

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council  
held on Monday, 27 November 2023 at Melksham Without Parish Council  
Offices (First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market Place,  
Melksham, SN12 6ES at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors Richard Wood (Chair of Planning); David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council); Alan Baines (Vice Chair of Planning); Mark Harris and Peter Richardson

**Officer:** Lorraine McRandle, Parish Officer

**In attendance:** Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Bowerhill) & 3 members of public

**298/23 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping**

Councillor Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting those present were aware of the fire evacuation procedures for the building and that the meeting was being recorded to aid production of the minutes and that the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been approved.

The meeting was informed the Clerk was off sick. It was agreed to send the Clerk the Council's best wishes for a speedy recovery.

**299/23 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given**

Apologies were received from Councillor Chivers who was in hospital.

**Resolved:** To approve and accept the reasons for absence of Councillor Chivers and to send the Council's best wishes.

**300/23 Declarations of Interest**

**a) To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**b) To consider for approval any Dispensation Requests received by the Clerk and not previously considered**

None received.

**c) To note standing Dispensations relating to planning applications**

To note the Parish Council has a dispensation lodged with Wiltshire Council dealing with Section 106 agreements relating to planning applications within the parish.

**301/23 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature** *Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of business where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.*

There were no items to considered in closed session.

### **302/23 Public Participation**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of public to speak to items on the agenda.

A member of Townsend Farm Residents Association attended the meeting in relation to planning application PL/2022/08155 for 53 dwellings on land to the west of Semington Road. The resident noted this application was being considered at a Strategic Planning Committee of Wiltshire Council on 29 November and raised a concern at the impact additional vehicles from 53 more dwellings would have on the narrow road. This was on top of the number of vehicles already using it, which would also be exacerbated by the new development at Buckley Gardens (PL/2022/02749) currently being constructed, with vehicles already queuing to get onto the roundabout.

A resident of Semington Road attended the meeting to also raise their concerns at more development on Semington Road. They also raised a concern at the lack of planning enforcement action with regard to concerns the proposed double garage and home office at 489 Semington Road was being constructed in such a way that it would become a dwelling in due course. Having contacted Planning Enforcement on several occasions they had responded to say there had been no breaches of planning approval, despite evidence which would suggest to the contrary.

Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder updated Members on various planning matters.

### **Pathfinder Way School (PL/2023/08046)**

Several meetings had taken place with designers regarding the possibility of a second pedestrian access to the proposed primary school at Pathfinder Way from the A365, which they had gone away to look at, however, there was concerns regarding the ownership of the piece of land adjacent to the A365, which was outside the scope of the school proposals.

It had now been clarified this area of land would remain in the ownership of Taylor Wimpey who had a responsibility to carry out the landscaping of the area. It was noted from the map provided it suggested there was

an ability to access this piece land off of the toucan crossing, on the A365. However, it would appear that the landscaping of the area had not been completed by Taylor Wimpey and should be a properly designated landscaped area with an attenuation pond.

Wiltshire Councillor Holder noted whilst the map showed this area would include a play area, as there was one already located in Phase 1 of Pathfinder Place, felt this may not be necessary, however, the land should be landscaped. Therefore, he had raised this with both the Legal and Planning Teams at Wiltshire Council and had since raised an enforcement issue, given Taylor Wimpey had not undertaken the landscaping as per planning approval (case no NT166). He had been advised to contact Natalie Rivans, Planning Enforcement, who had asked both himself and the Parish Council to point out which parts of the site within Taylor Wimpey ownership had not been carried out according to the approved planning application. It was explained whilst this issue was still to be resolved, it was unlikely, but not definite, that the land transfer of the primary school site would go ahead, as there is still contention if Taylor Wimpey have fulfilled all their planning obligations.

With regard to the secondary access off of the A365, it was felt not much progress had been made. However, Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder's view was arrows on the masterplan seemed to indicate a potential access from the crossing on the A365 and therefore, from a design point of view, this should be designed into the plans as a secondary access to the school site. If and when Taylor Wimpey fulfils their planning obligations, this will be a public open space with a walkway to the crossing on the A365.

Wiltshire Council Nick Holder stated he had suggested to the Planning Team it would be unlikely the Parish Council would want to take over management of this area. The Planning Team had checked the Section 106 with this area of land due to be part of the managed site on behalf of the Management Company. Therefore, would be Remus's responsibility to maintain but it was Taylor Wimpey responsibility to landscape and plant it, as per the plans provided, which was not the case at present.

Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder stated it would be helpful if at some point the Planning Committee could respond to Natalie Rivans with regards to aspect of the Pathfinder Way site which had not been completed as per the planning approval.

### **Woolmore Farm (PL/2023/05883)**

The meeting was informed the applicant had been advised to withdraw the application. Having discussed the application with the planning officer, had suggested the general sense of the Parish Council's Planning Committee, having considered the application was that they were not necessarily opposed to tidying up the site, it was more about using the appropriate planning 'tool' to do this.

**Land South of Western Way and proposals for 210 homes and 70 bed care home (PL/2022/08504)**

Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder shared the Parish Council's disappointment at the decision of the Planning Inspectorate to uphold the appeal by the applicant and approve the application.

With regard to the footpath to the rear of Melksham Oak School understood an application was being submitted this week and would be uploaded to the planning portal in due course.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

**303/23 To consider the following new Planning Applications:**

- a) [PL/2023/09370](#): 603 Berryfield Lane. Proposed removal of existing conservatory and new extension to form kitchen/dining/sitting room. New extension to form entrance lobby with WC, providing disabled wheelchair access.

**Comments:** No objection.

- b) [PL/2023/09236](#): Six Guinea Cottage, 212 Lower Woodrow, Forest. Extension and alteration.

**Comments:** The Parish Council have no objection to the plans submitted, however, have concerns at the risk of flooding, as the presented Flood Risk Assessment does not apply to the new proposals and was the same Flood Risk Assessment presented for proposals for a new dwelling in 2022. (PL/2022/09008).

- c) [PL/2023/08449](#): Snarlton Farm Solar Farm, Snarlton Lane. Variation of condition 2 of 13/06140/FUL to extend the expiration period from 25 years to 40 years.

Councillor Glover highlighted the original agreement between the developer and the Parish Council stated 'to pay the Council for each year for 25 years (operational life of the solar farm)'. Therefore, as the operational life of the solar farm had been extended to 40 years, the applicant should therefore extend the agreement with the Parish Council.

It was suggested this information also needed to be

shared with the solar farm company.

**Comments:** The Parish Council have no objection to the extension of the operational life of the solar farm, in so far as the payment to Melksham Without Parish continue for 40 years and does not end at 25 years, given the applicant has extended the operational life of the solar farm.

It was agreed to move agenda items 8(c) Land West of Semington Road (Planning application PL/2022/08155), 8(d) Pathfinder Way School (PL/2023/08046) and 9(a) 489 Semington Road (PL/2021/06824) further up the agenda, as members of public were present regarding these items.

**304/23 Revised Plans:** To comment on any revised plans on planning applications received within the required **timeframe (14 days):**

None received.

**305/23 Current planning applications:** Standing item for issues/queries arising during period of applications awaiting decision.

**a) Blackmore Farm (Planning Application PL/2023/01949).** Outline permission with some matters reserved for demolition of agricultural outbuildings and development of up to 650 dwellings; land for primary school; land for mixed use.

No update to report.

**b) Snarlton Farm (Planning Application PL/2023/07107);** Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for two pedestrian and vehicle accesses (excluding internal estates roads) from Eastern Way for the erection of up to 300 dwellings (Class C3); land for local community use or building (incorporating classes E(b), E(g) and F2(b) and (c)); open space and dedicated play space and service infrastructure and associated works.

No update to report.

**c) Land to the West of Semington Road (Planning Application PL/2022/08155):** Outline application for up to 53 dwellings including formation of access and associated works, with all other matters reserved.

As the Clerk was currently off sick and therefore unlikely to attend the Strategic Planning meeting on 29 November, Councillor Wood sought another volunteer to attend the meeting along with himself in order to voice the objections of the Parish Council. Councillor Glover agreed to attend the meeting.

It was noted in the Planning Officer's report they had recommended approval of the application.

Members discussed previous objections/concerns raised which needed to be drawn to the Strategic Planning Committees attention, in particular, as well as some additional points, requests:

- The number of cul-de-sacs proposed, which was against Parish Council policy.
- Proposals for 100% affordable housing which conflicted with Core Strategy Policy 43 which states 'the need for developing mixed, balanced and inclusive communities, affordable housing units to be dispersed throughout a development and designed to be high quality, so as to be indistinguishable from other developments'.

It was noted at a recent appeal hearing, the Planning Inspector had stated as there was no 5-year land supply the requirement for affordable housing was looked at Countywide and there is a need for this type of development. Therefore, this needed to be borne in mind at the meeting. However, it was felt this point still needed reiterating.

It was pointed out along with the adjacent site for 50 dwellings (PL/2023/00808) this meant there were 103 affordable homes in one area with a concern the whole development would carry a stigma, which was unacceptable.

- Concern was raised, along with the adjacent site for 50 dwellings (PL/2023/00808) singularly, they do not get the full weight of benefits that would kick in if they were one application for 103 dwellings, in terms of eligibility for a play area etc. Whilst some provision is provided, there should be a requirement to provide play space with an equipped play area and joined up with the adjacent site.

It was highlighted as per the appeal decision relating to the Malmesbury applications (PL/2021/05209 & PL/21/01363), which have parallels with the two parcels of land West of Semington Road, within the appeal report it highlighted the implications of the lack of master planning between the two sites which had resulted in a scheme that was demonstrably poor in terms of its layout and design.

- It was felt it needed to be highlighted at the meeting how much damage had been done by Wiltshire Council in not be able to demonstrate a 5-year land supply and the various planning applications approved in recent years due to a lack of 5-year land supply and the implications this had.

- It was noted the adjacent site (PL/2023/00808) included trees along the streets and therefore trees should be planted, at least along the main spinal road of the development.
- The site cannot be considered a rural exception site, as it conflicts with Policy 77 – Rural Exception Sites in the draft Local Plan states ‘for **small villages** and those not identified within the settlement strategy, adjoining the built area, housing will be supported where its primary purpose is to provide affordable homes to meet the local needs of a settlement, provided: the proposals consist of **20 dwellings** or fewer.’
- The site does not adhere to Policy 82 in the draft Local Plan (Housing in Open Countryside) with regard to proposals for housing development outside of the defined settlement boundaries and outside of the built areas of small villages, on land that is not allocated in the development plan or subject to an exceptions policy.
- The Planning Inspectorate had previously stated the development of 50 dwellings adjacent to this site did not create a significant impact on the loss of green space, however with a 100% increase in development in this area, this would create a significant impact and therefore a material impact on green space.
- As part of the Neighbourhood Plan Review, the site (part of SHELAA No 728) was assessed by AECOM as part of the Neighbourhood Plan review, with the report noting, the site is adjacent to an indicative green infrastructure corridor and high priority woodland habitat. The Western part of the site is Grade 1 agricultural land. It also highlighted development of the site would likely contribute to the further coalescence between Melksham and Berryfield.
- As part of the draft Local Plan review, the site had been assessed, with the report highlighting the site may contribute to coalescence between Melksham and the village of Berryfield.
- The loss of Grade 2 agricultural land (Best Most Versatile land). The Parish Council do not want to see the loss of good quality land from agricultural use. It is understood rapeseed has been grown and cultivated in the field and for the last 15+ years, there had always been either crops or animals on the land. The Parish Council request additional weight is attributed to this comment due to the proposals in the Government’s consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) earlier in the year, that more weight is attributed to recognise the food production value of farmland.

- Whilst it was noted Highways had not objected to proposals, Members still raised safety concerns with regard to the proposals and the need to highlight at the meeting the pooling of Section 106 funding to provide a footway along the southern part of Western Way, in order to children to access Pathfinder Way School.
- The erosion of the rural buffer and visual green gap between the town of Melksham and the small village of Berryfield. This gap has been identified as an important gap/wedge (Location 6) within the Green Gaps and Green Wedge Assessment undertaken by AECOM, as part of the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan. The report concluded the character of each settlement is considered sufficiently distinct to identify as two separate settlements and therefore recommended for designation as a green wedge between Melksham and Berryfield in the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan.
- If the application is approved, to request the following
  - A condition, similar to one included on planning permission for 144 dwellings on Semington Road (20/01938/OUT): *An application for the approval of all of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of one year from the date of this permission.*
  - A contribution to improve rights of way in the vicinity of the development be included in the Section 106 Agreement:
    - To divert MELW05.
    - Improvements to Rights of Way down to the river and diversion of MELW07.
  - A contribution towards additional land to provide allotments in the Berryfield area in the Section 106 agreement.
  - Adherence to Melksham's Neighbourhood Plan policies and emerging reviewed Neighbourhood Plan
  - The Parish Council seek the provision of play equipment above that required by the West Wiltshire District Council saved policy in the Core Strategy and wish to enter into discussions being the nominated party for any proposed LEAP (Local Equipped Area of Play)/play area and the associated maintenance contribution.
  - Bus shelters to be provided in Semington Road with WiFi connectivity to provide Real Time Information.
  - The road layout is such that there are no dead ends in order that residents and refuse lorries do not need to reverse out of roads.
  - As no community facility is being provided from this application, a contribution is made towards the running costs



of the new village hall being provided as part of planning application 16/00497/OUT on Semington Road.

- The Parish Council wish to be involved in public art discussions.
- The provision of circular walking routes with the provision of benches and bins.
- A contribution is made to public transport.
- A contribution towards the canal scheme.
- Contribution to educational and medical facilities within the Melksham area.
- There is visible delineation between pavement and roads so they are easily identifiable.
- Equipment is provided for teenagers, such as a teen shelter with WiFi connectivity.
- The provision of bird, bat and bee bricks, reptile refugia and hibernacula in order to increase biodiversity and wildlife in the development.
- If adjacent to existing dwellings the design is such that the layout is garden to existing garden.
- Ground source heat pumps to be included in proposals.
- To include capacity for hydrogen heating in the future within proposals.
- Provision of solar panels and storage batteries for every house or group of houses/block of flats.
- Inclusion of lifebuoys, noticeboards and defibrillators. The maintenance of these items to be undertaken by the management company, unless the council decides that they would like to take on the asset.

The meeting was informed Wiltshire Councillor Mike Sankey would be attending the meeting on behalf of Councillor Jonathon Seed who was unable to attend the meeting.

It was noted within the Heads of Terms for the site, it included public open space with a delivery of 1,852.18m<sup>2</sup> of public open space, of which 93.81m<sup>2</sup> is to be equipped play space. However, next to the amount it had N/A against it and a 'x' against 'Agreed', therefore, it was unclear whether this had been agreed.

The Heads of Terms also included the following:

- Upgrade of Bowerhill Sports Field at Lancaster Road and/or upgrade of playing pitch and/or ancillary services within the vicinity of the land (£12,508.80 contribution).

- A contribution of £74,200 for active travel enhancements in the local vicinity (notably, the provision of a route to the planned school at Pathfinder Way).

Frustration was expressed it had previously been agreed discussions would be held with the Parish Council on Section 106 Agreements, however, there had been no discussions with the Parish Council regarding this application.

**Resolved:** For Councillors Glover and Wood to attend the Strategic Planning meeting on 29 November.

- d) Land at Pathfinder Way, Bowerhill. Reserved Matters application (PL/2023/08046)** pursuant to outline permission 16/01123/OUT relating to the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the proposed primary school (including Nursery and SEN provision).

Councillor Glover explained Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder had covered most points raised at the meetings and had circulated a summary of the first meeting to Members.

