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Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

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Your Ref: 17/05152/OUT
Our Ref: ph_051217_17_05152_OUT Bucknell

5th December 2017

Dear Julie

17/05152/OUT Outline application for residential development for up to 20 dwellings, to include 4 affordable dwellings (to include access), Proposed Residential Development Land West of Tyndings, Bucknell, Shropshire

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership objects to this application. This speculative application is on a large site which is outside the settlement boundary, not allocated within the SAMDev plan, and which would have a significant impact on the AONB. The 3D view below from Google Maps is viewing the site approximately from the public right of way climbing Bucknell Hill north of the village. This shows that the proposed development site (outlined in red) climbs higher up the slopes of the hill behind than the adjacent development, and would thus be much more visually intrusive.



View of the site from the north

The need to provide houses should not over-ride the policies in place to protect the quality of the AONB's environment and landscape. This is valuable in its own right and for its very significant contribution to people's wellbeing and to supporting the county's economy.

We note also that on this occasion it appears that the AONB Partnership was not consulted on this significant application, which is why our standard response was not also submitted. We would request that the reason for this omission is looked into.

The following national and local policies applicable support the position that this application should be refused:

Para 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that:

115. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. *The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.* (emphasis added)

Shropshire Core Strategy Policy CS17: Environmental Networks states:

*Development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire's environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by **ensuring that all development:***

- **Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors.** *Further guidance will be provided in SPDs concerning the natural and built environment;*
- **Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Meres and Mosses and the World Heritage Sites at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and Ironbridge Gorge.** (emphasis added)

Shropshire Council SAMDev Policy MD12: The Natural Environment states:

In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the conservation, enhancement and restoration of Shropshire's natural assets will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that the social or economic benefits of development can be demonstrated to clearly outweigh the harm to natural assets where proposals are likely to have an unavoidable significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following:

- i. the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB;**
- ii. locally designated biodiversity and geological sites;
- iii. priority species;
- iv. priority habitats
- v. important woodlands, trees and hedges;
- vi. ecological networks
- vii. geological assets;
- viii. visual amenity;
- ix. **landscape character and local distinctiveness.** (emphasis added)

Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19 (as approved by Shropshire Council) Policy for Protection of the AONB states:

In line with national and local authority planning policies, the AONB has the highest standards of protection for landscape and natural beauty and the purposes of designation should be given great weight in planning decisions, also taking into account the statutory AONB Management Plan.

Consideration of the purposes of designation in all decisions affecting the AONB should reflect sustainability and the full range of special qualities defined in the Management Plan as well as landscape character and visual amenity. Exceptionally where a significant adverse impact associated with development cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation measures including habitat creation or community benefits, should be sought.

The AONB Management Plan Policy for Housing and Design of Development states:

The design of all housing (market priced and affordable) should demonstrate sensitivity to the special qualities of the AONB.

Where affordable housing is allowed when other forms of development would not be, in order to meet social need, the standards of sensitivity to the AONB should not be compromised, and are expected to be higher than outside the AONB. Such cases need to include a rigorous assessment of identified local housing need and consideration of the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development without undermining the purposes of designation. Development should not contribute to the loss of irreplaceable habitats or established ancient trees.

All development should integrate well into the historic pattern and character of the surrounding built environment and landscape. *Building style should reflect local tradition, and designs should be of a high standard in keeping with the nationally designated landscape. In line with Core Strategy policy CS6, particular regard should be paid to village and town design statements and Conservation Area Appraisals. Inappropriate design, layout and materials should be avoided. Innovative sustainable schemes are to be encouraged where they take account of the surrounding vernacular and the use of local materials. (emphasis added)*

Yours sincerely

Phil Holden
AONB Partnership Manager