Climate Team consultation response

Reference: PL/2023/10642
Address: Land east of Church View, Sutton Benger SN15 4RR
Proposal: Approval of reserved matters following outline approval under appeal ref: APP/Y3940/W/22/3292118 for erection of 19 Dwellings and Associated Infrastructure (Details of Appearance, Scale, Layout & Landscaping)

Overall: Objection. (This can be addressed though).

Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (ref: Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Section 19 of this Act places a legal duty on development plan documents, taken as a whole, to include policies designed to secure development that contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

Development Plan:

At paragraph 1.3 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) key principles that underpin the strategy to help build more resilient communities are identified including:

- *"Providing for the most sustainable pattern of development that minimises the need to travel and maximises the potential to use sustainable transport."*
- *"Managing development to ensure that jobs and the right infrastructure are delivered at the right time to ensure that out commuting, in particular to areas outside of Wiltshire, is not increased"*
- *"Working towards lowering Wiltshire's carbon footprint through the appropriate location of development, and through renewable energy and sustainable construction."*

Paragraph 1.10 states: *"**The overarching priorities are to help build and protect resilient communities through….. tackling the causes and effects of climate change**"*

Paragraph 2.10 states: *"**Climate change is a central issue to be addressed by the WCS**….. The basis of this strategy is to achieve sustainable patterns of development in order to reduce carbon emissions."*

The WCS sets out that addressing climate change as a strategic objective stating at paragraph 3.5 that: ***"Climate change is possibly the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today."***

Paragraph 6.32 sets out that the strategy will contribute to tackling climate change through a number of different areas of policy, such as:

- focusing growth at the larger settlements to help minimise the need for travel,
- ensure new development can withstand future changes in climate and add minimally to carbon emissions,
- provide a network of green infrastructure; and
- ensure more sustainable forms of transport.

Core Policy 41 seeks to help to reduce Wiltshire's contribution to climate change through improved design and construction methods. The policy states that: *"New development, building conversions, refurbishments and extensions will be encouraged to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand. Development will be well insulated and*

designed to take advantage of natural light and heat from the sun and use natural air movement for ventilation, whilst maximising cooling in the summer."

Furthermore, "all proposals for major development will be required to submit a Sustainable Energy Strategy alongside the planning application outlining the low-carbon strategy for the proposal.

Core Policy 60 sets out that *"the council will use its planning and transport powers to help reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and support and encourage the sustainable, safe and efficient movement of people and goods."* It sets out a number of means to achieve this including planning development in accessible locations, and promoting alternatives to the private car. These aims are further supported by CP61, CP62, CP63, CP64, CP65 and CP66.

In addition, the Wiltshire Core Strategy contains specific policies in relation to **biodiversity (CP50), green infrastructure (CP52), high quality design (CP57), flood risk (CP67)** and **water resources (CP68)**. These all relate to reducing Wiltshire's contribution to climate change and/or adaptation. To be compliant with these policies regard should be had to the implications of the development on climate change. As set out previously climate change is the central issue to be addressed by the development plan.

Other material considerations:

As set out above planning legislation establishes that **other material considerations** should be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. As such, these need to be kept in mind as developments are planned and formulated. Other material considerations may include other local planning policy and guidance, the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, UK government legislation or Written Ministerial Statements and national planning policy and guidance such as the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Council is carrying out a **Local Plan Review**. A draft version has was approved by cabinet and full council so proceeded to the Regulation 19 stage of public consultation. The consultation has recently closed and comments are being assessed. A suite of ambitious new and replacement policies to further reduce Wiltshire's contribution to climate change and foster better community resilience to impacts from climate change are now emerging. The direction of travel is reflective of wider strategic policy already adopted by Wiltshire Council, such as the **Wiltshire Climate Strategy, adopted February 2022**. This builds on the Council's February 2019 resolution to acknowledge a **climate emergency and subsequent commitment to seek to make the county carbon neutral by 2030**.

To further underline this the **Climate change act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019** raised the **duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline** (previously 80%).

The **National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)** (NPPF) sets out the UK government's position on planning in England.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states: *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"* and paragraph 8 makes it clear that **mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective**.

Paragraph 157 states: *"The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate…. It should* ***help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions****, minimise vulnerability and improve*

resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure."

Paragraph 159 states that: *"**New development should be planned for in ways that:***
*a) **avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change.** When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and*
*b) **can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design**. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards."*

Paragraph 162 goes on: *"In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should **expect new development to…… take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption**"*

In terms of transport paragraph 108 states that "transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that….. opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued".