Councillor Wood felt having heard the update from Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder was hopeful an additional pedestrian access could be provided from the A365 and expressed concern at the current proposal for one access for both vehicles and pedestrians and the potential for conflict.

It was noted the Highway's Officer had reiterated the Council's comments with regard to conflict between pedestrian and vehicles and the possibility of traffic backing up on Pathfinder Way.

Councillor Glover explained both the Planning and Education were against the children coming in from the north and crossing the car park entrance/exit and were also against the potential for children coming from the south to cut across the car park, rather than walking all the way around and had indicated this was unsafe. Therefore, if additional accesses to both the south and the north were provided this would alleviate these concerns.

**Resolved:** To support Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder's request for this Council to contact Natalie Rivans, Planning Enforcement.

- e) Land rear of 52e Chapel Lane, Beanacre (PL/2023/05883).** Erection of 3 dwellings, with access, parking and associated works, including landscaping (outline application with all matters reserved – Resubmission of PL/2022/06389)

No update to report.

- f) Woolmore Farm Buildings, Bowerhill (PL-2023-07756).** Variation of Condition 1 (approved plans) on PL/2022/05895 (Redevelopment

of redundant farm buildings to provide B1 employment space, involving change of use of existing agricultural buildings, plus erection of new build B1 offices, together with demolition, construction of a new access with associated parking, landscaping and ancillary works) to facilitate a redesign of Unit 5.

Members noted this application had now been withdrawn.

**306/23. Planning Enforcement:** To note any new planning enforcement queries raised and updates on previous enforcement queries.

**a) 489 Semington Road (PL/2021/06824)**

Members noted the concerns of a resident in relation to the proposed new double garage and home office and response from Planning Enforcement and endorsed all the comments raised earlier in the meeting by the resident.

**Resolved:** To contact Planning Enforcement again with concerns proposals were appear to not being built to plan and to request a site visit with Members of the Planning Committee and local residents.

**307/23 Planning Appeals**

**a) Land South of Western Way. Outline application (PL/2022/08504)** for the erection of up to 210 residential dwellings and a 70-bed care home with associated access, landscaping and open space (resubmission of 20/08400/OUT).

Members noted the Planning Inspectorate had allowed the Appeal and approve the application.

**b) 16 Halifax Road, Bowerhill (PL/2023/01275).** Retrospective application for the installation of new feather fence to side and front of house, 2 garden gates and proposed installation of black steel chimney to side of house.

Members noted the applicant had appealed the decision of Wiltshire Council's to refuse this application.

**308/23 Planning Policy**

**a) Neighbourhood Planning**

**i) Update on NHP#2 and Regulation 14 consultation and Viability Assessments.**

Councillor Pafford noted the consultation was due to end on 3 December with responses currently being processed.

The Parish Officer provided an updated on the number of responses received so far and that a meeting was due to take place on Thursday, with Place Studio on how to move forward following Regulation 14.

Councillor Glover noted in the Town Centre Masterplan it mentioned pedestrianisation of areas of the town centre, however, nothing appeared to have been carried forward in the Neighbourhood Plan, when other aspects raised in the report had been carried forward. Therefore, as it was not a policy within the Neighbourhood Plan, no one had the ability to object to it or otherwise.

Councillor Pafford noted a car parking survey was due to be undertaken and without this, it would be difficult to make decisions on pedestrianisation until this had been undertaken. However, noted there was an opportunity to consider this when the Steering Group looked at responses to the consultation/actions to be undertaken following the consultations.

**ii) To reflect on responses to planning applications for monitoring of the Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Parish Officer explained the Clerk had across information in the Local Plan, which would be useful to use when commenting on future planning applications ie:

- Water quality and Wessex Water identifying a need in Melksham to invest in water network assets to improve capacity between 2025 and 2036.

With regard to water supply, given all the additional development taking place, it was noted the consumption would exceed the capacity of Sandridge Reservoir, which was pumped full overnight and then supplied Melksham during the day.

- Environmental pollution with Melksham having been highlighted as a potential AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) declaration location due to elevated levels of Nitrogen Dioxide, with 3 diffusion tubes currently monitoring levels in Melksham.

It was noted SSE had also expressed supply and distribution concerns in recent planning documentation.

- b) Wiltshire Council Local Plan.** To note response sent under delegated powers.

Members noted the Parish Council response which had been formulated by the Clerk, Neighbourhood Plan and Planning consultants and is attached to these minutes as an appendix.

It was noted Melksham Town Council had forwarded a response on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group which had been circulated to Members earlier in the day. Concern was expressed not all the responses as provided by the Neighbourhood Plan consultants had been included in the response.

**Recommendation:** To note the response to the Local Plan which had been sent to Wiltshire Council under delegated powers and to formally thank the Clerk and Vaughan at Place Studio for formulating such an excellent response to the Local Plan.

**309/23 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (Standing Item)**

- a) To note correspondence from Wiltshire Council Planning Officers regarding the Parish Council's request to be involved in Section 106 Agreements and consider a way forward.**

Members noted the responses received in relation to the concerns raised that the Parish Council had not been involved in Section 106 agreements, including the Blackmore Road (PL/2023/01949) application.

Members expressed frustration, whilst they had indicated that a process for this to take place was on its way several months ago, there had been no communication from Planning on this matter, despite the Clerk chasing.

Councillor Pafford suggested raising the Council's frustration at not being involved in Section 106 discussions, despite repeated requests, which Members agreed would be useful.

**b) Updates on ongoing and new S106 Agreements**

**i) Hunters Wood/The Acorns:**

Members noted plans for the proposed footpath to the rear of Melksham Oak School would be submitted shortly, but expressed disappointment they had not been party to discussions on proposals, as requested and therefore the application was being submitted without local knowledge input.

It was noted in correspondence, reference was made to works

taking place May-July, however, it was unclear if this meant works would start between May-July or would take place between May-July.

**ii) Pathfinder Place:**

There was no update on outstanding issues relating to highways, the management company or play area.

**iii) Buckley Gardens (144 dwellings on Semington Road)**

Councillor Wood noted work was proceeding with a road closure taking place for 3 days shortly to enable resurfacing work to take place.

**iv) Land to rear of Townsend Farm for 50 dwellings (PL/2023/00808)**

It was noted work had started on site.

**c) To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers**

None to note.

**d) Contact with developers**

**i) Bloor Homes Re New Road Farm.**

In line with the Council's Pre-App Policy, the notes of the meeting held with Bloor Homes on 14 November are included within the minutes below:

Those present from Melksham Without Parish Council, included Councillors Wood; Baines; Glover; Pafford; Harris; Teresa Strange, Clerk and Lorraine McRandle, Parish Officer. Others at the meeting included Councillor Pat Aves, Melksham Town Council; Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford (Melksham Without North & Shurnhold); Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Bowerhill Ward) via Zoom and from Bloor Homes South West Jonathan Dodd, Planning Manager and Claire Hambleton, Senior Land Manager, Bloor Homes South West.

Jonathan updated the Council on proposals and the updated masterplan following the inclusion of the site in Wiltshire Council's draft Local Plan (policy 20).

Proposals for the site include:

- 380-390 dwellings (to include approximately 20 self-build dwellings)
- Two accesses onto the A3102 (one onto the Eastern Way roundabout).

- 100 place nursery near the entrance to the site.
- A green corridor will be created around the existing water course.
- The watercourse will have to be crossed by a road but wish to minimise disruption to the green corridor.
- Split play space in two locations, with a central open space, with a drainage basin and play space, providing a wide green area in the centre of the site.
- Extra land to the north east corner, with proposals for an attenuation basin, and potential location for allotments and some play space.

It was stated whilst Bloor would be responding to the draft Local Plan to say primarily, they agree with the policy in the plan for the site, they would highlight they now had additional land to the North East of the site. Therefore, the site is capable of delivering more homes than that allocated in the plan. This would enable the site to achieve open space requirements, biodiversity net gain, drainage solutions, play space etc, in 'off setting' some of this land to achieve higher housing numbers for the site. The updated Masterplan would also be submitted as part of the Local Plan response.

With regard to biodiversity net gain, it was not clear if 20% had been achieved on the site, as in the emerging Local Plan, but it was in excess of 10%. The site had also been assessed against the emerging Open Space Policy in the draft Local Plan with play and open space provision in excess of that stated in the plan.

Jonathan noted he had previously been given a list of requests/comments from the Parish Council and queried if these were also those of the Town Council.

It was clarified the requests were those the Parish Council always highlighted to developers at pre app meetings and were not the comments made at the pre app meeting.

Jonathan explained if he could have the view of the Parish Council to the updated Masterplan prior to submitting their response to the Local Plan, this would be useful, in order to take account in their representation to Wiltshire Council's Local Plan.

Concern was raised at the following:

- Increase in density of the site and types of dwellings proposed to accommodate the increase in density
- Increase in number of dwellings proposed compared to the 285 in the draft Local Plan.
- Over development of the site.
- Loss of hedgerow.

- Lack of parking for the proposed nursery.
- The need for an approximate housing mix, not just 4/5-bedroom homes to meet the needs of local people, as included in the Housing Needs Assessment undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Review.
- The need to adhere to emerging policies in the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan, such as the Design Guide.
- The need for adequate parking at the nursery.
- The lack of a holistic approach to the provision of education facilities.
- Only two buses pass the site, out mid-morning (to Bath) and back in the afternoon (to Marlborough)." Other bus services are not within close walking distance, making the site unsustainable in this aspect.

Jonathan explained the most important hedgerow was the one running through the centre of the site, with most of it being retained where possible. However, hedgerow which would be removed would be low value.

Councillor Aves raised a concern how it could be guaranteed the hedgerow would be retained where stated, bearing in mind experience on other sites, where the same assurances had been given, only for them to be subsequently removed.

With regard to the concerns of the density of the site, Jonathan stated he was not clear on what density assumptions had been made by Wiltshire Council in the draft Local Plan allocation of 285 dwellings, but would clarify the density of the site, compared to other adjacent sites, but felt it was of a similar ratio ie 40 dwellings per hectare. However, different parts of the site would be different densities.

As well as houses, flats and maisonettes would be built on site, with 2.5/3 storey dwellings possibly on the spine road to the site for instance, in order to achieve up to 380-390 dwellings. However, could draw up a detailed scheme to show the capacity for the site and make it clearer how the number of units could be achieved.

Wiltshire Councillor Holder felt the site should give a feel of a continuation of existing development adjacent to the site in terms of scale and design and needed to be sympathetic to what already existed and therefore putting in flats and maisonettes did not create place making and did not show a continuation of the built up area of Melksham and an extension of what already existed and therefore raised a concern the site could look like an eyesore against what already existed and would appear incongruous to the rest of the built up area.



Councillor Baines noted in the draft Local Plan 'Planning for Melksham' document it stated *'the site contributed to the separation of Melksham from the distinctive wooded, greensand hills to the East and North-East. Hedgerows and trees should be retained and enhanced as part of a mature landscape framework and landscape buffers should form an appropriate, transitional settlement edge to the rural landscape.'* Which he felt suggested the Eastern edge of the development needed to be tapered off towards the rural landscape. It was also noted there was reference in the document for a sufficient buffer either side of the watercourse to be included in proposals, noting parts the site floods currently.

Jonathan explained work had been done at looking at flooding of the site, therefore a flooding strategy would be included in proposals with greenfield run off betterment, which was a new policy requirement.

Councillor Baines sought the views of Bloor Homes at the site allocation policy in the draft Local Plan including the provision of a nursery.

Jonathan explained he had looked at Wiltshire Council's Education Strategy and felt it was a sensible approach to take in providing a nursery on the site and in principle was happy to provide one.

Concern was expressed that having a nursery on this site and a primary school on another site nearby (Blackmore Farm: PL/2023/01949) did not make sense, particularly as it would mean people having to drop off children at different sites, rather than on one site either side of an 'A' road, meaning most people would use a car rather than walk. There was also a need for adequate parking at the nursery, as not everyone attending the nursery would necessarily come from this site or nearby developments within walking distance.

Jonathan confirmed parking would be provided. It was proposed the nursery would be located near the entrance to the site, so vehicles would not to go through the rest of the site to access it. However, could look at car parking provision, given concerns.

The Clerk understood whilst the proposed primary school at Blackmore Farm would also include a nursery, the proposed 100 place nursery on this site was for the whole housing allocation in the draft Local Plan.

Councillor Nick Holder expressed a concern people would drive to Melksham Oak School, given the 1.5m distance to the school and whilst a new public footpath was proposed to the rear of the school, it would not necessarily reduce the number of children being taken

to school via car. Similarly, it should not be assumed people would walk to the nearest primary schools either.

Jonathan explained Bloor could only try and provide as much as possible to encourage people to walk or cycle to school but unfortunately could not influence people wishing to drop their children off at school.

Councillor Wood stated the Parish Council preferred to use looped roads, rather than cul-de-sacs, as well as having no shared road space which had recreated problems on sites elsewhere in the parish and expressed a concern given this was a high-density development shared road spaces would be provided on this site.

Jonathan explained most of the site would include looped roads with a street hierarchy with shared surfaces in places.

Councillor Pafford highlighted the Parish Council always asked for a circular footpath around developments for dog walkers and hoped some would be included in the design, with Jonathan confirming these would be provided around parts of the site.

Clarification was sought if, given the size of the site, if a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP), which would be overlooked from a safety point of view, would be provided on the site, as well as allotments.

Jonathan confirmed usually for a development of this size they would provide a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and 2 LAPS distributed throughout the scheme allotments would also be provided with car parking, fencing around and a water supply.

It was noted there was no access proposed to the adjacent development which also included a play area (17/01096/REM), with Claire confirming Bloor would be able to facilitate an access to the adjacent site, however, the adjacent developer had retained a strip of land along their boundary. However, could provide Wiltshire Council with a financial contribution (Section 106), as they had done on other sites, in order they could negotiate access with the adjacent developer.

Jonathan confirmed he would:

- Share Bloor's response to the draft Local Plan consultation and pre app feedback from Wiltshire Council.
- Undertake a density analysis and share with the Parish Council.
- Would meet again with the Parish Council with further updates on the Masterplan after the Local Plan consultation.

It was agreed the Parish Council would forward:

- An updated list of pre app requests.
- A copy of the Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP2) Housing Needs Assessment.

Members discussed the meeting and concerns with regard to overdevelopment and density of the site on the edge of the town. It was queried if this development would have an impact on the overall number of houses to be built in Melksham, as proposed in the draft Local Plan. It was highlighted with the additional houses proposed and other new developments in the pipeline, Melksham should almost be at the housing allocation figure in the draft Local Plan.

Members noted the information received from Bloor highlighting the density of various other developments within the vicinity, which were in line with proposals for the site.

Members discussed the offer from Bloor of a site visit to look at the density of other sites in the vicinity, noting the information already provided on the density of other sites in the vicinity.

**Recommendation:** Not to uptake the offer of a site visit.

Meeting closed at 8.33pm

Signed: .....  
Chair, Full Council, 4 December 2023

# Melksham Without Parish Council's response to Wiltshire Council's draft Local Plan consultation

Sent Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 at 1.30pm

## Strategic Housing Requirement Methodology

### Policy 2

Melksham Without Parish Council (MWPC) support that Wiltshire Council has undertaken additional work to inform the approach to identifying housing need and that the updated overall housing requirement contained within the draft Wiltshire Local Plan (WLP) has now been calculated in accordance with the standard method.

The overall approach is therefore considered to be **sound, as it is consistent with national policy**.

### Table 4.1

It is evidenced in the Sustainability Appraisal that a range of alternative approaches to the distribution of housing have been tested and MWPC support the proposed approach to the redistribution of the draft housing requirement between the four HMAs (Housing Market Areas) which would lead to reductions in the Chippenham and Trowbridge HMAs. As this takes into account the most up to date ONS small area population estimates and has been checked against dwelling completion data.

