



Statement of Community Involvement

Land off Biddestone Lane, Yatton Keynell

April 2025

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Cotswold Homes appointed Marengo Communications, an independent specialist public consultation company, to undertake the pre-application community and stakeholder consultation for the proposed development of land off Biddestone Lane, Yatton Keynell.



The Proposed Site

- 1.2 This SCI document provides a record of the pre-application community and political engagement carried out on the proposals for the site between October 2024 and December 2024. It demonstrates the pre-application engagement that was carried out with local residents and community representatives.
- 1.3 This document demonstrates that Cotswold Homes has actively informed the local community about the plans, in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the National Planning Policy Framework and gives an overview of all consultation activity undertaken prior to the current planning application submission.
- 1.4 Key objectives of the consultation:
- Proactively inform the community of the proposals
 - Provide opportunities for the community to ask questions and build understanding
 - For the team to listen and take on board community feedback and local knowledge, similar to how the team are taking on board feedback from officers, policy and the technical team
 - To ensure the proposals maximised the opportunities and benefits and minimised any negative impacts for the community.

1.5 Activities undertaken as part of the consultation process have included:

- Emails sent to the ward councillors and the parish council
- 338 letters sent via Royal Mail to local residents inviting them to attend a public consultation to view the plans for the proposed development
- A consultation website launched providing further information, ways to feedback and get in touch
- Cotswold Homes provided a freephone helpline and postal address for consultees to use
- A stakeholder meeting was held with members of the Parish Council and local representatives on October 28th, 2024
- A public consultation was held at the Bell Inn, Yatton Keynell on 25th November 2024

1.6 We received a wide range of feedback which is included below. As of the 16th of December:

- There have been 331 unique visits to the consultation website and 446 page views in total
- 7 pieces of feedback were handed in at the exhibition
- 4 forms were received via Royal Mail
- 17 online forms were completed
- 4 people have got in touch with questions and feedback

1.7 The key themes that have emerged through the process include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Yatton Keynell has already met its housing targets | • Concerns over pinch point on Biddestone Lane |
| • Mixed views on the need for housing | • Concern about the location of the development |
| • That local residents be prioritised | • Support for the sustainability measures |
| • Concerns around foul and surface water drainage | • Support for high quality materials to match existing buildings in the village |
| • Flooding of Biddestone Lane will be exacerbated | |
| • Impact on local infrastructure including schools and GP | |

1.8 Feedback has led to a number of changes being made including:

- Utilisation of additional land from adjacent field to create a flood compensation area that will reduce surface water flooding of Biddestone Lane near the south west corner of the site.
- Evolution of the sustainable drainage strategy for the development.
- Changes to the proposed mix of units by increasing the number of two bedroom homes and providing a range of terrace, semi-detached, detached homes.
- Revising proposed house types to include a bungalow and flats (in the form of a maisonette).
- Refinement of the design to include predominantly natural stone walls to dwellings and stone detailing.
- Commitment to prioritising local residents for affordable housing (this will be at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority).

1.9 The team remains committed to engaging with Wiltshire Council, the Parish Council and local residents, post submission of this application.

2. PURPOSE OF CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Political and community involvement is an integral component of planning. By engaging with interested and local people in the process, especially at an early stage, an understanding of their needs and concerns can be achieved.
- 2.2 The objective of the consultation process was to engage with neighbours, community representatives, interested parties and the local community, raising awareness of the consultation and proposals, providing opportunities for people to ask questions, and inviting feedback ahead of finalising and submitting a planning application to Wiltshire Council.
- 2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (updated in December 2024) identifies the role of local authorities in encouraging high quality pre-application consultation by applicants and developers. Paragraph 41 states that local authorities should “*encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community... before submitting their applications*”, where this would be beneficial. Paragraph 137 also states that “*Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.*”
- 2.4 The Localism Act (2011) outlines:
- A duty to consult: There is a new requirement for developers to carry out pre-submission consultation for planning applications.
 - A duty to respond: The Act outlines the duty of the person carrying out the consultation to take into account any responses it generates.
 - Power to make supplementary provisions: Sets out further provisions which could be made through development orders – these would create a strong requirement to consult, to respond to comments received and to prepare a statement detailing how consultation has been completed.
- 2.5 Wiltshire Council’s Statement of Community Involvement provides guidance on consulting the community on planning applications. Paragraph 5.15 states that “*Wiltshire Council encourages applicants to carry out public consultation in the local area before submitting a planning application. This may take the form of a public meeting and display of their initial suggestions*”

