivery in the borough in the last 10 years, Rugby Borough Council (“the Council”) is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable sites for housing. There is also a national need to deliver more houses and a local need for more affordable houses. But this shortage of deliverable sites will not persist for long – probably only until the eLP is adopted. Nevertheless the delivery of the appeal site for housing is a benefit to weigh in the balance. The local economy will benefit from the jobs and supply of materials during the construction phase, and through the ‘spending power’ of the new residents.
6. There are also other benefits to acknowledge including provision of public open space and sports facilities, and biodiversity net gain.
7. But the benefits could also be delivered through developing the three sites identified in the eLP. The adverse impacts by doing so would be conspicuously reduced. This is a material consideration which the Council says is particularly relevant in this appeal. During the site selection process for the eLP, the appeal site was rejected in favour of the three alternatives. The planning application that is now the subject

of this appeal was doubtless a response to that rejection. The Appellant knows “it’s now or never” for the appeal scheme – its application / appeal must be determined before the eLP is adopted and the planning policy climate becomes overwhelmingly negative. That is why we are at this appeal.

8. But the Appellant is wrong – it’s just “never”. Even though the proposed development falls to be assessed against the ‘tilted balance’ of the NPPF, the adverse impacts of this development proposal do, at the moment, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The appeal scheme is contrary to the adopted development plan as well as those which are emerging. There are no material considerations which indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
9. For these reasons, the Council is confident that this appeal should be dismissed.

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