It is welcomed that in considering the implications of the delivery of different strategies the constrained nature of settlements was assessed as well as recent housing delivery. It was concluded that whilst Melksham was not significantly constrained when compared to other towns, housing growth has been above what the Core Strategy planned, furthermore with concerns regarding the adequacy of local infrastructure, it was concluded that the town would benefit from a period of slower growth.

As a result, it is therefore considered to the proposed distribution of housing across the HMA is considered to be **sound**, as it is **positively prepared** and **justified**.

### **Neighbourhood plan area designation housing requirements (paragraphs 3.45-3.49, 4.107, 4.111, 4.113, policy 17, table 4.4)**

Paragraph 66 of the NPPF requires strategic policy-making authorities to establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area and within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas. The neighbourhood area requirement should reflect the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.

Whilst the draft WLP has identified the overall housing requirement figure for Wiltshire and the HMAs, it has not identified the overall housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas, it defines individual requirements for each settlement (explained in paragraphs 3.47 and 3.48). Paragraph 4.107 states that the neighbourhood area designation housing requirement is set at 270 dwellings, with the expectation that 200 homes would be delivered at Melksham and 70 homes at Shaw/ Whitley. This figure does not reflect the level of housing that is proposed to take place over the plan period within the neighbourhood area.

National policy is clear that the draft WLP must clearly define the housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas – this should be for the area as a whole. The current approach of the draft WLP does not provide the housing requirement for the NA as a whole – it defines requirement that the neighbourhood planning body is required to plan for.

The scope of a neighbourhood plan is for the neighbourhood planning body to determine, there is no requirement for neighbourhood plans to plan for housing. NPPG states:

*"The scope of neighbourhood plans is up to the neighbourhood planning body. Where strategic policies set out a housing requirement figure for a designated neighbourhood area, **the neighbourhood planning body does not have to make specific provision for housing, or seek to allocate sites to accommodate the requirement** (which may have already been done through the strategic policies or through non-strategic policies produced by the local planning authority). The strategic policies will, however, have established the scale of housing expected to take place in **the neighbourhood area**."*

*Housing requirement figures for neighbourhood plan areas are not binding as **neighbourhood planning groups are not required to plan for housing**. However, there is an expectation that housing requirement figures will be set in strategic policies, or an indicative figure provided on request. Where the figure is set in strategic policies, this figure will not need retesting at examination of the neighbourhood plan. Where it is set as an indicative figure, it will need to be tested at examination."*

(NPPG paragraph 104, reference ID: 41-104-20190509)

In order to be sound, the draft WLP should include a policy which defines the neighbourhood area housing requirements for the whole Melksham Neighbourhood Area – this should be informed by the strategic approach to the distribution of housing. The plan should clearly set out the level of housing that has been delivered in the neighbourhood area since the start of the plan period, as well as that which is in the pipeline (sites with permission/ minded to approve and under construction). This will ensure clarity.

As the strategic approach appears to be reliant on neighbourhood plans allocating housing sites, MWPC have concerns as to whether the approach is sound. The Housing Delivery Paper (figure 4) details the sources of housing supply. Whilst it could be appropriate to include within the supply allocated sites within existing plans, there should not be the expectation that emerging or reviewed plans

will deliver housing – there are a number of references within the draft plan and its evidence base where it is stated that neighbourhood plans will allocate sites e.g., policy 2, paragraphs 3.24 and 4.111 of the draft WLP and paragraph 1.27 of the Housing Delivery Paper.

Paragraph 68 of the NPPF is clear that strategic policy making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area and that planning policies should identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period, as well as specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and where possible years 11-15 of the plan. This should not rely on sites coming forward through neighbourhood plans.

The proposed approach is therefore **unsound as it is not consistent with national policy**.

Notwithstanding or without prejudice to the NHP area comment above, the stated 200 requirement for Melksham is **not sound because it fails to take account of homes completed or in the pipeline and is not justified**. It should take into account the decision on the Appeal for Land South of Western Way (PL/2022/08504) which was upheld in November 2023. Georgina Clappitt-Dix indicated in an email on 15/9/23 attributed a number of 248 additional homes to reflect the 210 dwellings and 70 bed care home. This substantially increases supply in the short term and constitutes a significant change in circumstances that justifies a lower housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Whilst the WLP explains that neighbourhood plan areas have their number calculated on their separate requirements, you can see from Table 4.2 page 45 of the WLP the growth and residual numbers for the towns in the Chippenham HMA. Whilst its clear that a figure of approx. 10% of the Housing Growth number has been used for the NHP allocations across the towns such as Melksham, Devizes, Calne, Corsham etc, there is an anomaly for Chippenham, whose figure is much lower than 10%. **This is a further unjustified inconsistency in the methodology or methodologies applied to different places and further evidence that the requirement for Melksham is not sound.**

Extract from Table 4.2:

Settlement	Housing Growth	Completions & Commitments	Residual
Chippenham	5,850	3,759	2,090
Melksham	2,160	1,036	1,120

The Neighbourhood area designation for Chippenham is 200 dwellings. (4.44 page 53 WLP) and is much lower than 10%. The Neighbourhood area designation for Melksham is not known but for Melksham its 200 and for the Large Village of Shaw & Whitley 73.

### The role of windfall/ small sites (paragraphs 3.36-3.39)

The Housing Delivery Paper (1.8) highlights that a significant component of housing land supply is not identified in the plan, either because it was not known about when the plan was prepared (windfall) or is too small for it to be considered (sites of less than 10 dwellings). Paragraph 2.12 of the Housing Delivery Paper states that the estimate of the number of homes delivered from small sites is 'deliberately conservative'.

MWPC therefore have concerns that if the allowance of the contribution from small sites are too low the draft WLP could be proposing allocations which are not required.

The proposed approach is therefore **unsound as it is not sufficiently justified**. In order to be sound, there should be clear evidence to demonstrate that sufficient weight has been given to the level of housing that could be delivered on small sites and whether this would impact on the level of housing allocations required.

With regard to windfall sites, Paragraph 3.37 on page 28 concerns Large Windfall Sites and states that if they come forward over the Plan period, they will provide contingency and will help Wiltshire maintain its housing land supply across the Plan period. It does not clearly state that the numbers of housing permitted will actually be counted as a commitment against the overall housing number allocated. So, for the Melksham outstanding number of 1,120 (Table 4.2, Page 45 of WLP) how is the recently approved (upheld at Appeal) decision on 210 dwellings and a 70-bed care home treated? PL/2022/08504 Land south of Western Way. As well as current planning applications awaiting decisions:

**Blackmore Farm (PL/2023/01949)**. Outline permission with some matters reserved for demolition of agricultural outbuildings and development of up to 650 dwellings; land for primary school; land for mixed use. **NOTE that the allocation in the WLP Policy 18 Page 75) s for approx. 425 dwellings.**

**Snarlton Farm (PL/2023/07107)**; Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for two pedestrian and vehicle accesses (excluding internal estates roads) from Eastern Way for the erection of up to 300 dwellings (Class C3); land for local community use or building (incorporating classes E(b), E(g) and F2(b) and (c)); open space and dedicated play space and service infrastructure and associated works.

**Land to the West of Semington Road (PL/2022/08155)**: Outline application for up to 53 dwellings including formation of access and associated works, with all other matters reserved. 100% affordable.

**Upside, Bath Road (PL/2022/06221)**: Demolition of existing structures and erection of 112 dwellings and 675sqm of flexible employment space

## Policy 3 - Identification of broad locations for growth

Policy 3 identifies Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge, as settlements which should be strategically planned for in the longer-term, referred to as 'broad locations for growth'. The policy states that in these areas there will be additional significant urban extensions identified towards the end of the plan period. The limited justification refers to the need to provide certainty over the direction of future growth.

It is unclear where the evidence is located to justify the identification of these areas or how growth relates to the identified housing needs, the spatial strategy, or neighbourhood area housing requirements.

Furthermore, there are no details contained within the policy or supporting text to explain whether there would be a specific policy trigger for the preparation of the subsequent development plan document (referred to in policy 3). The ORS report does not identify a need for further growth and the sustainability appraisal does not test this element of the policy or consider reasonable alternatives.

MWPC therefore have significant concerns that the identification of broad locations for growth within a policy could result in unjustified and unsustainable development being proposed in these areas. Given the significant strategic implications of the proposed approach, if it can be demonstrated that there is a need for additional growth, this is something that should be fully assessed and tested through a future review of the local plan.

The proposed approach is therefore **unsound** as it is **not positively prepared** (it will not achieve sustainable development), it is **not justified** (there is no detail to explain how this is an appropriate strategy), **nor is it effective** (it is unclear what the trigger(s) would be for the preparation of an additional development plan document). For the plan to be sound, this proposal either needs to be accompanied by appropriate robust evidence or deleted.

## Paragraph 1.6

Paragraph 13 of the NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained within local plans, with paragraph 17 stating the development plan must include strategic policies to address each LPA's priorities for the development and use of land in its area. Paragraph 21 states that plans should make it explicit which policies are strategic policies and that these should be limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of an area. They should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies. Paragraph 1.6 of the draft WLP states that all of the policies are strategic – whilst it is acknowledged that several of the policies are strategic, it is not accepted that all policies are strategic. The glossary of the NPPF is clear that strategic policies are those, with site allocations, which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of section 19 (1BE) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The plan is therefore **unsound** as it is **not consistent with national policy**.

## **Review of draft Wiltshire Local Plan by policy (non-strategic housing number elements)**

### Policy 1

The settlement strategy defines the different tiers of settlements (principal settlements, market towns, local service centres, large villages and small villages) and how they relate to their wider hinterland. Settlement boundaries are proposed around all but small villages.

Whilst it is acknowledged that settlements have overlapping roles. It is submitted that the proposed settlement strategy and then the related distribution of housing is somewhat confused.

Policy 1 clearly defines the different tiers of settlements. However, there are contradictions within the supporting text. For example, 3.10 states that market towns serve a wide hinterland and notes that as they are smaller than the principal settlements, they each have different characteristics, which need to be considered when planning for their development. The following paragraph (3.11) refers to principal settlements and market towns being referred to as 'main settlements', which appears to somewhat contradict the preceding paragraph. There are numerous references to main settlements within the supporting text throughout the plan – but these are not referred to within policy.

This approach is therefore **unsound** as its lack of clarity will result in it **not being effective**.

### Policy 2

Policy 2 defines the overall housing requirement for Wiltshire. It then groups principal settlements with market towns and local service centres with large villages and then states that the scales of growth and priorities for development are set out within area strategies. It is submitted that this approach could result in a lack of clarity. It is unclear why policy 2 repeats (and regroups) elements of policy 1. It is considered that a more appropriate strategic approach would be for policy 2 to clearly set out overall housing requirements for each of the four areas.

Further confusion is created in the final paragraph of policy 2, under the 'local service centres and large villages' heading – it is unclear what is meant by 'A scale of housing growth is set for each Local Service Centre and Large Village, with Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the Area Strategies, that forms the housing requirement for a neighbourhood area designation in whole or part.' Where a policy includes the housing requirement for a neighbourhood area, for clarity this should be for the whole NA.

Other concerns with the policy include:

- The statement that settlement boundaries can only be updated by the LPA, when in practice these could be reviewed through neighbourhood plans.
- The reference within the first sentence under the 'local service centres and large villages' heading to what neighbourhood plans will do – it is suggested this is amended to clarify that this could be a role of neighbourhood plans.
- The suggestion that proposals for development adjacent to the built area of small villages can only be determined by the local planning authority. This is something that a neighbourhood plan could consider/ include.
- The text below the 'development outside defined settlements' heading should also include a reference to relevant policies within made neighbourhood plans.

Policy 2 is therefore **unsound** as it is **not effective nor is it consistent with national planning policy**.

## **Berryfield – request for Settlement Boundary**

Extract of: Page 20 3.14 Small Villages are generally smaller and have a low level of services and facilities. There are 148 Small Villages designated in total across Wiltshire. They may accommodate some very modest development to respond to local needs and to contribute to their vitality. Although they don't have settlement boundaries, they have built up areas where infill may take place. This recognises a more limited scope for development and a role more limited than larger settlements.

Extract of: Page 24 of the WLP 3.26 At Small Villages, infill proposals will be supported consistent with their character and will support their vitality. To further support these communities, policies allow for housing that meets a settlement's identified need or will support appropriate employment, services and facilities. Schemes will be smaller scale than Large Villages and housing developments geared are closely to meeting community needs in perpetuity.

Despite the definitions of small villages in the draft WLP above, and the definition of Berryfield being a Small Village in the adopted Core Strategy the village of Berryfield has seen unprecedented development approved in the last few years. Bowood View (150 dwellings built and occupied), Buckley Gardens (144 dwellings approved and started on site), Land to the rear of Townsend Farm (50 approved at Appeal and clearance started on site, and outstanding application awaiting decision for 53 more dwellings as Phase 2). MWPC has little faith that the Small Village policy of the new WLP will hold to prevent even further speculative, not plan led development at much higher numbers than "infill", none of which is to respond to local need of the village, **and therefore requests that there should be a settlement boundary for Berryfield.**

## **Policy 5 Securing infrastructure provision from new development**

Pages 34 – 38 of the WLP detail Infrastructure Delivery

MWPC supports this policy, but sees no current evidence to support two strands that are detailed:

3.65 Timely delivery of new infrastructure to support development proposals must be secured.

It sees time and time again, s106 triggers or planning conditions are missed, delayed, often for many years (such as pedestrian crossings several years too late across busy A roads (Taylor Wimpey/Pathfinder Place 16/01123/OUT), play areas several years late (East of Melksham consortium) – all down to Wiltshire Council enforcement not having the will, or teeth, to make the developers adhere to the legal requirements. Often too it's Wiltshire Council who hold the money and they are the ones that are very slow in providing the required infrastructure, again as detailed in a s106. Or inform that they did not secure enough funds in the s106 (Footpath to the rear of Melksham Oak school, finally about to have a planning application, again, secured in East of Melksham s106 many years ago). There are other examples where the s106 details something that then conflicts with the planning application (so for a village hall or community centre but it's compromised by proximity to new housing (Bowood View) or with access considered not suitable by Highways (The Acorns/Hunters Wood).

The second strand detailed in Policy 5, delivery responsibility iv) liaison through the Area Boards **with town and parish councils** and appropriate local stakeholders to identify community infrastructure requirements to help establish local priorities – this is something that MWPC asks for on a regular basis, it comments and requests on planning applications for large developments, and is rarely taken account of. A very recent example is that of Land south of Western Way (2022/08504) upheld at Appeal in November 2023. The request for MWPC to be considered for adopting the play area was not pursued due to the tight timeframes of the Appeal.

This policy is supported but is **unsound as there is no evidence to demonstrate that this will actually take place**.

See also policy 84 comments on public open space and play facilities

## **Policy 17**

Table 4.2 outlines the distribution of housing growth for the area between 2020-2038. For Melksham the 2,160 dwellings have been identified to be delivered to contribute to the HMA requirement. Of these 1,036 were completed and committed up to the end of March 2022, leaving a residual requirement of 1,120. It is unclear whether the 2,160 dwellings cover the whole of the neighbourhood area or Melksham Town. The supporting text and title of the document refers to the Melksham Town and yet the allocations are all in Melksham Without as are many of the completed and committed numbers.

Policy 17 should be clear that whilst over the plan period there is a need to deliver the residual requirement.