3. CONSULTATION ACTIVITY

3.1 From October through to December, the consultation included:

- Call and emails to the Parish Council
- Emails to Ward Councillors
- A discussion with the local GP Practice Manager
- 338 letters issued to neighbours
- Website launched
- Meeting with representatives of the Parish Council and the local ward Councillor
- Public consultation exhibition event

Community letter

3.2 Community newsletters inviting the local community to participate in the public consultation were posted by Royal Mail to 338 addresses surrounding the site.

A copy of the distribution area can be seen in Appendix 1a.

A copy of the newsletter can be seen in Appendix 1b.

Project contact methods

3.3 Throughout the process, a Freephone number (0800 689 5209) and e-mail address (info@ch-yattonkeynell.co.uk), were supplied and managed by Marengo Communications, providing further information to residents, businesses, and stakeholders on request.

Consultation Website

3.4 A bespoke project website www.ch-yattonkeynell.com was launched on 12th November 2024.

3.5 The webpage gave high-level information about the proposals, an online feedback facility, and ways to get in touch. At the time of writing, there have been 331 unique visits to the consultation website and 446 page views in total.

Screenshots of the consultation webpage can be seen in Appendix 1e.

Stakeholder Engagement

3.6 A presentation was given to community representatives, including the Chair of the Parish Council on 28th October 2025.

- 3.7 A conversation was had on 3rd December with the Practice Manager of Jubilee Field surgery, where the proposals were explained and questions answered, with an offer of a further meeting if necessary.

4. PRE-SUBMISSION PUBLIC CONSULTATION

4.1 Publicity

To ensure that residents and businesses, as well as wider community groups, knew that the consultations were running, Cotswold Homes endeavoured to promote the consultation widely. The publicity included:

- Letters were sent via Royal Mail and emails, and digital copies of letters were issued to elected representatives and other key stakeholders.
- A two-page community newsletter was issued to 338 addresses (Consultation area map, Appendix 1a; community newsletters Appendix 1b).

4.2 In person public exhibition



Image from the public exhibition

An in-person public and stakeholder exhibition was held on 25th November 2024 during which the proposals were presented to members of the public to elicit their views.

The event took place as follows:

Date	Event	Time	Location	Number of Attendees
Public Consultation Event				
Monday 25 th November 2024	Public Consultation Exhibition	3pm -7pm	The Bell Inn High Street Yatton Keynell Chippenham SN14 7BG	47

The information on display at the public consultation exhibition included the following information:

- Welcome
- Who are Cotswold Homes?
- About the site
- Our proposals
- Access & Highways
- Biodiversity & ecology
- Drainage
- Green homes
- Design & architecture
- Social value
- Next steps

See Appendix 1c for a copy of the banners displayed at the in-person public consultation events.

4.3 Consultation website

To expand the reach of the engagement process, and make it accessible to the wider community, a consultation website was set up to encourage feedback. The content provided on the website mirrored the information provided through the in-person consultation events.

The bespoke website, www.ch-yattonkeynell.co.uk, was launched in November 2024 and was updated after the public consultation event.

The website contained information on the following:

- Welcome
- Who are Cotswold Homes?
- About the Site
- Our proposals
- Feedback and next steps

Screenshots of the consultation website can be seen in Appendix 1e, the website was updated after the exhibition with a digital copy of the banners to download.

5. FEEDBACK

5.1 Summary

The turn out at the exhibition was good with 47 people attending on the 25th of November. The general impression was varied with a mix of positive and negative responses.