In terms of the future national direction of travel the **10 Point Plan**, **Net Zero Strategy**, **Heat and Buildings Strategy**, the **Sixth Carbon Budget, Timber in Construction Roadmap,** and **Powering Up Britain** are very clear. The intentions include:

- More journeys by public transport, walking and cycling;
- More electric cars;
- More sustainable (safe) construction practices; and
- More renewable energy and storage technologies.

Comments on the submission:

The climate team actively and strongly encourages developers of all scales to put the mitigation of and adaption to climate change as a golden theme to run through their development project. This will mean different things depending on the scale of the project, but to support the transition to a low carbon future, radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions over the existing status quo will be required.

I note that there is planning history and that outline planning approval has been granted at appeal. I can see no reference within the delegated report, decision or appeal to sustainable construction. Nonetheless, CP41 is an extant policy of the development plan that is a material consideration in the assessment of the planning approval for this site. The outline planning permission and any subsequent reserved matters approval or approvals form the planning permission as a whole. As such, I would request the submission of a Sustainable Energy Strategy as required by the development plan. I do accept though that this need not revisit the principle of development or the approved detail of access.

Despite this objection, it can be addressed relatively easily, and I suspect that the development is being planned on reasonable sustainable construction principles, certainly in operational energy/carbon terms.

The plans show an intention to provide solar panels and air source heat pumps. This is positive. However, the strategy should look for a fabric first approach to keep energy demand as low as possible. Some of the external design details do not support this. For example the small dormer details (which add little architecturally) but create potential for thermal bridging and reduced energy efficiency (plots 2-5, 8-10, 13-14 and 18-19).

Architectural interest can be created through variation in materials if necessary, such as brick banding or timber cladding.

After fabric the use of air source heat pumps and solar panels could achieve a net zero in operation scheme. To maximise solar energy the roofs should be orientated within 30 degrees of south. Plots 1 and 11-16 are sub-optimal. The developer should re-orientate the roofs of these plots.

I note the plans state that the PV and ASHPs shown is indicative. This is reasonable. I imagine that this will be looked at further at Technical Design Stage post planning approval. Nonetheless, plots 2, 3 and 9 pose some concern with heat pumps right on the boundary – this could cause noise issues. I can recommend conditions to control all this if the Sustainable Energy Strategy makes appropriate commitments and the layout and external appearance are providing all opportunities for sustainable construction.

In terms of embodied carbon I would encourage the developer to report what they are doing and how they are trying to address this through the substructure, superstructure and external finishes. Also, they should be thinking about how they minimise the areas for hard standing. The visitor parking should be omitted. There is space on the streets for visitor parking and this can be shown. This means that less hard standing will be required, reducing embodied carbon and providing more space for landscaping. Landscaping sequestrates carbon and provides biodiversity betterment. It will be cheaper for the developer too.

Electric vehicle charge points should be shown for each plot with a commitment to a layout that makes that financially viable for every dwelling. I think the layout will probably support this for each plot, but the developer could provide assurance in their Strategy. I note sheds that are suitable for cycle storage. This can be secured by condition.

It should have been covered at outline stage really, but if the developer can agree to the higher water efficiency standard of 110 l/p/d that would be positive.

In summary:

- Please request the submission of a Sustainable Energy Strategy. This ought to set out the low-carbon strategy for the proposal.
- This needs to include an assessment of operational and embodied carbon impacts from the development and consider sustainable transport.
- I support the developer to aim for net zero carbon in operation, I just need them to commit to this in writing.
- Omit small dormer details (which add little architecturally) but create potential for thermal bridging and reduced energy efficiency (plots 2-5, 8-10, 13-14 and 18-19).
- Plots 1 and 11-16 should have the roofs re-oriented to maximise roof mounted solar PV potential.
- The air source heat pumps at the boundaries (plots 2, 3 and 9) might cause noise issues and should be moved away from boundary.
- I encourage the developer to explain their decisions on materials for the substructure, superstructure and external finishes to include low carbon materials. For example, timber frame construction can result in 50% less embodied carbon than masonry construction. Timber cladding could add interest and contrast to brick.
- Remove visitor parking spaces and replace with landscaping. Notionally show space for visitors on-street (side of plots 1 and 7; front of plots 11-16).
- Show the location of their electric vehicle charge points, committing to provide one for every dwelling regardless of costs.
- Commit to water efficiency of the higher standard of 110l/p/d with agreement to a condition.

Climate change is the central issue to be addressed by the development plan. The direction of travel since its adoption in 2015 is very clear with the Council's adopted Climate Strategy in 2022 setting a framework for reducing carbon emissions in Wiltshire and for making the county resilient to climate change. Furthermore, the NPPF states that planning needs to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Date: 24 January 2024

James Taylor BA(Hons) MA MRTPI
Climate Officer
Environment
Wiltshire Council

James.taylor@wiltshire.gov.uk
01225 716727