It is submitted that the suggested neighbourhood area designation requirement of 270 dwellings (which is incorrectly defined, see representations regarding NA requirements) is hidden within the policy and despite the supporting text (4.107), it is unclear:

- How this relates to the 1,120 homes that are identified for the town;
- Whether this is the residual requirement for the whole plan area or just Melksham town;
- If the requirement is for the full plan period;

- How the requirement relates to the proposed allocations (Land East of Melksham, Land off Bath Road and Land North of the A3102)
- What the relationship is between the requirement and the proposed identification of the broad location for growth.

It is noted that the 'Planning for Melksham' paper is designed to be a guide to how the draft WLP relates to Melksham and explain the evidence base. However, there is a lack of clarity over the area to which this document applies – references are interchangeable between the town and the neighbourhood area. There should be clarity and consistency. **Refer to Planning for Melksham comments detailed further in the document.**

Paragraph 66 of the NPPF is clear that strategic policy making authorities should set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations. As previously set out, this approach is unsound.

### Chippenham Rural Area (4.108 and 4.111)

The draft WLP again makes the suggestion that neighbourhood plans within the rural area should be addressing local housing needs and provide new homes. It is for Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to determine the scope of their plans. **As previously set out, this approach is unsound.**

### Table 4.4

Table 4.4 defines the distribution of housing growth for the Chippenham rural area. This identifies 73 dwellings to be constructed within Shaw/ Whitley, given the commitments/ completions, the residual requirement is identified as 50. It is unclear how this figure relates to the remainder of the neighbourhood plan area. As highlighted above, the local plan should include clearly defined housing requirements for neighbourhood areas. **As previously set out, this approach is unsound.**

In addition, there are local constraints at Shaw & Whitley.

It conflicts with several aspects of the draft Wiltshire Council School Places Strategy 2023-2027 (consulted on in March 23). Firstly, it states that Shaw Primary School is full, and cannot be expanded further to meet the needs of the proposed local plan housing (Page 89 Housing Development)

Therefore, any new housing developments would require parents to drive their children to other primary schools, this conflicts with several of the policies/statements in the draft School Places Policy namely:

Page 17 C4 Primary schools	Wiltshire Council believes that: • Parental preference is a key consideration and ability to access a school place close to home within the local community is an important factor.
Page 21 C8 Location of new schools	The fundamental aim in planning school places is to provide places near to where children live, to meet parental preferences as far as possible; to locate schools at the heart of their communities and to minimise travel to school distances. Wiltshire Council believes that where additional school places are needed because of new housing development, as far as possible the costs should fall on the landowners and/or developers, by way of contributions falling within the concept of planning obligations. Wiltshire has an agreed methodology for calculating the infrastructure needs arising from new development. A policy for requesting contributions from developers and for the use of such funding is in place. It is Wiltshire Council policy that where significant number of new places are needed, new primary schools should be provided, wherever possible, within major new housing developments. <b>The site should ideally be within walking distance of most the development and Wiltshire Council will seek, through the planning processes, to provide for safe routes to school for pedestrians and cyclists.</b> Sites of a suitable size to enable future expansion will be sought where the school can provide a natural focus for the local community, possibly in association with other local facilities such as shops or other community buildings.
Page 22 C8 Location of new schools	Wiltshire Council recognises the importance of considering distance of travel from home to school when planning new developments to reduce dependence on subsidised bus travel and encourage safe walking and cycling to school.
Page 23 C12 Schools in the wider community	Wiltshire Council recognises that schools should act as a focus for the local community in a way that extends beyond the education of children who attend the school. The council recognises the importance of schools engaging with their local communities to promote social inclusion and community cohesion as an integral part of ensuring success for all children. This is particularly important for communities with a high proportion of vulnerable families. In co-operation with agencies and other organisations, many schools have facilities which are made available to the wider community including sports and leisure complexes, ICT facilities, playgroups, childcare facilities, adult education and youth provision. School facilities are increasingly being made available for evening, weekend and holiday use making more effective use of the resources available.



It also conflicts with the following statements in the Planning for Melksham document:

**Page 12 Paragraph 33 Growth planned for Melksham:**

“Where development takes place is also a consideration. If it can be located as near to the centre as possible this will help it to capitalise on growth. If there are opportunities to improve connections, to and between the town centre and sites for new development, this can also help.”

**Page 13/14 Paragraph 39. Bypass:**

“39. Careful consideration has therefore been given to the potential impacts of any new development on traffic congestion along the A350. For these environmental reasons, as well as benefits for town centre trade (see above), **development proposals are as well connected to the town centre as possible**, allied to scope for provision **for sustainable transport and active travel routes to the town centre**,

Any cars travelling to the new proposed school at Pathfinder Way in the south of the parish, will have to travel on the A350 to get there. What new improved bus routes and pedestrian and cycling routes will there be, and how will they be provided? The pavement on the A365 into Town from Shaw & Whitley is physically not wide enough already, as evidenced by lots of LHFIG (Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group) requests for clearing back the verge, trying to make the narrow pavement safer for those walking to school already (most in the opposite direction from George Ward Gardens to Shaw primary school, Shaw pre school at the Village Hall and Toddler Group at Whitley Reading Rooms.) If they did manage to get into town, there is no cycle way through the centre until you get to the south at Longford Road. How will these new pedestrian and cycle ways be put in when there is physically no land available (pavement width) to do so.

**The housing allocation for Shaw & Whitley is not sound as not positively prepared in line with other Wiltshire Council policies due to its constraints.**

## **Strategy for the Chippenham Housing Market Area - Melksham Constraints**

Extract of: WLP page 44 4.22 Melksham is one of the five Market Towns in the area. Compared with other settlements it is relatively less constrained and its location on the A350 makes it attractive for business investment. An eastern bypass is proposed at the town to improve the functionality of the A350 as part of the strategic road network.

Extract of: WLP page 73 4.91 Melksham is not significantly constrained in environmental terms but there are concerns over the adequacy of local infrastructure to be able to support future growth with the A350 recognised as particularly constrained at peak times, leading to traffic congestion. A bypass to the east of the town is under consideration to relieve traffic pressure and secure improvements to the A350 strategic corridor, which in turn could lead to improved efficiency of the transport network and other social, environmental and economic benefits for the town.

**MWPC do not agree with the statement made at 4.91.**

Whilst there are no national landscape designations, flood risk is a significant constraint within Melksham Town (and Shaw and Whitley).

Within Melksham, Environment Agency Flood Mapping, Planning for Melksham and draft policy 95 (Flood Risk) has defined c10 hectares of redundant employment land at Cooper Tires as being within flood zone 2 and 3 where “development should (be) avoid(ed)” See Cooper Tires below.

From the Sustainability appraisal on page 62:

“Melksham is at high risk of river flooding and at moderate risk of surface water and groundwater flooding. The cumulative impact of development is assessed as moderate.”

Highway Infrastructure

“.....the A350 recognised as particularly constrained at peak times, leading to traffic congestion.”

The A350 strategic transport routes (ref Policy 75 (Strategic Transport Network)) is identified as a route prioritised for improvement “to support development”. Reps suggest this is confused with Planning for Melksham justification. However, it is congested and continues to impact on local traffic movement and environmental quality.

It has areas in the Neighbourhood Plan area that are not on mains drainage or connected to gas.

In the south west of Melksham (in Berryfield, in Melksham Without) the land is Grade 2 Very Good Quality agricultural land.

Further comments on Constraints are detailed by topic review of the WLP below, with comments on flood risk, lack of health facilities, bypass, education etc.

## **Distribution of housing growth for the Chippenham area**

Table 4.2 Distribution of housing growth for the Chippenham area

What an odd way of presenting the figures for distribution of housing allocation numbers, this is a key table, and yet the 3<sup>rd</sup> column says “Completions and commitments (1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31 March 2022) with an asterisk and a line below to say it includes major

permissions post 1 April 2022, up to 31 May 2023. Please update it to read the Completions and commitments (1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023) so it's meaningful and accurate.

### **Policy 68 Managing Town Centres – Transition Town**

Whilst this is the response of MWPC, and does not cover the Town Parish, it does have a joint NHP with Melksham Town Council and also has a relationship with the town, it surrounds it in a “donut” arrangement. It notes on page 190 of the WLP that Table 5.1 Settlement Classifications denotes Melksham as a Transition Town but we can see no description of what that classification practically means, or what evidence there is to justify this. Paragraph 5.27 states that this is a functional description that influences the type of renewal projects that are being delivered with the aim of ensuring that change is delivered in a manner that reflects the nature and character of the place.

**This policy is unsound as not justified.**

### **Policy 76 Affordable housing – Designated Rural Areas in Wiltshire**

MWPC support the policy intention to provide 40% affordable housing for 10 dwellings and above.

MWPC understand that the definition of a “Designated Rural Area” is a legal definition from the Housing Act 1985, but wants to query why this designation was used as the eligibility criteria for providing affordable homes in rural areas at either 5 rather than 10 dwellings. Using a 1985 designation seems to not fit what the current rural status of villages in Wiltshire may be. We are lay people, but could a differing designation be used, for example the Government’s Rural Urban Classification <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-urban-classification> which was brought in 2016 and updated in 2021?

**This policy is unsound as not positively prepared, and not justified.**

### **Policy 81 Community facilities**

MWPC support this policy, but it must be backed up by Wiltshire Council when they are approving housing developments at outline stage with village halls/community centres as part of the outline application. We have two examples where the parish council has come forward with an application for the actual village hall and its design is critically compromised due to the closeness to the housing, space available for parking etc which can lead to the design not being sustainable in terms of providing a decent enough facility with opening hours etc, or no opening windows etc (e.g. Bowood View) or in the area now transferred to Melksham Town Council under the latest Community Governance Review at Hunters Wood/The Acorns, where highways refused the access for a community centre as per the approved outline application. These community facilities mainly come from s106 and CIL contributions, and so getting this right at outline application as part of the wider scheme must come first. How can this policy be improved to ensure that it's got right in the first place?

**This policy is unsound as not effective.**

### **Policy 83 Health and wellbeing**

Whilst welcoming this policy, the section on Healthy food environment (page 216 of the LWP) needs to go further, as otherwise it will just be land for community gardens, orchards or allotments. There needs to be s106 contributions for fencing, a car park for deliveries, a water supply, details of who will manage them, otherwise these are meaningless.

**This policy is unsound as not effective.**

### **Policy 84 Public Open Space and Play Facilities**

5.94 on page 217 of the WLP states that “Developers will be **encouraged** to discuss with town and parish councils, in the first instance, before setting up a company to manage new public open space...>”

Can this not be stronger than encourage? Otherwise, it's just paid lip service. The difficulty often is that the s106 is signed at outline stage, and then sold to the actual housebuilder and so the s106 is at the wrong time for this discussion.

**This policy is unsound as not effective.**

Recent applications have approved plans for “wildlife cuts” or wildlife areas (eg Bowood View and Pathfinder Place). Whilst admirable in intention, they often mean that there is no available green public open space on a development for children to just play, and kick a ball. It all becomes either designated equipped play areas, attenuation or wildflower cut. This policy should include some space for informal play. Management companies are hamstrung by Landscape plans that do not include this and designate as wildflower area – this also applies to Policy 88.

### **Policy 88 Biodiversity in the built environment**

Page 231 of the WLP “1. Provision of wildflower verges and meadows throughout the development managed to ensure their longevity” should not be at the expense of some informal play.

**This policy is unsound as not effective.**

## **Policy 86 Renewable energy**

Whilst supporting renewable energy, MWPC are pleased to see the policy wording on page 223 of the WLP

“f. the cumulative environmental effects of proposals with other renewable energy installations”

Does “k..... visual amenity.... Include glare?”

**This policy is unsound as not effective, if it does not include impact on visual amenity such as glare.**

## **Policy 90 Woodland, hedgerows and trees**

MWPC welcomes this policy but has seen examples of existing hedgerows (including an ancient one) being included as part of the private boundary of new residential properties and as soon as the dwelling is privately owned, they rip out the hedgerow and replace with a fence. These must be in the public realm areas, and not in gardens of private dwellings.

In addition, any trees planted in the public open space, must be not right up against the boundary of rear gardens, as they cause major havoc in years to follow, cutting off light to gardens, not maintained properly, often cut down by frustrated residents. For example, the public open space in Bowerhill with houses built and trees planted decades ago. Management companies do not want copses in the centre of public open spaces, or dotted around, it's easier to mow if all planted at the boundary.

We have been to many new developments where the trees and planting is done by the developer, and then there is a gap of a couple of years before the management company is in place and no maintenance at all is done, it all dies, and then the management company try and blame external influences so they don't have to replace. So, MWPC welcome the maintenance plans as detailed in 5.153 on page 237 of the WLP, but they must ensure they are from initial planting and not from adoption.

Soil conditions must be taken into account, most of Bowerhill is built on clay and the trees are cut down and blamed for the cracks in buildings but it's often the clay soil structure. Existing tree lined streets have dangerous pavements where the roots have uplifted the pavements, e.g., Halifax Road in Bowerhill. This policy must detail how this is contained and manageable in years to come; otherwise, the policy will not be improving the health and wellbeing of the local communities, but doing the opposite making it impossible for push chairs, mobility scooters and the less mobile to use the pavements.

**This policy is unsound as not effective.**

## **Policy 91 Conserving and enhancing Wiltshire's Landscapes**

MWPC believe that this policy does not go far enough and is weak.

5.156 page 238 of WLP speaks to the erosion of the separate identify of settlements and their coalescence, character, visual and functional amenity, which can degrade their setting to the detriment of the character of the rural countryside.

It does not go far enough, and should be designating the landscape buffers between settlements. This cannot be done at NHP level (as you suggest in 5.161) as they can only designate areas in their own parish or neighbourhood plan area, and not in the neighbouring area. This can only be done strategically by the Local Authority between settlements in different parishes e.g., Melksham Without and Semington, Melksham Without and Seend.

It also removes some specific prevention of coalescence wording that were previously listed in the Core Strategy, such as Melksham & Bowerhill, although the gap has pretty much disappeared by recent approvals due to the lack of 5-year land supply. This is why it needs a stronger protection at strategic levels. **This policy is unsound as it is not effective.**

The adopted Core Strategy says: Page 130 5.83 “Melksham and Bowerhill village have a functional relationship and are considered together for the purposes of this strategy. Therefore, the housing growth identified for Melksham town will also serve to meet the needs of Bowerhill. **The identity of these separate communities will need to be preserved through the planning process.** Berryfield is considered separately and is identified as a small village. However, it is recognised that both Berryfield and Bowerhill have strong functional links to Melksham and have important individual characteristics which should be protected where practicable.”

### **Extract from Planning for Melksham Page 11 28. Place Shaping Priorities**

“PSPs therefore provide a succinct strategic context within which to better understand the spatial strategy for the main settlements. They also set a framework to co-ordinate the high level and strategic role of the Local Plan, with the function of neighbourhood plans, prepared by town and parish councils, that set more detailed visions for the future of each community. The two sets of plans therefore work in harmony.”

With regards to Landscape Gaps the Local Plan is not working in harmony with the NHP as its not picking up the strategic elements between settlements in other parishes that can only be done at LP level.

### **Where is the evidence to support Policy 6 Chippenham Principal Settlement?**

6. Respect the individual identities of villages within the landscape setting of Chippenham and their relationship to the town

**Why can't Melksham have the same policy line? The policy is unsound as not justified if the same methodology has not been applied to all settlements.**

### **Policy 94 Wiltshire's Canals and the boating community**

This policy seems to have taken away the safeguarded route which is now ambiguous? It just talks about the creation of a new link from the Kennet & Avon at Semington and River Avon at Melksham to facilitate the re-opening of the Wilts & Berks as navigable waterway. Where has the onward link across Queensfield towards Lacock gone? The onward route is not protected?

It also only talks about the impact on the cultural, historic and natural environment, and yet there is no mention of the impact on the existing community of Berryfield that the route will go straight through the middle of.