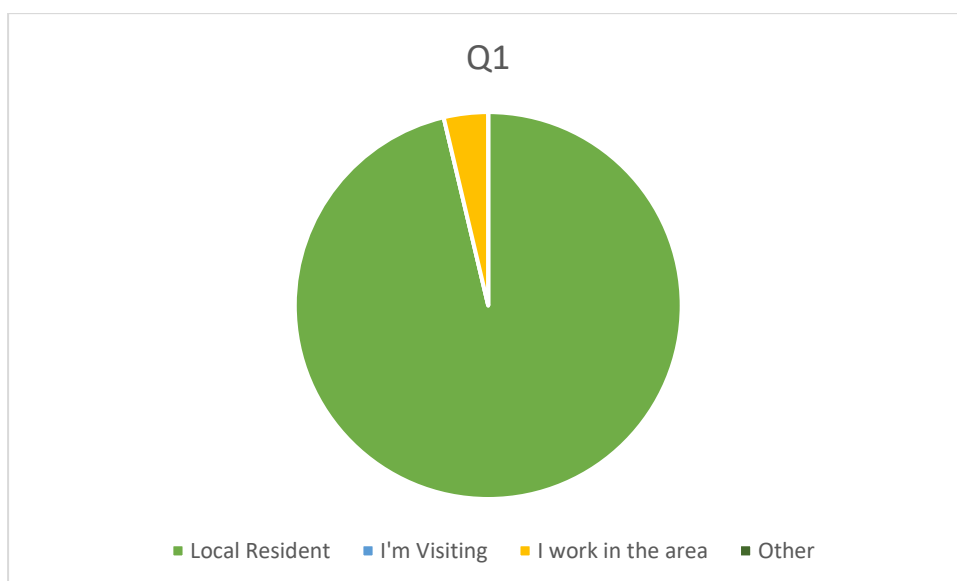
At the time of writing, we have received the following feedback responses:

- 7 pieces of feedback were handed in at the exhibition
- 4 forms were received via Royal Mail
- 17 online forms were completed

The public consultation attendees were invited to fill out a feedback form, see Appendix 1d. There were 4 questions on the form, consisting of 1 closed and 3 open questions.

5.2 Feedback Analysis

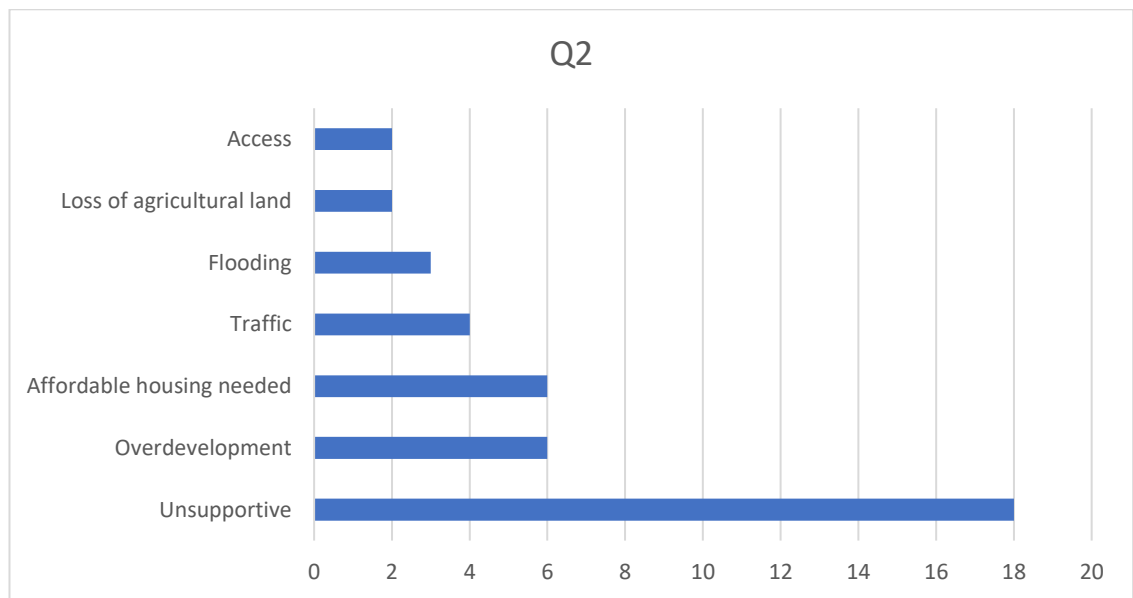
Question 1 – What is your connection to the area?