5.201 regarding the historic line "the council will support its identification and historical significance by signage where appropriate". MWPC have discussed this with developers in the past, who were agreeable, and then it was not put as a planning condition in the approval, once sold to the new housebuilder once outline permission is gained there is no hook to ensure that the housebuilder then does this. This is despite the Archaeology response from Wiltshire Council asking for this condition at outline, but not backing it up at Reserved Matters. **This policy is not sound, it is not positively prepared.**

## **Review of draft Wiltshire Local Plan by Topic**

### **Employment Land**

The Wiltshire Employment Land Review Update (WELRU) has suggested the need for additional employment space. However, this does not account for the capacity created by the closure of Cooper Tires (end of 2023) despite mentioning it on Page 14.

The WLP spatial strategy for Melksham's growth to meet identified strategic housing, community and employment needs provides sites for nearly 90% of all forecast development needs and have not had regard to the potential of Cooper Tires or prioritised the un-let capacity of Avonside Enterprise Park.

Planning Practice Guidance sets out guidance (as detailed in the WELRU page 2) on assessing the need for and supply of employment land. The assessment of need should be evidence based. "The assessment should consider:

- Recent gains and losses to the stock
- Evidence of market demand, including market intelligence, surveys and discussions"

This approach is therefore **unsound as it is not consistent with national policy.**

In the conclusions on Employment Land in the SA (page 45) it states "Retention of existing and allocated employment land is often challenging to manage. Consider inclusion of policies that safeguard against incompatible uses or unnecessary loss of employment sites but also set out criteria against which, in exceptional cases, an existing site or allocation that is clearly and demonstrably no longer suitable for employment development can be de-allocated or developed for an alternative use."

There has been no mention of trying to account for the capacity created by the closure of Cooper Tires. It is not yet currently available, but the only site in Melksham that was reviewed was the Golf Course Land which the WELRU states is not currently available.

This approach is therefore **unsound as a result of not being justified.**

MWPC are struggling to understand the context and reasoning for 5 hectares of employment land to be allocated at Land East of Melksham in Policy 18. On the WLP list of unallocated sites, the only one in Melksham listed is the "Golf Course" land, why not, Cooper Tires (perhaps as not available yet, but very clearly coming forward at the end of 2023, with its closure noted in the Planning for Melksham document, and what about SHELAA 1025 Land South West of Western Way, adjacent to the Bowerhill Industrial Estate with potential access from the industrial estate, and alongside the A365/A350 junction, so in prime position as part of the A350 catchment.

Page 70 of the WELRU states that the golf course land is not available as they are awaiting a decision from Wiltshire Council Strategic Property on a location for a new highways transfer station. We note that the land East of Melksham in Policy 18 is not on the list of unallocated sites that were reviewed.

The WLP should have considered spatial options for employment land and tested reasonable alternatives, ideally through the SA process. We can see no evidence of this being done. All the SA does is look at the number of hectares of Employment Land for Melksham (page 43), it does not look at any reasonable alternatives. What is the justification and evidence for allocating it in Land East of Melksham?

The employment land allocation in Policy 18 is **unsound as a result of not being justified.**

### **Education**

Wiltshire Council should have considered and tested reasonable alternatives, ideally through the Sustainability Appraisal process for the extension to Melksham Oak secondary school (Policy 19 Land off Bath Road), the proposed new primary school in Policy 18 Land east of Melksham (Blackmore Farm) and the new 100 place nursery (Policy 20) Land North of the A3102. **MWPC can see no evidence of this being done and therefore the proposals are unsound as a result of not being justified** as this requires what is being proposed to be an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives.

The Local Plan sets out the strategic plan for the Melksham area for the next 15 years, where is the strategic thinking and planning, it looks like it has just plopped one in each of the 3no. land allocations in the WLP, so nursery in one site, primary in another and secondary in a further site. Whilst neat for land allocations, this does not work for the local community. The children attending the new primary school and the nursery (most likely for siblings in the new developments) will have to cross the A3102 to access.

With regards to the secondary school expansion, where is the evidence that this is the best strategic option for Melksham, as this will make Melksham Oak school too big for future expansion, according to Wiltshire Council evidence, and would it not be better now to start a new secondary school or satellite provision, now, rather than moving the problem on until 2038?

**Evidence re Melksham Oak:**

**Extract from: Sustainability Appraisal Objective 9: Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive communities with better services and facilities**

Page 30 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report Annex 1.1 Chippenham HMA states “There is limited capacity available at Melksham Oak School, with the it being expected that the school reaches capacity in the near future. Additionally, expansion is planned for the school to meet known emerging demand. Further expansion risks creating a very large school. More substantial levels of housing, in the region of 4500 homes would be able to support new secondary school provision. New primary provision has been secured and expansion is being pursued currently, but beyond this additional primary provision would have to be delivered, with around 1300 homes being able to support a new primary school.”

**Where can Wiltshire Council evidence that they have given careful consideration to the expansion of Melksham Oak school?**

Extract from the draft Wiltshire Council School Places Strategy 2023-2027 (March 23)

<p>Page 90 Implications for Secondary Provision from 2022/23</p>	<p>The number of pupils attending Melksham Oak is forecast to grow significantly over the next few years as larger cohorts begin to feed through from primary schools and as new housing is completed. The recent expansion means that the school now has a PAN of 300, which will be sufficient to meet the needs of current housing. If the proposed 2712 local plan houses are taken forward, there would be a significant shortfall of secondary places. Whilst the school site is large, expanding the school over 12FE would make it the largest school in the Country and would probably be considered too large to operate from one site. The number of additional places required would not be sufficient to make a whole new secondary school viable. As the Local Plan process moves forward and the final number of houses is determined, <b>the provision of secondary places in the town will need to be given careful consideration by the Local Authority and Academy Trust.</b> Demand for resource base provision in West Wiltshire is high and consideration needs to be given for the creation of 2 additional secondary resource base classes, based on current and predicted demand. The Special School Transformation Team are exploring opportunities to expand resource base provision with existing secondary schools in Melksham and the surrounding areas.</p>
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**Where can Wiltshire Council evidence that this review has been undertaken:**

Extract from the draft Wiltshire Council School Places Strategy 2023-2027 (March 23)

<p>Page 20 C7 School Organisation Review</p>	<p>Educational viability, efficiency and effectiveness are all potential triggers for considering a review of school organisation and subsequent re-organisation of school provision in an area. The ‘triggers’ that might provide an indication that a review is necessary are set out below. 4. Where there is population change in an area (to include growth from new housing)</p>
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**Paragraph 94 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. This includes local planning authorities giving great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools when preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.

**Where have Wiltshire Council provided a secondary school choice for parents in their Local Plan in line with the NPPF?**

The policy to allocate Policy 19 in the Local Plan to secure 2 hectares for an extension to Melksham Oak school is not sound as not consistent with national policy, or Wiltshire Council draft School Places Strategy.

In addition, there are no details of how this allocation meets the strategic outcomes of the Local Plan as detailed on Page 11 of the WLP:

## Extract from: page 11 of the WLP 2.5 Outcomes

- Provision of 16+ education, including higher education, will have been enhanced to provide trained employees necessary to deliver economic growth from target sectors

Mentioned again on page 13, 2.13 there is a need to improve the level of skills beyond the age of 16 and to retain those skills within local communities.

## From Page 11 of the WLP Infrastructure

2.6 Challenge: The Plan will ensure that services and infrastructure, to meet the needs of Wiltshire's growing population and economy are brought forward in a **timely and responsive manner** through new development proposals. Appropriate and sustainable modes of transport, highway improvements, **school facilities**, water management, green spaces, power supply, high speed and affordable internet connectivity, access to emergency services, sustainable waste management facilities are all essential components of daily life and therefore **critical to delivering the strategic goal** of building strong and healthy communities.

2.7 Objective: Infrastructure requirements need to be appropriately planned, secured and implemented to ensure the timely delivery of development proposals

## Health and Wellbeing

### Sustainability Appraisal Objective 9: Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive communities with better services and facilities

Extract from Page 30 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report Annex 1.1 Chippenham HMA states "**Despite a hospital being situated in Melksham**, there is an existing GP capacity issue".

MWPC believe that this is misleading, and in fact, disingenuous. It implies that it is a hospital available for residents to access like others in West Wiltshire at Chippenham, Trowbridge and Devizes. It may host some ancillary services such as wheelchair repairs but if you check the list of departments and services on the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/hospital> it lists **NONE AVAILABLE**, whilst the Trowbridge Hospital has a Minor Ailments department and Chippenham and the new Devizes Practice Plus Group Surgical Centre both list a whole host of services from Dentistry, to Gynaecology to Orthopaedics and Urology.

**The statement is misleading and not sound as not justified, and should not be used to as part of the Sustainability Appraisal measures.**

## Biodiversity and Climate Change

**MWPC support the comments prepared by the Centre for Sustainable Energy prepared on behalf of the Wiltshire Climate Alliance (copy attached).**

## Bypass

Sustainability Appraisal Report Annex 1.1 Chippenham HMA

### Extract from Sustainability Appraisal Objective 10: Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices

Melksham's existing transport infrastructure mainly lies with the A350 with other routes including the A3102 and A365. These routes confluence on the A350 which cause significant peak hour congestion and delays, particularly through the town.

Extract of: WLP page 44 4.22 Melksham is one of the five Market Towns in the area. Compared with other settlements it is relatively less constrained and its location on the A350 makes it attractive for business investment. An eastern bypass is proposed at the town to improve the functionality of the A350 as part of the strategic road network.

Extract of: WLP page 73 4.91 Melksham is not significantly constrained in environmental terms but there are concerns over the adequacy of local infrastructure to be able to support future growth with the A350 recognised as particularly constrained at peak times, leading to traffic congestion. A bypass to the east of the town is under consideration to relieve traffic pressure and secure improvements to the A350 strategic corridor, which in turn could lead to improved efficiency of the transport network and other social, environmental and economic benefits for the town.

Extract of: WLPC Policy 75 Ref to A350 improvements... "**.....to support development growth....**"

Planning for Melksham Place Shaping Priority 3 defines the outcomes of the A350 bypass as improving the efficiency of the transport network and other social, environmental and lead to economic benefits for the town. NB These should be the Neighbourhood Area.

There is not a stated direct connection between the delivery of the bypass and the accommodation of growth.

The purpose and link between the A350 by pass and growth needs clarifying.

If the Bypass business case illustrates the link, then it should be a direct infrastructure requirement prior to delivery of eastern area allocations (and further growth)

There is confusion, insufficient clarity and evidence of the role of the A350 bypass improvements in supporting the growth at Melksham, and therefore Policy 75 Strategic Transport Network is **unsound as not effective**.

## Flood Risk

Sustainability Appraisal Report Annex 1.1 Chippenham HMA

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 5: Minimise impacts on climate change (mitigation) and reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects (adaptation)

Page 62 states:

DAQ 3: **Minimise vulnerability to surface water flooding** and other sources of flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere?

Fluvial flood-risk, along with surface and groundwater flood risk form part of the settlement-level analysis below. The cumulative impact of development was also considered in order to identify those catchments where an increase in flows as a result of growth would have the greatest impact on downstream flood risk. This analysis is based on a strategic assessment of flood risk. Local knowledge will be applied when specific development locations are identified. In terms of flood-risk potential at settlements the following can be stated:

**Melksham is at high risk of river flooding and at moderate risk of surface water and groundwater flooding. The cumulative impact of development is assessed as moderate.**

	higher amount of development to Malmesbury. <b>Likely effects: moderate adverse</b>	<b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>	<b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>
<b>Melksham</b>	Melksham is at high risk of river flooding and at moderate risk of surface water and groundwater flooding. With specific development locations not known this leads to moderate adverse effects likely at the town. <b>Likely effects: moderate adverse</b>	As regards Melksham there are vulnerabilities associated with the potential for especially fluvial flooding. Given the proposed lower growth quanta under scenario CH-B, minor adverse effects are considered likely for the town. <b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>	Melksham has its highest level of growth proposed under CH-C. The town possesses some areas of flood risk, mainly fluvial due to the course of the River Avon, but moderate risk of surface water and groundwater flooding. As a result, moderate adverse effects are estimated here. <b>Likely effects: moderate adverse</b>
<b>Rest of HMA</b>	Development quanta for Rest of HMA, whilst not location-specific, are moderately high and therefore estimated to lead to minor adverse effects, which will be clarified as site-level proposals emerge. <b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>	Development quanta for Rest of HMA, whilst not location-specific, conserve the moderately high levels proposed under Core Strategy Continued, and are therefore estimated to lead to minor adverse effects, which will be clarified as site-level proposals emerge. <b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>	Development quanta for Rest of HMA, whilst not location-specific, are moderately high, and therefore estimated to lead to minor adverse effects, which will be clarified as site-level proposals emerge. <b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>
<b>Overall HMA score</b>	-1.6 Core Strategy Continued exhibits likely moderate adverse effects overall, with moderate adverse effects considered likely in Calne, Devizes, Malmesbury and Melksham. <b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>	-1.3 The overall judgement for this strategy is minor adverse effects. There are less settlements where significant adverse effects are likely – namely Chippenham and Devizes. <b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>	-1.4 Likely minor adverse effects are likely overall. There are less settlements where significant adverse effects are likely – namely Calne, Devizes and Melksham. <b>Likely effects: minor adverse</b>
<b>Conclusions/Recommendations:</b>			
Strategy CH-B is considered to be the more sustainable strategy with significant adverse effects considered likely in two settlements - namely Chippenham and Devizes.			
Strategy CH-A is considered to be the less sustainable strategy with significant adverse effects considered likely in four settlements - namely Calne, Devizes, Malmesbury and Melksham.			
Whilst all areas across Chippenham HMA demonstrate some areas at risk of flooding, some places are more constrained than others. Alternative strategy CH-B, which focuses on Chippenham, offers the best opportunities to achieve flood-resilient development and mitigation.			
Devizes is particularly constrained by groundwater flood-risk, which limits the areas of the settlement that might be suitable for further growth. This leads to an outcome of there being likely moderate adverse effects at the town under the more substantive growth scenarios (CH-A and CH-C). Under strategy CH-B growth here is more restrained and this contributes to making this scenario the most feasible for this HMA.			
Calne, Melksham and Malmesbury also perform less strongly under this objective. This notwithstanding, these settlements tend to offer greater resilience under this objective via strategy CH-B, which directs reduced growth levels to these places.			

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MWPC dispute this evidence, its referring to the risk of river flooding to the town, and the allocations (housing and employment) are all in Melksham Without and so not justified.

It particularly contests the evidence for the Rest HMA as this includes the “Large Village” of Shaw and Whitley, and the “Small Village” of Beanacre, which have consistently received internal property flooding from surface water on repeated, numerous occasions. Whilst we can’t comment on aspects out of our parish particularly, we are very aware that the surface water flooding that affects Shaw and Whitley also affects Box and Corsham, with it all coming down the hills from the Neston estate.

For Shaw and Whitley this is especially important as it has a housing allocation of 73 dwellings in the Chippenham HMA Rural Large Village allocation.

We can supply a host of evidence on the flooding in Shaw & Whitley, and all of this can be collaborated by the Drainage team/Atkins at Wiltshire Council. It looks like Wiltshire Council’s own drainage team were not consulted on the flood risk, as they would certainly have commented on the surface water flooding risk at these locations. Other evidence is the Northern Operational Flood Working Group minutes who meet every two months, with Melksham Without consistently on the agenda.

Substantial mapping was undertaken by residents following some 14 internal properties being flooded in September 2014, regular closures of the Shaw Primary School due to flooding across the Corsham Road, including as recent as earlier in 2023. Telemetry installed by the Environment Agency on Corsham Road. See example during this plan Reg 19 consultation period, when at the time of writing on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the volunteer flood wardens have been deployed twice already.