The majority of respondents live in Yatton Keynell.

Question 2 – What do you like about the proposals for new homes at Yatton Keynell?

Q2 - Overall themes



Most people who answered question two were unsupportive of the plans. Many of the respondents felt that the village does not need any more housing and felt that the proposals should consider the traffic and flooding issues facing the village. People who were supportive of the proposals welcome new housing and more affordable housing in the village. Other themes that were mentioned by respondents were: impact upon the existing infrastructure; the location of the development, and the potential loss of agricultural land.

Here are some sample answers:

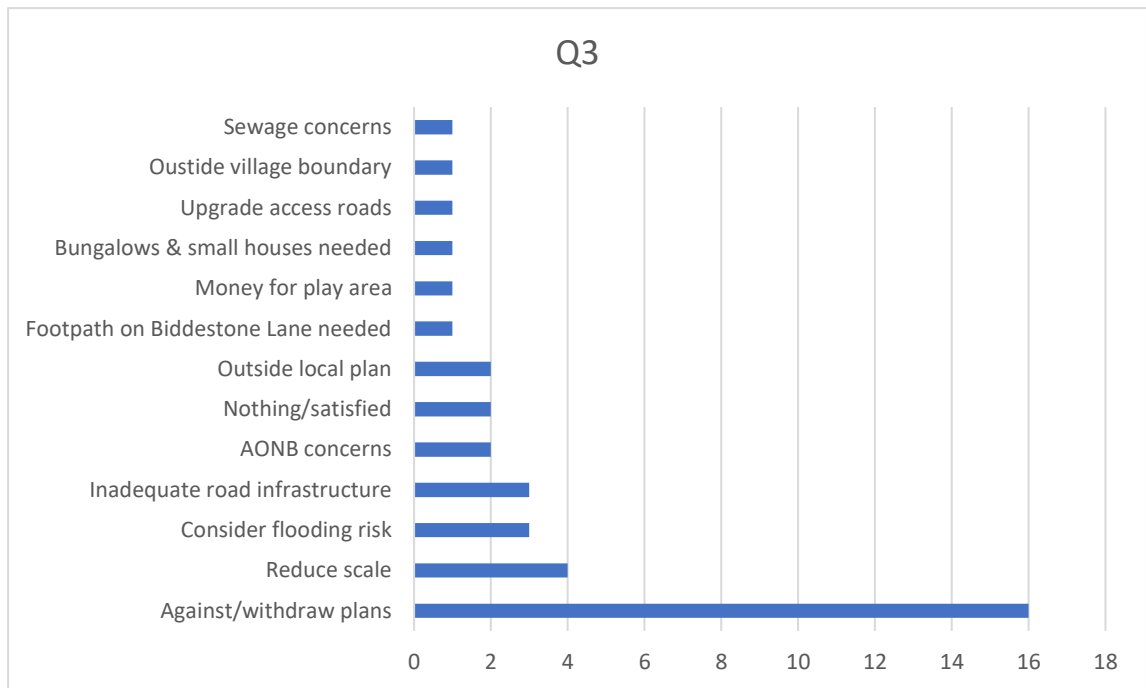
"Absolutely nothing it will cause flooding the road is not big enough for the level of traffic on that road. Lots of accidents on that road already, the village already suffers with flooding and the number of vehicles driving through is already too much. The village school and the docs have issues with people parking outside the school there has been accidents outside the docs and the school. It's a village not town and look at Chippenham flooded 25th of November 2024 because you built on flood plains. Stop destroying our countryside and stop building houses people can't afford".