Latest at 8:30pm on 28 October ⓘ

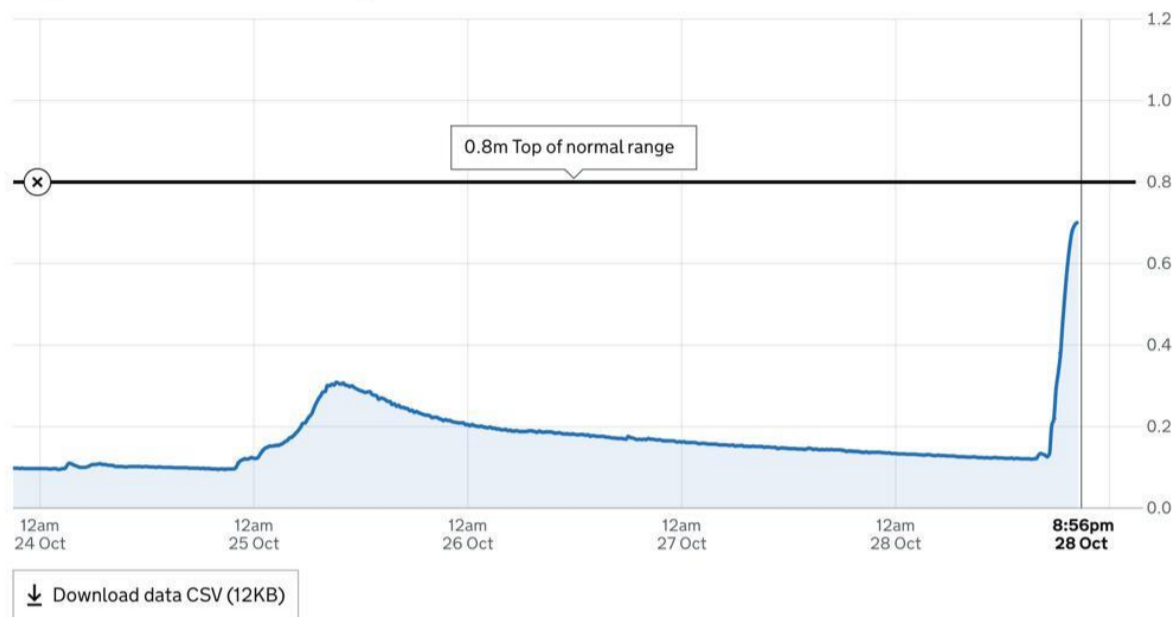
Height  
0.70m ⓘ

Trend  
Steady ⓘ

State  
Normal ⓘ

Normal range 0.00m to 0.80m

Height in metres over the last 5 days



Likewise, the small village of Beanacre receives consistent, regular flooding incidents as recent as January and October 2023. Again, refer to the Wiltshire Council drainage team or we can provide a host of evidence.

## Review of draft Local Plan against the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (including Cooper Tires site)

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 1 (adopted July 21) and reviewed Plan 2 (JMNP2) (at Regulation 14 consultation stage 16/10/23 – 3/12/23)

### Cooper Tires & Closure and Regeneration

Planning for Melksham (PfM) notes the factory closure and loss of c350 jobs. However, neither Pfm nor WLP addresses how the site how regeneration of the site will be promoted and enabled within the plan period other than as a “large windfall site”.

Current policy serves to reinforce environmental constraints to its re-use.

The Wiltshire Employment Land Review update has suggested the need for additional employment space. However, this did not account for the capacity created by the closure of Cooper Tires.

The WLP spatial strategy for Melksham’s growth to meet identified strategic housing, community and employment needs provides sites for nearly 90% of all forecast development needs and have not had regard to the potential of Cooper Tires or prioritised the un-let capacity of Avonside Enterprise Park.

Wiltshire Council and WLP has until now, adopted a reactive position in relationship to JMNP2 positive approach to plan for the site, when the emerging strategy to allocate it was raised with Wiltshire Council prior to the publication of their Regulation 19 plan.

MWPC have suggested that WLP Policy 18 allocation of Site 1 (Land East of Melksham) is not soundly made as other employment land options including the potential of Cooper Tires to re-accommodate employment space has not been evidenced as options. In addition, revisions to the employment strategy should now address the potential of Cooper Tires (accepting its Flood Risk).

Despite this, the WLP presumes that 9% of strategic development requirement will be met through JMNP2 allocations at Melksham, including the currently proposed allocation at Cooper Tires.

Place Shaping Priority 1 (Town Centre) is not positively supported by WLP sites allocations or its reactive approach to the emerging JMNP2, contrary to the NPPG para 009;

*“The local planning authority should take a proactive and positive approach, working collaboratively with a qualifying body particularly sharing evidence and seeking to resolve any issues to ensure the draft neighbourhood plan has the greatest chance of success at independent examination.”*



**There is concern that the approach to the WLP strategy for Melksham is unsound as it is not in conformity with national guidance or positively produced.**

MWPC believes that the approach taken by Wiltshire Council in evidencing and drafting the WLP has been undertaken in a silo, despite the known context of the JMNP2 preparation and knowledge about Cooper Tires.

Whilst the Link Officer has provided good service in his role, he has not been empowered by Wiltshire Council to share necessary evidence or engage with the JMNP Steering Group within a collaborative process.

## **Review of Wiltshire Council's draft Local Plan policies against the current Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP1) and the draft reviewed Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP2) policies**

**(NB: the NHP has to be in conformity with the Core Strategy/Local Plan).**

<b>WLP Policy</b>	<b>Relevant JMNP Policy</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>No Objection / Object</b>
<b>Delivery</b>			
Policy 64 Additional employment land	Policy 10 Employment Sites	<p>Employment Policy is broadly in conformity with JMNP1 P10 <i>Potential reference to WLP 65 and 66 Criteria?</i></p> <p>Clause D Clause should clarify including impact on viability of existing allocated/retained Principal Employment Land (is alluded to in RJ)</p> <p>Allocation of Cooper Tires is likely to include employment. Coordination needed with employment allocation east of Melksham. (Subject to other comments) Should include ensuring no impact on viability of JMNP2 employment allocations.</p>	No objection
Policy 65 Existing employment land	Link to policy 10	<p>No issues with policy or criteria. Concern that 5 hectare employment allocation may undermine optimum viability of existing principal sites including Avonside, which is not fully occupied and potential for employment at Cooper Tires. Addressed in allocation response Planning for Melksham.</p>	No objection
Policy 67 Sequential test and retail impact assessment	Policy 9 link	<p>No in principle conflicts with JMNP1 and 2 Check consistency post Reg 14</p> <p>Potential complexity for delivering main Town Centre uses inclusion at Cooper Tires. But should not undermine.</p> <p>No justified evidence to expand Town Centre boundary.</p>	No objection
Policy 68 Managing town centres	Policy 8 Town Centre	<p>No in principle conflict with JMNP1 or 2 subject detailed comments below. General conformity with revised JMNP2 P9</p> <p>Hierarchy;</p> <p>Approach in conformity with NPPF</p> <p>Melksham is defined as a market town. Logical Town Centre designation Lack of clarity about implications of transitional town centre status. Where is the methodology or criteria? What difference does this make to managing development through the Local Plan? If no method or consequence it should not be included.</p> <p>Boundaries TC &amp; PSA</p>	<p>Object Criteria ref town centre strategies and transitional Market towns not defined or effective. Policy is not sound.</p>

		<p>Approach in conformity with NPPF.</p> <p>Management of uses; Class E has stripped real power from plan led management. Policy is long and seeking to apply controls around the periphery. This is cumbersome but probably the only effective approach.</p> <p>Other Policies in the Development Plan This should make direct reference to Neighbourhood Plan and adopted TC Strategies</p> <p>Town Centre Strategies. “...Town centre strategies within the Plan may provide more detail in relation to the kinds of uses that are accepted within different areas of the town centre...”</p> <p>Clause is weak and has no expectation other than as information. This is not in conformity with the status given to the Melksham TCMP report and does not support its role, It should be tightened to expect demonstration of positive response to adopted local TC strategies or master plans. If within or part of made NDP guidance will be supplemental to policies and used to guide decisions.</p>	
Policy 69 Tourism and related development	No equivalent policy		No objection
Policy 70 Sustainable Transport	Policy 11 Sustainable Transport and Active Travel	<p>Policy 11 is wide ranging and focus on railway station. It cross-suits with aspects of WLP transport policies 70-75</p> <p>LPR policy doesn't really say more than state aims and WC actions. Is it actually a policy?</p> <p>Lack of direct mention of air quality Cross cut reference to Health and wellbeing policy / indicators Question why no mention of Transport hierarchy in planning for sustainable transport.</p> <p>By omitting aspects of local plan objectives the policy effectiveness is questioned.</p> <p>Potential for Review JMNP2 R14 policy to align.</p> <p>NB Proportionate transport strategies and infrastructure; No mention of “Broad Locations for Growth” NB Rather have BLG deleted as unsound.</p> <p>But if retained these should be specifically identified as will warrant specific priority.</p> <p>Potential reference to Local transport strategies required; ie hook into Priority for People?</p>	<p>Object</p> <p>Policy is not effective and does not address key aspects of growth referenced in the WLP , environment outcomes or local transport strategy.</p>
<u>Policy 71:</u> <u>Transport and new development</u>	No equivalent policy	Consistent with principles of safe and sustainable transport	No objection
Policy 72 Development impacts on the primary	Policy 11	<p>No direct impact on JMNP policy.</p> <p>Seems to be a traffic management policy</p>	No objection

and major road networks			
Policy 73 Transport: demand management	Policy 11	<p>Lack of alignment with JMNP policy 11. WLP Policy does not reference the requirement for travel plans which is a requirement of current JMNP1 policy 11.</p> <p>Has the strategic requirement altered? Is there now a lack of conformity emerging between transport related developer submission requirements?</p> <p>LPR policy appears rambling and more of a statement of priorities, although non objectionable.</p>	<p>Object</p> <p>Policy is not effective and should set requirement trigger for travel plans.</p>
<u>Policy 74: Movement of goods</u>	No equivalent policy		No objection
Policy 75 Strategic transport network	No equivalent policy	<p>Cross reference with Melksham Railway Station supported</p> <p>Ref to A350 improvements... "...to support development growth...."</p> <p>Planning for Melksham Place Shaping Priority 3 defines the outcomes of the A350 by pass as improving the efficiency of the transport network and other social, environmental and lead to economic benefits for the town. NB These should be the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>There was not a stated direct connection between the delivery of the bypass and the accommodation of growth.</p> <p>The purpose and link between the A350 by pass and growth should be clarified.</p> <p>If the business case illustrates the link, then it should be a direct infrastructure requirement prior to delivery of eastern area allocations (and further growth)</p>	<p>Object</p> <p>The policy conflicts with the purpose of the A350 by pass scheme at Melksham within "Planning for Melksham" document</p> <p>There is confusion, insufficient clarity and evidence of the role of the A350 improvements in supporting growth at Melksham.</p> <p>The policy is not effective and is unsound.</p>
<b>Social</b>			
Policy 76 Providing affordable homes.	Policy 6: Housing in Defined Settlements (rev)	<p>WLP policy broadly aligns with JMNP2 rev policy 6.</p> <p>NB Policy 6 R14 draft references local plan. This may need to be reviewed to reflect CS policy or successor policies.</p> <p>WLP Affordable housing split different. No conflict as direct ref to local housing evidence set out in JMNP2 policy 6.</p> <p>Accessible homes level does not align with more detailed breakdown in WLP Policy 77. This may need to be refined to align or evidence needed to warrant different standards.</p> <p>WLP should define all settlements that P76 applies to.</p> <p>JMNP2 may consider defining/revising rural settlement boundaries where WLP has not e.g., Berryfield.</p> <p>First Homes discount of 40% is higher than WLP Policy. This may attract objection.</p>	No objection

Policy 77 Rural exceptions sites	No equivalent policy	The objective and criteria in WLP policy 77 address nationally accepted practice and policy with regard to Rural Exceptions sites. These may be promoted as exceptions adjacent to Shaw and Whitley, Beanacre and Berryfield. JMNP2 does not reference RE sites directly. This may be considered as an addendum to Policy 6.	No objection
Policy 78 Meeting Wiltshire's housing needs	Overlap policy 6	Comprehensive policy covering house typology, space standards, accessible homes, homes for older people and vulnerable people.  Detailed issues; House typologies in Melksham HNA covered in policy 6.  Are we satisfied that all forms of specialist housing for older people should be just in Melksham? We may wish to consider that for the JMNP2 area, S&W should be defined as a possible location (Middle Farm) for potential age restricted /supported living, which may align with local HNA.	No objection
Policy 79 First homes exception sites	No equivalent policy	Detailed and new exceptions policy area. Consider post R14 refinement to JMNP policy 6 to reference and WLP.	No objection
Policy 80 Self and custom build housing	No equivalent policy	Detailed and new policy area. Consider post R14 refinement to JMNP policy 6 to reference and WLP. Potential for additional JMNP2 evidence from WC Self build register.	No objection
Policy 81 Community facilities	Policy 15: Community Facilities	WLP criteria are different than P15. It may be worth aligning P15 criteria with WLP P81 or referencing <i>them, but retaining the policy to link to facilities map/list.</i>  <i>However, P81 does not contain a clause to demonstrate new need. This risks competing facilities within a settlement and potential loss of viability for both.</i>	Object  Policy is not effective as may enable competing facilities, over-provision an unviability.  Add criteria to demonstrate community need and support.  Current policy is not effective and unsound.
Policy 82 Housing in the Countryside	No equivalent policy	National criteria compliant	No objection
Policy 83 Health and wellbeing	No equivalent policy.	HIA should be required on employment development land of 5 hectares or more. This captures the Melksham allocation.	Objection  Trigger should be revised to five hectares or more.
<u>Policy 84: Open space and play facilities</u>	Policy 14: Open Spaces Policy 16: Local Green Space	This policy references the Wiltshire Open Space Assessment. The study provides an up-to-date and robust evidence base; auditing the provision (quantity, quality and accessibility) of open space; setting standards for provision; identifying any surpluses or deficiencies; and recommended planning policy and developer contributions. The standards will be used to assess proposals for open spaces during the Plan period, recognising the need for improving the quality of existing open spaces in addition to requirements for new provision.	No objection