"Nothing we don't need any more houses in this village. Sewers not able to take them and they said that 30 years ago. Storm water cannot cope. Bad exit road both ways, into village and onto a very bad junction. We have already filled the required amount of houses suggested by planners. The road by the village hall and beyond that past proposed site, always floods. No more houses!"

"Everything – they are much needed – price will decide if I am 'in the market' but I wish you well with the planning process/nightmare".

Question 3 – What would you change about the proposals?

Q3 Overall themes:



Most of the respondents said that they would like to see the plans withdrawn in response to Q3. Respondents also said that they would like to see the scale of the development reduced, consideration given to the flooding risk and expressed concern about the existing road infrastructure. Supporters of the principle of the development suggested that bungalows for the elderly and flats for first time buyers should be included.

Here are some sample answers:

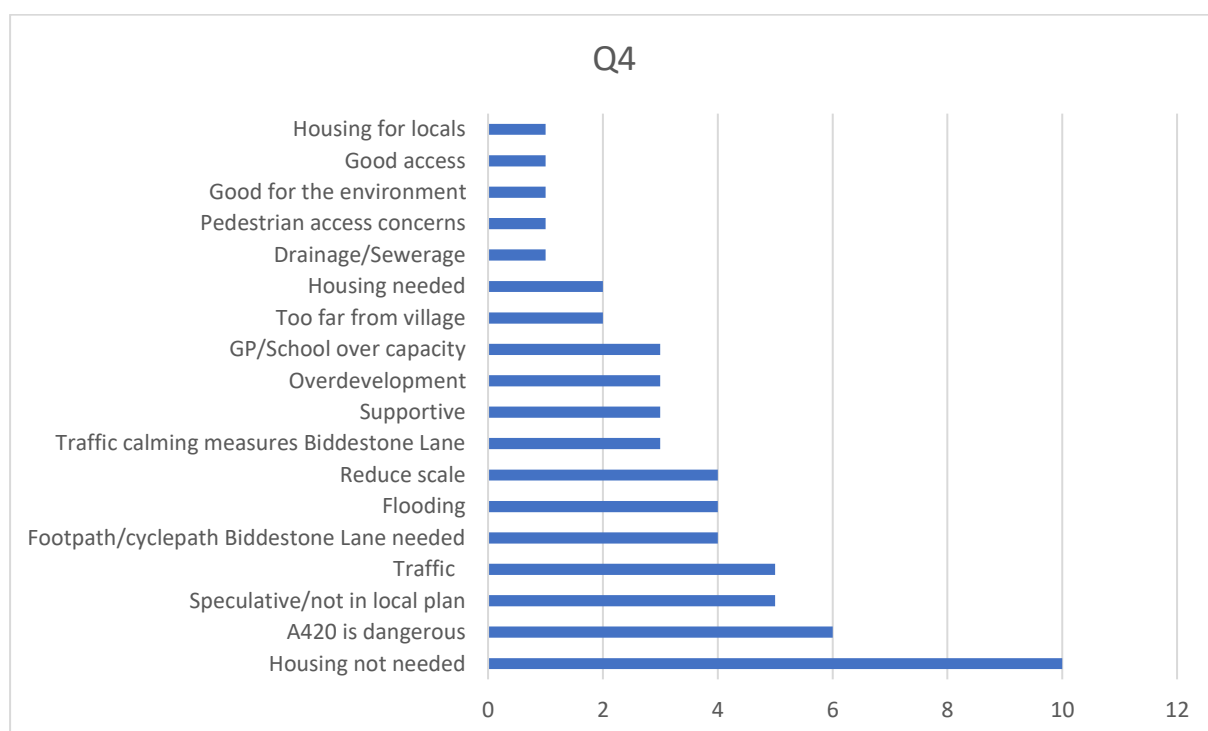
“The change I would like is the proposal is withdrawn. This is not within the council plans for development in the village. There has been development recently in the village and further development should be focused on council land within the village. The village sewage system will not be able to cope with more houses. The land proposed is prone to flooding. The proposed exit onto Biddestone lane will have poor visibility. It is a lane not a road so 55 houses which has an average of 2 cars per household will cause a significant risk to users. There is nowhere on Biddestone Lane that can have a footpath as it is too narrow”.