		<p>There are shortfalls in the supply (ha) of open space against the standards in four types of open space typology: Allotments, Amenity Green Space, Play Space (Children and Youth). There is also a gap in the provision of ANGSt Standard: At least one accessible 20-hectare site within two kilometres of home.</p> <p>This policy could usefully refer to the provision of open space by major development that reflects the identified deficiencies in of the local area in the open space assessment.</p> <p>The policy in JMNP2 could also usefully refer to this evidence base document.</p>	
Policy 85 Sustainable construction and low carbon energy	Policy 1 Sustainable Design and Construction / Allocations	<p>An aspirational policy that follows in the footsteps of other Local Plan policies that are now examined.</p> <p>Policy 1 of the JMNP was revised to reflect these exemplars polices and the emerging WLP but in a way that is less prescriptive / more aspirational (proportionate to a NP).</p>	No objection
Policy 86 Renewable energy	Local Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	This policy is comprehensive going into greater detail that the JMNP 2 policy 2 which is a slight update to the JMNP1 policy 2 to include reference to energy storage.	No objection
<u>Policy 87: Embodied carbon</u>	Policy 1 Sustainable Design and Construction	An update to the Core Strategy that addresses the need to tackle Climate Change.	No objection
<u>Policy 88: Biodiversity and geodiversity</u>	Policy 13: Biodiversity	Policy is considered effective. Reference to nature recovery is supported.	Support
<u>Policy 89: Biodiversity net gain</u>	Policy 13: Biodiversity	<p>This policy seeks double the Minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) required by the Environment Act but there is no explanation for how the figure of 20% is arrived at for BNG in this policy.</p> <p>Nature Recovery is a key part of this policy.</p>	Support
<u>Policy 90: Trees, hedgerows, and woodland</u>	Policy 17: Trees and Hedgerows	<p>The target for tree canopy coverage is lower than recommended by the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network and referenced in the JMNP.</p> <p>There are no standards for tree replacement, or buffers to woodland.</p>	<p>Object</p> <p>The policy does not contain tree planting triggers or criteria that will ensure major development makes a proportionate contribution to meeting WC targets. It is ineffective and unsound.</p>
<u>Policy 91: Conserving and enhancing Wiltshire's landscapes</u>	<p>Policy 18: Landscape Character</p> <p>Policy 19: Green Wedges</p>	<p>JMNP includes a map which references the Special Landscape Area (a saved local plan policy). This designation will no longer be saved, WC instead recognises the National Planning Policy Framework's landscape character approach to determining landscape value and will require applicants to assess the value of their sites at the local level through the use of the Landscape Institutes Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21: 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations.'</p> <p>This is the policy that the JMNP policy 19: Green Wedges links to directly. In the supporting text there is mention of other relevant assessment and studies that may inform development proposals including NP (which are listed after Parish Plans –</p>	<p>Object</p> <p>The failure to identify strategic countryside gaps does not have regard to sites assessment evidence and undermines the effectiveness of the policy.</p>

		<p>are they still produced?!) which are 'approved the Council'. If the NP is 'made' and includes relevant material then it will have the same status as material prepared for WC and the Local Plan evidence base.</p> <p>Para 5.156 also refers to the "erosion of the separate identity of settlements and their coalescence, character, visual and functional amenity can degrade their setting to the detriment of the character of the rural countryside". This is of direct relevance to the JMNP and would suggest that part 3 of the policy: <b>3. conserving and enhancing the locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings</b> Could include direct reference to the need to avoid coalescence.</p> <p><b>Strategic Countryside Gaps</b></p> <p>Supporting text para 5.1.6 references the erosion of the separate identity of settlements and their coalescence.</p> <p>The Wiltshire "Site Landscape Appraisals 2023" , landscape mitigation in the form of strategic countryside gaps are identified to protect the separate identity of outlying rural villages (in the hinterland of the town). The current policy fails to identify strategic countryside gaps and is not fully effective. Where identified gaps straddle neighbourhood area boundaries NDP's cannot address the risk. There should be strategic countryside gaps identified in the local plan.</p>	
<u>Policy 92: Conserving and enhancing dark Skies</u>		No policy included on this specific topic in the NP, however there are no targets for reducing light pollution except areas designated dark sky areas – this could be broadened out to include the rural areas of the JMNP and GI assets such as the K&A canal.	Support
<b>Environment</b>			
Policy 93 Green and blue infrastructure	<p>Policy 11: Sustainable and Active Travel</p> <p>Policy 16: Local Green spaces</p> <p>Policy 17: Trees and Hedgerows</p> <p>Policy 18: Landscape Character</p> <p>Policy 20: Locally distinctive High Quality Design</p> <p>Policy 19: Green Wedges</p>	<p>No direct equivalent JMNP policy. Cross-cut with made and proposed new JMNP sustainable transport community and environment policies.</p> <p>Should GBI development requirements be limited to major developments (more than 10 dwellings)? Given the requirements, it seems reasonable. However, should ALL development be expected to provide contribution to GBI.</p> <p>Settlement Frameworks. These do not yet exist. There is intention to produce them. The policy should say "any future adopted....."</p> <p>Should this be a discretionary devolution to NDPs/TC's PCs? It would seem reasonable that local knowledge should be harnessed.</p>	No objection in principle
Policy 94 Wiltshire's canals and the boating community	Priority Statement 3: Wilts & Berks Canal Restoration	<p>Agreement of safeguarded route Alignment with plan in JMNP2?</p> <p>NB Financial contributions. Is it intended that financial contributions from development will fund W&amp;B canal link project?</p> <p>Suggest policy should make clear that any proposal must be supported by a robust business case and any associated planning consents for enabling development.</p>	No objection

Policy 95 Flood risk	Policy 3: Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management	<p>WLP policy conforms with and references national policy and best practice in the process of selecting suitable sites for development. JMNP2 does not cause conflict with WLP P95.</p> <p>Policy 3 may be straightened by cross reference to WLP policy 95 in relation to new development and then reference local circumstances.</p> <p>WLP P95 raises significant constraint issues for Cooper Tires as WLP has selected greenfield sites in Flood zone 1. Sequential testing and or exceptions testing will need to support its future development where at least the land is within Z2 and 3.</p>	No objection
Policy 96 Water resources	No directly equivalent policy	<p>Identification of Source Protection Zone, Safeguard Zone or Water Protection Zone and buffers within JMNP area to assess against allocations.</p> <p>IDP:</p>	No objection
Policy 97 Contaminated land	No equivalent policy	<p>Cooper Tires site Allocation. Contamination likely to be one of the biggest viability challenges. Allocation supporting text/policy criteria may directly ref WLP policy and SPD guidance in setting qualitative criteria. NB Placeholder allocation acknowledged contamination</p>	No objection
Policy 98 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping	Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design	<p>No fundamental lack of conformity between JMNP2 and WLP design objectives. However, the policy is poorly drafted. See below.</p> <p>WLP P98 is monumental and hugely complex, placing an almost impossible agenda of design criteria plus cross referencing with yet more design guides e.g., Manual for Streets.</p> <p>It pays no regard to the Wilts Design Guide. Its 12 criteria do not relate to the clear design steps in the WDG. It does not ref the National Design Guide or expect applicants to demonstrate regard to adopted NP guidance. These should form the backbone of this policy which should and can be MUCH shorter.</p> <p>As drafted the policy lacks conformity with national guidance</p>	<p>Object</p> <p>Object The policy does not reference or synchronise with national design guidance, the Wilts Design Guide or adopted NDP area guides.</p> <p>It is confusing and overly complex.</p> <p>In failing to have direct regard to national policy or guidance it is not justified. It does not require applicants to refer to adopted guidance and is not effective as drafted. It is unsound.</p>
Policy 99 Ensuring the Conservation and Enhancement of the Historic Environment	Policy 21: Local Heritage	<p>No in principle conflict or lack of conformity. WLP policy 99 provides a more comprehensive policy protection of designated assets and areas and criteria including impact assessment) for associated development. JMNP2 P21 may be supplemented by direct ref to this policy and criteria.</p> <p>WLP P99 references non designated assets and criteria for their consideration and conservation. These differ slightly from those in P99. Alignment should be achieved through coordination between policies. However, the NDHA list is locally distinct and justifies P21.</p>	No objection
Policy 101 Air quality	No equivalent policy	<p>Wiltshire Air Quality Action Plan. How does this affect Melksham?</p>	No objection

		<p>What are the air quality implications of traffic congestion? NB Melksham not identified as one of the six community action areas (with AQMZ)</p> <p>How will + 1200 homes affect objectives of Action Plan / Air quality n Melksham</p> <p>Has this been assessed as part of Allocations?</p>	
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## Review of “Planning for Melksham”

Planning for Melksham combines an area within the Town Council administrative area and land within Melksham Without. The PfM document should reflect this in its terminology relating to the town or Neighbourhood Area or Community Area (as per the current Core Strategy). At present place shaping principles are perceived to be restricted to the town but are pertinent to development in MWPC area as part of the PfM strategy.

Document	Page	Policy/Paragraph/Table/Figure	Comment
Planning for Melksham	1	Para 1 Introduction	The Planning for Melksham (PfM) document sets out the evidence and processes that have informed the policies of the Local Plan that relate to Melksham. The whole document is very muddled, it's not clear if its talking about the Market Town of Melksham, the Melksham & Bowerhill settlement area, the Neighbourhood Plan area or the Community area. It states on Pg 73 Policy 17 that is for the Melksham Market Town (but doesn't say it's for the Market Town in PfM) and then policies 18,19 & 20 in Table 1 all relate to land in Melksham Without.
Local Plan	73	Table 1  Paragraph 4.93	<p>Under the title to the section “Melksham Market Town”, this paragraph states “The Plan allocates three sites” but these are neither in Melksham (or Bowerhill). In the Core Strategy it clearly identified “Melksham and Bowerhill Village” and “Melksham Community Area” (although the housing numbers for Berryfield in the MCA were attributed to Melksham and Bowerhill – eventually).</p> <p>This is particularly important in the case of the Melksham, as the Melksham Community Area lies within two HMAs – Trowbridge HMA to the south and Chippenham HMA for the Neighbourhood Plan area and villages to the North.</p> <p>This is a document specifically for Melksham, so if the arrangement of Melksham and Melksham Without is different to those in other Market Towns, this could easily be articulated in the document as area specific.</p>
Planning for Melksham	3	2. Context and Challenges  Table 2	<p>Population figure – what is this for? 18,113 is in the table. From Census 2021 the population of Melksham is 17,500 and for Melksham Without is 7,800 giving a total of 25,300. It should be clearly indicated as to what it is for, and is misleading as this box is entitled “Strategic Context for Melksham Market Town” and yet the housing allocations are all in Melksham Without with the inference that they are in Melksham Town and therefore relate to the contextual population figure of 18,113.</p> <p>On page 23 of the WLP figure 3.2 Strategic transport route map dated 2023 has a label “Melksham and Bowerhill Village”, another inconsistency.</p>
Planning for Melksham	4	Figure 1 Environmental constraints and designations at Melksham	This shows Melksham & Bowerhill – again, not consistent, if this document and the figures are for the Melksham & Bowerhill settlement boundary they should say so. This is misleading and therefore not based on sound evidence.
Planning for Melksham	4	Paragraph 8	This paragraph states that the River Avon has potential as a significant Green and Blue Infrastructure asset and yet there is no mention of the Clackers Brook asset that is also a significant GBI asset and features heavily in the design of the recent housing developments to the east of Melksham and in “PfM page 75 Para 4.94 Land East of Melksham which states that the allocation requires significant buffers for the “tributary watercourse”.



			See also Green Infrastructure Evidence Base report for the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (2020 but minor update 2023) <a href="https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/np2-evidence-base">https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/np2-evidence-base</a>
Planning for Melksham	4	Paragraph 9	This talks of the current proposals to provide a canal link from Semington to the River Avon as part of the restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal. Why is there no mention of its connection in the north east to Lacock and onwards to Swindon?
Planning for Melksham	5	Paragraph 12 How has Melksham developed?	Query this number of housing at approx 670 houses built as the “eastern Melksham urban extension”. To our knowledge it was 800. What context is this number for?
Planning for Melksham	5	Paragraph 14	As above, there is no mention of the 100 dwellings that are built and occupied on SHELAA site 3103 (Barratt Homes, Gladstone Road etc) - so it adds weight to number in para 12 not being correct.
Planning for Melksham	7		Note that PFM is quoting/using evidence from the Melksham NHP consultation on the Town Centre held in Feb/March 2023.
Planning for Melksham	8	Paragraph 22 Melksham Town Centre	This refers to regeneration opportunities but despite mentioning the new campus in para 21 it makes no mention of the disused Wiltshire Council buildings such as the library and blue pool (or Cooper Tires which although was not available in a call for sites, was very clearly going to be closed in December which they have known for some time.) <b>NB: picked up in paragraph 99 on page 33</b>
Planning for Melksham	9	Figure 3 Existing development plan allocations and major planning permissions at Melksham	This figure needs a date so it can be understood what it relates to. It omits the following approved planning applications: <b>20/07334/OUT</b> (refused but upheld at Appeal) PL/2023/00808 reserved matters 50no. 100% affordable dwellings at land to the rear of Townsend Farm – yet to start on site <b>20/01938/OUT</b> PL/2022/02749 Reserved Matters, 144 dwellings at Land at Semington Road (David Wilson, now known as Buckley Gardens) started on site Sept 2023. MWPC Clerk confirmed at LP drop in session (with David Way) that these were missing from the figure and should have been included
Planning for Melksham	16	Figure 6 Pool of sites assessed through sustainability appraisal at Melksham	
Planning for Melksham	10	Table 3 Place Shaping Priorities – Melksham	These are a list of the same thing (the priorities then become the policy). On page 9 para 26 it says the list of the priorities came from working with Melksham Town Council and wider consultation with the community and other stakeholders carried out in 2021. MWPC were definitely at those meetings and yet seem discounted in the statement in PFM.
Local Plan	73	Policy 17 Melksham Market Town	MWPC Clerk has checked previous notes and the policy as you may recall that MWPC challenged the minutes of that meeting and got them changed to reflect what was actually agreed. They broadly agree.  Note that WC said in Jan 2020 that “new employment land to be provided adjacent to <b>Bowerhill Industrial Estate</b> and the A350. There needs to be enough employment land to support growth, but not an excess which may lead to a need for additional housing to support it” <i>but they are putting in the East too</i>  In addition, “Schools – a <b>holistic</b> approach is required to future education provision rather than piecemeal funding”  <b>SEE SUGGESTED REVISIONS TO THE PLACE SHAPING PRIORITIES (AND THEREFORE POLICY 17) DETAILED SEPARATELY BELOW</b>
Planning for Melksham	11	28. Place Shaping Priorities	“PSPs therefore provide a succinct strategic context within which to better understand the spatial strategy for the main settlements. They also set a framework to co-ordinate the high level and strategic role of the Local Plan, with the function of neighbourhood plans, prepared by town and parish councils, that set more detailed visions for the future of each community. The two sets of plans therefore work in harmony.” <b>SEE COMMENTS ON THE MELKSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND ALSO LANDSCAPE POLICY 91 ABOUT THE LACK OF HARMONY OF THE TWO PLANS ON THESE ASPECTS</b>
Planning for Melksham	11	29. Place Shaping Priorities	“PSPs are also used to influence how and where development will take place as an important part in the selection of sites for new development. Some priorities apply equally everywhere, notably the need to address climate change and achieve carbon reduction. Others are more specific to a particular place. PSPs aim to address unresolved issues that were previously highlighted in the Wiltshire Core Strategy plus new issues that need to be tackled during the next plan period.”