*“Less homes.
More space around them.
No electricity pylons.
Upgraded road access in/out of the village”.*

*“Footpath on Biddestone Lane inside hedge for safety.
Money for play area, to give to village hall to upkeep recreation area and play equipment.
Bungalows and smaller homes for 1st time buyers (elderly) i.e. flats.
Consider flooding by the village hall”.*

Question 4: What else would you like to say about the proposals?

Q4 Overall themes:



Many of the respondents who answered Question 4 felt that new housing is not needed in Yatton Keynell, the proposals are speculative and not included in the Local Plan. Other key themes included: concerns about the A420, traffic and flooding. Respondents would welcome a footpath and cycleway along Biddestone Lane, traffic calming measures on Biddestone Lane and a reduction in the scale of the development.

Here are some sample answers:

"The development is purely speculative and outside the local plan.

The road is not suitable for a development of this size and already floods.

2 housing developments have already been completed recently so YK has already had its share of additional housing".

"The main issue is traffic. The junction between Biddestone Lane and the A420 is a notorious accident black spot. Encouraging more traffic to use this junction without any form of junction modification (e.g. traffic lights) would be irresponsible. Construction traffic could only use this junction because it cannot come through the village. At the other end of Biddestone Lane, perennial irresponsible parking by people using the village shop and the church cause this junction of three roads to be hazardous. Again, more traffic using this stretch of road will increase the likelihood of accidents. There is a narrowing of Biddestone Lane at W3W cemented.advances.crunched which would need to be widened if more traffic is expected to use this road".

"If the development were to proceed, we feel it would be necessary to:

Improve pedestrian and cycleway provision down Biddestone Lane which will continue to be a favoured route for walkers from the development to the shop, pub and church.

Improve vehicular safety on the blind bend on Biddestone Lane close to the cemetery, by introducing vehicle width, weight and speed restriction".

5.3 Comments & Responses

Themes: Principle of development/Overdevelopment/unallocated site	
Sample comments	Responses
Yatton Keynell has met its requirement for new homes with the building of houses at Philips Close and Drovers Green as per Wiltshire plan.	Wiltshire Council's housing land supply is currently 2.03 years. In the absence of a five year housing land supply for the District, planning policies within the Local Plan are considered out of date for the purposes of determining housing applications, and a presumption in favour of sustainable development applies in accordance with national planning policy guidance (National Planning Policy Framework 2024). Specifically, NPPF Paragraph 11d confirms that in this instance, permission should be granted unless NPPF policies which protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusal, or where any adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. We believe that under our proposal, assets are appropriately protected and the benefits of the development strongly outweigh any impacts. Whilst Wiltshire Council submitted a new Local Plan for examination in November 2024 and this contained a number of allocated sites for development, the Plan still relies on a significant number of homes to be delivered through windfall sites. Yatton Keynell has a range of public amenities, including a primary school and GP surgery, and benefits from bus routes to Chippenham. We therefore think it is an appropriate place for development that can assist with helping meet housing need whilst also contributing to local services and facilities.
We understand the need for new homes but are concerned at the size of the development in relation to the existing size of the village.	We consider the proposed development to be a moderate level of housing when considering the level of existing services and facilities within the village and its proximity to Chippenham.
We are concerned about the overbearing scale of the development (10% of the village) and proximity to the ANOB (Cotswolds National Landscape).	We consider the proposed development to be a moderate level of housing when considering the level of existing services and facilities