			<p><b>Where is the evidence to support Policy 6 Chippenham Principal Settlement?</b></p> <p>6. Respect the individual identities of villages within the landscape setting of Chippenham and their relationship to the town</p> <p><b>Why can't Melksham have the same policy line?</b></p>
Planning for Melksham	11	31 Providing Employment Land	<p>"There are very few available sites left in the town for business expansion or inward investment and there is ongoing demand for more employment. The spatial strategy for Melksham identifies a requirement for approximately 5ha of employment land at the town which is proposed to be delivered on Site 1a 'Land East of Melksham'."</p> <p><b>SEE COMMENTS UNDER "EMPLOYMENT LAND" (review of WLP by topic)</b></p>
Planning for Melksham	13	37 & 38 Eastern Bypass	<p>These two paragraphs contradict each other: 37 saying that "for a significant level of new housing to take place, significant new transport infrastructure e.g., an A350 bypass is required" and 38 saying "it's currently uncertain if future funding for the scheme will be available" –</p> <p>"37. Further work will establish exactly how many new homes could be delivered before a bypass is in place" <b>what and when?</b></p> <p>"38. This planned Major Road Network (MRN) scheme will tackle congestion in the town and provide new capacity to accommodate traffic from new development" <b>and what happens if it doesn't progress?</b></p> <p><b>SEE COMMENTS UNDER "BYPASS" (review of WLP by topic)</b></p>
Planning for Melksham	13/14	39. Bypass	<p>"39. Careful consideration has therefore been given to the potential impacts of any new development on traffic congestion along the A350. For these environmental reasons, as well as benefits for town centre trade (see above), <b>development proposals are as well connected to the town centre as possible</b>, allied to scope for provision <b>for sustainable transport and active travel routes to the town centre, such as new and improved bus routes and pedestrian and cycling routes.</b>"</p> <p><b>SEE COMMENTS ON THE SHAW &amp; WHITLEY HOUSING ALLOCATION AS THIS IS A CONSTRAINT</b></p>
Planning for Melksham	14	40 How many homes?	<p>Level of Growth 2,160 deducting 1,120 To confirm that MWPC Clerk has reviewed list of allocations making up the 1,120.</p>
Planning for Melksham	15	Selecting sites 43.	<p>MWPC to comment on the Sites allocated following their pre-app meetings regarding these sites.</p>
Planning for Melksham	16 17	<p>Figure 6 Pool of sites assessed through sustainability appraisal at Melksham</p> <p>49 &amp; 52 Three sites considered most sustainable 1, 9, 17</p>	<p>The map is missing two approved sites, see notes for Fig 3 on Page 9.</p> <p>The legend/key is over the villages of Shaw &amp; Whitley, so you cannot see the Neighbourhood Plan allocation or the Settlement Boundary. Site 9 is a direct contravention of the Core Strategy's Melksham Area Strategy Page 130 5.83 "Melksham and Bowerhill village have a functional relationship and are considered together for the purposes of this strategy. Therefore, the housing growth identified for Melksham town will also serve to meet the needs of Bowerhill. <b>The identity of these separate communities will need to be preserved through the planning process.</b> Berryfield is considered separately and is identified as a small village. However, it is recognised that both Berryfield and Bowerhill have strong functional links to Melksham and have important individual characteristics which should be protected where practicable."</p> <p>NB: Site 9 subject to an Appeal, with the hearing commencing 24/10/23 – acknowledged in 53. Page 18</p>
Planning for Melksham	18 36-37	<p>56 Primary School</p> <p>115 Education</p>	<p>Land East of Melksham "This new primary school is required to not only support housing development on Site 1a but also new housing development on Site 17 (Land north of A3102). The location of Site 1a in the northern part of the larger Site 1 means that the new primary school is well placed to serve both sites."</p>

			<b>SEE COMMENTS ON EDUCATION (in the review by topic)</b>
Local Plan	75-76	<b>Policy 18 Land east of Melksham</b> (425 homes, 5ha of employment land, 1h local centre land (shops), 2ha primary school 2FE) and 60 early years places	<b>SEE COMMENTS ON SITE ALLOCATIONS BELOW</b>
Planning for Melksham	18, 20-24	55. – 74 Figure 4  Site 1a: Land to the east of Melksham Table 4	
Local Plan	76 - 78	<b>Policy 19 Land off Bath Road, Melksham</b> 135 dwellings, 2ha for expansion of Melksham Oak	<b>SEE COMMENTS ON SITE ALLOCATIONS BELOW</b>
Planning for Melksham	19 25-28	58  75-83 Figure 8 Table 5.	
Local Plan	78-79	<b>Policy 20 Land North of the A3102, Melksham</b> 285 dwellings, 0.4ha for 100 place nursery	<b>SEE COMMENTS ON SITE ALLOCATIONS BELOW</b>
Planning for Melksham	19 29-31	59  84- 91 Table 6 Figure 9	86. The site is currently relatively poorly served by bus services but there are bus stops along the A3102 and existing services withing adjacent residential areas which could potentially be extended to serve the site.  87. Residents would be able to easily visit the town centre through sustainable transport modes.....  <b>How does the leap from 86 to 87 happen? From poor bus service to available sustainable public transport?</b>
Planning for Melksham	19 34-36	61 NHP  105- 113	“In due course, a review of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan is intending to allocate additional land for development. Neighbourhood planning lends itself to identifying small to medium sized sites for housing and other forms of development. Smaller sites in the neighbourhood plan will supplement proposals Planning For Melksham 20 Wiltshire Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft 2020-2038 (Regulation 19 consultation), September 2023 of the Local Plan Review. The overall amount of land earmarked for development will provide a good degree of contingency and flexibility, as well as a wider choice, to best ensure development needs are met.”  <b>Town Centre Master Plan available here</b> <a href="https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/files/uqdc4c117_e9f3060071d8479c85b7429c1dae272c.pdf">https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/files/uqdc4c117_e9f3060071d8479c85b7429c1dae272c.pdf</a>  <b>TO NOTE THAT CURRENT REVIEWED NHP2 IS AT REG 14 CONSULTATION, FINISHING ON SUNDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER.</b>  <b>COMMENTS ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DETAILED SEPARATELY</b>
Local Plan	80	Town Centre 4.104, 4.105, 4.106 and Neighbourhood Planning 4.107	
Planning for Melksham	32-34	92 - 103	
Planning for Melksham	36	114 Local Infrastructure	<b>SEE COMMENTS ON WLP POLICIES, LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
Planning for Melksham	36	115 Education	<b>SEE COMMENTS ON EDUCATION (review of WLP by topic)</b>
Planning for Melksham	37	117 Highways and Sustainable transport	<b>SEE COMMENTS ON BYPASS AND REVIEW OF POLICY VS NHP POLICY</b>
Planning for Melksham	38	123 Health & Social Care	<b>Not really a plan! Just explains a problem really!</b>

Planning for Melksham	38	124. Utilities	<b>Whilst acknowledging that (high speed) broadband is not classed as a utility but it is a priority for the rural areas, especially as people working from home, and the ambition to bring more employment to the area.</b>
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## Review of “Place Shaping Priorities for Melksham”

### Suggested Revisions

PSP1 Town centre AREA regeneration: Ensure town centre regeneration through continued investment in the town centre, maximising use of brownfield land, including adjacent riverside employment sites and encouraging employment opportunities.

PSP2 Reducing out-commuting: Reduce out-commuting through an improved employment offer, including *optimising the use of existing employment sites* and delivery of new employment land to allow existing businesses to expand and to attract inward investment.

PSP3 A350 Bypass: Safeguard a route for an A350 bypass to the town by not undermining its delivery, which will improve the efficiency of the transport network and lead to other social, environmental and economic benefits for *Melksham and the Neighbourhood Area*. ~~town~~. *whilst having the minimum impact to residents.*

PSP4 Railway station improvements: Increase levels of train passenger transport and help reduce traffic congestion through improvements to railway station parking facilities, together with improved facilities for public transport, pedestrian and cycle access that have strong links with the town centre.

PSP5 Infrastructure: Ensure sufficient healthcare facilities, schools and transport infrastructure are delivered in the most sustainable locations in a timely, holistic approach.

PSP6 Education provision: Ensure a ~~town-wide~~ *Neighbourhood Area* – wide approach to future education provision, with sufficient early years, primary and secondary school places provided to meet the needs of all new housing development *in the most sustainable locations*.

PSP7 Wilts and Berks canal: Continue to safeguard a future route of the Wilts and Berks Canal and enable its delivery to provide significant economic, environmental and social benefits for Melksham *whilst protecting resident’s amenity*.

PSP8 Green and Blue Infrastructure: Deliver improvements to the area’s ~~town’s~~ green and blue infrastructure networks, optimising their accessibility and ecological capital, connecting communities and contributing to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

## Site Allocation Comments

### Policy 18 Land East of Melksham

(known locally as Blackmore Farm/Gleesons)

**Allocated in the WLP for approximately 425 dwellings, 5ha of employment uses, a local centre, and a 2ha site for a 2-form entry primary school to include 60 early years places**

**Current Planning Application under consideration for:**

**Blackmore Farm (Planning Application PL/2023/01949).** Outline permission with some matters reserved for demolition of agricultural outbuildings and development of up to 650 dwellings; land for primary school; land for mixed use.

**MWPC comments on the planning application that are relevant to the site allocation are listed here:**

- There is a concern at the impact this development will have on the narrow country roads to the north of the site. A large number of residents will be tempted, as drivers from east of Melksham currently do, to use country lanes such as New Road (single track with passing places), Forest Road and through the National Trust village of Lacock via a single-track medieval bridge to pick up the A350 to access Chippenham and the M4. The bridge at Lacock is often closed due to flooding.
- Concern was raised at potential flood risk, noting this had been raised as a concern by several people commenting on the application. Although there will be attenuation, once full, the run off will go into the water courses and unless these are more than adequate, there could be flooding issues.

- Concern was expressed at an inaccuracy within Appendix 9.1 of the Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy (Part 1) as it stated 'the nearest Environment Agency (EA) designated main river to the site is Clackers Brook, a tributary of the River Avon, which passes through Melksham and the neighbouring village of Shurnhold'.
- Shurnhold is not a village; it is part of Melksham bordering South Brook about half a mile to the west of the River Avon, whereas Clackers Brook flows into the river from the east. There is therefore concern about the accuracy of other aspects in the report.
- The proposal for a single form entry primary school does not meet Wiltshire Council's criteria of two form entry school provision; confirmed by the draft School Places Strategy in March 23. Any school needs to be in place as soon as residents move in. If not, children will be taken by vehicle to other schools in the Melksham area causing additional traffic, which does not conform with Wiltshire Council policy.
- Concern was raised at the safety of children wishing to access Melksham Oak School, as they would need to use Eastern Way and compete with the traffic, particularly as there is still no rear access to the school. There are already many concerns raised at the number of pupils on the A365 pavement, both pedestrians and cyclists, and evidence of regular accidents and near misses as the flow of children at school opening and finishing times is wider than the pavement can cope with.
- There is no access to the school from adjoining land, which are in the SHELAA (Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment), form part of a wider site in the Local Plan Review in 2021 and have a current planning application for 300 dwellings. Snarlton Farm (PL/2023/07107).
- Whilst there is a proposal to have a pedestrian/cycle access using part of Browns Lane bridleway on Eastern Way, there is still no other means of connecting to existing development and services East of Melksham.
- In order to facilitate access to this development a number of farm building and facilities are due to be demolished and removed. There is concern whether this will allow for the continued viability of the farm holding as 50% of the farm would remain as open land. This is also a loss of agricultural land.
- The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan is currently under review and has a number of emerging evidence documents to underpin revised and new policies. The draft AECOM Site Assessment report 2023 has assessed this site. It excluded it from the initial first sieve of sites, at Stage 1, with the following comments:  
"The site is removed from the settlement boundary. The site may be appropriate to be developed alongside Site 3678, 3683, 3701 and 3525 as a large urban extension of Melksham which connects to the Melksham Bypass. The site contains deciduous woodland which have priority habitats. The site also includes the designated heritage assets of Blackmore House. The site is exposed to views across from Sandridge Hill." When the report has been validated by the NHP Steering Group we will forward the published version to the Planning Officer.
- Whilst noting it is proposed one of the access/exits will include a roundabout, the parish council would like to see the second entrance/exit also as a roundabout, in order to ease traffic flow.
- Any highway requests as recommended in the Highway Officer comments, should be in place prior to first occupation and not the 400th as indicated.
- The proposed accesses/egresses within the planning application are a direct contradiction to the accesses/egresses proposed in the draft Local Plan. Concern is raised if there were to be an accident near one of the accesses/egresses currently proposed in the planning application, this could block off the other access/egress, therefore, a completely separate access in a different location is required as suggested in the draft Local Plan. Attention is drawn to Paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states: new developments must ensure safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users

## **Policy 19 Land off Bath Road, Melksham**

(known locally as south of Melksham Oak/Hannick)

**Allocated in the WLP to provide approximately 135 dwellings and 2ha of land secured for the expansion of Melksham Oak Academy. \***

**MWPC have met with the developers of this site at pre app stage 7/7/21 and at that stage raised the following concerns about the site, which apply to the Site Allocation:**

- land drainage could be an issue for the site, as local members are aware it does not drain very well and queried whether the existing water course could cope with additional 'run off' which would have to be looked at carefully, foul drainage may also be an issue as this site is lower than some other parts of Bowerhill and therefore may have to access Melksham Treatment Works instead. At that stage the developers explained that whilst some initial works had taken place with regard to drainage it would need further investigation, foul drainage had not been looked at as yet.
- Site is isolated, as it is not adjacent to existing residential development, with a gap of the A365 between nearest residential areas, therefore would like to see some local facilities included on the site, as people would have to cross a major road to access the nearest local shop in Bowerhill. Concern is that residents will be encouraged to use their vehicle to access nearest shop or the town centre.
- Impact of noise from road noise from A365/potential A350 bypass and Oakfields Stadium.
- Proximity to Melksham Oak School.
- From a primary school point of view, children would be going against the tide of students going to The Oak, as they would potentially be going to Pathfinder Place School if developed

**\*It's Melksham Oak Community School which is part of the White Horse Federation, and not "Melksham Oak Academy" as per your policy wording.**

## **Policy 20 Land North of the A3102, Melksham** (known locally as Sheates Land/Bloor)

**Allocated in the WLP for approximately 285 dwellings, and 0.4ha of land for a 100-place nursery. MWPC have met with the developers of this site at pre app stage, including very recently on 14/11/23 and at that stage raised the following concerns about the site, which apply to the Site Allocation:**

At the pre application meeting last week, the developers explained their proposals for 380-390 dwellings (to include approximately 20 self-build dwellings) which is some 100 dwellings over the current allocation policy

Concerns raised were:

- Increase in density of the site and types of dwellings proposed to accommodate the increase in density
- Increase in number of dwellings proposed compared to the 285 in the draft Local Plan.
- Concerns of flats, maisonettes and 2.5/3 storey houses not in keeping with the existing housing in order to achieve the increased density on the site
- Over development of the site.
- Loss of hedgerow.
- Lack of parking for the proposed nursery.
- The need for an approximate housing mix, not just 4/5-bedroom homes to meet the needs of local people, as included in the Housing Needs Assessment undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Review.
- The need to adhere to emerging policies in the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan, such as the Design Guide.
- The need for adequate parking at the nursery.
- The lack of a holistic approach to the provision of education facilities.
- Only two buses pass the site, out mid-morning (to Bath) and back in the afternoon (to Marlborough). Other bus services are not within close walking distance.
- Concern was expressed that having a nursery on this site and a primary school on another site nearby (Blackmore Farm: PL/2023/01949/Policy 18) did not make sense, particularly as it would mean people having to drop off children at different sites, rather than on one site either side of an 'A' road, meaning most people would use a car rather than walk. There was also a need for adequate parking at the nursery, as not everyone attending the nursery would necessarily come from this site or nearby developments within walking distance.
- Parish Council preference for looped roads, rather than cul-de-sacs, as well as having no shared road space which had recreated problems on sites elsewhere in the parish and expressed a concern given this was a high-density development shared road spaces would be provided on this site.
- It was noted there was no access proposed to the adjacent development which also included a play area (17/01096/REM), with Bloor confirming that they would be able to facilitate an access to the adjacent site, however, the adjacent developer had retained a strip of land along their boundary. However, could provide Wiltshire Council with a financial contribution (Section 106), as they had done on other sites, in order they could negotiate access with the adjacent developer.

### **General Comments on the Consultation process**

- It would be helpful if (particularly long) policies could have paragraph/ criteria numbers – this would assist in implementation (and clarity as to which bit of the policy was being quoted).
- Where a proposed approach relies on evidence that is not included within the plan then it would be helpful if all of the relevant evidence documents could be referred to (with links as footnotes).
- The consultation has been poorly advertised to residents, all leaflets and posters relate to the events held at the beginning of the period, and there were none that were provided subsequent to that. The events were scheduled very close to the beginning of the consultation period, with only a week from the publication to the Melksham event, scant little time to take in to be able to ask questions in a meaningful way.