	within the village and its proximity to Chippenham. The planning application is supported by a Landscape Visual Appraisal that assesses the impact of the proposed development on the Cotswolds National Landscape.
This is agricultural land. We are a village, and additional housing will just take up all green land and just make us an expansion of Chippenham	We disagree that the development will take up all green land. There will remain a circa 3.5km wide green buffer between the village and the edge of Chippenham.
It's not really in the village/too far from the village and separate to the actual boundary.	The distance from the site to The Street is just 250m and the scheme provides a new 2m wide footway on Biddestone Lane to create a dedicated footway connection.
Themes: Traffic & road safety	
The Biddestone road is used as a rat run with no planning for infrastructure made.	Wiltshire Council Highway Authority will assess the transport implications of the proposed development. Should it identify that infrastructure improvements are required to make the development acceptable in planning terms, these can be secured as part of a planning consent.
The road is not big enough for the level of traffic on that road lots of accidents on that road already.	Personal Injury Collision (PIC) data obtained from Wiltshire Council (up to 250 metres either side of the proposed site access) confirms that there have been two recorded incidents, both recorded over 150 metres southwest of the site access. The recorded incidents appear to have occurred due to temporary driver error or misjudgement. It is therefore considered that there is no exiting highway safety pattern or problem on the local highway network within the vicinity of the site.
Are there plans to improve vehicular safety on the blind bend on Biddestone Lane close to the cemetery, by introducing vehicle width, weight and speed restriction.	At the site access, we are proposing to extend the 30mph speed limit further west along Biddestone Lane. This will ultimately slow down vehicles sooner as they approach the village and improve highway safety.
Bad exit road both ways into the village and onto a very bad junction.	Personal Injury Collision (PIC) data obtained from Wiltshire Council (up to 250 metres either side of the proposed site access) confirms that there have been two recorded incidents, both recorded over 150 metres southwest of the site access. The recorded incidents appear to have occurred due to temporary driver error or misjudgement. It is therefore considered that

	there is no exiting highway safety pattern or problem on the local highway network within the vicinity of the site.
Themes: Flooding and drainage	
Drains - There are already well-known drainage problems in the village. Covering over a large area of land on the border of the village will further increase run off into the drains, leading to worsening floods. There is good evidence that rainfall and the risk of flooding will increase with the rapid climate change we are experiencing.	No surface water from the site currently enters the drainage sewer network and none will do so under the proposed development. Run off from the proposed development will be attenuated on site before discharging into the land drainage ditch that runs along the south of the site at a restricted rate.
Chippenham flooded November 2024 because you built on flood plains.	We have not built on the flood plains in Chippenham.
The road by the village hall and beyond that, past the proposed site always floods.	We are aware of surface water flooding on Biddestone Lane and have therefore introduced a flood compensation area within our site where excess water will be diverted rather than spilling onto Biddestone Lane.
Drainage, sewerage and other facilities are already fully stretched, including flooding further down the system.	We have liaised with Wessex Water and been advised that there is sufficient capacity within the network to accommodate the development.
Pedestrian Access – e.g. Footpath/cycle path at Biddestone Lane	
The road from the proposed site entrance into the village is very narrow at points. There is no pavement, and it is already unsafe for pedestrians, including those who live along that part of the road. You have proposed a walking route from the building site to the village centre. This is a relatively long way round and it will likely discourage pedestrian access to the village centre.	The proposals include a new 2m wide footway on Biddestone Lane between the site and the existing pedestrian infrastructure at the Village Hall, which then provides a connection to The Street. This will provide a safe, dedicated pedestrian link to the village that is only 250m, ensuring good accessibility for residents of the development.
Please consider making good the "footpath" behind no.6 Combe View if your plan is for people to use this regularly.	The proposals include linking a new footway on Biddestone Lane to the Public Right of Way that runs between Coombe View and the village hall. We will engage with the Highway Authority if further improvements are considered necessary.
If the development were to proceed, we feel it would be necessary to: Improve pedestrian and cycleway provision down Biddestone Lane which will continue to be a favoured route for walkers from the development to the shop, pub and church.	The proposals include linking a new footway on Biddestone Lane to the Public Right of Way that runs between Coombe View and the village hall. Our view is that this improvement is appropriate and proportionate for a development of this scale. It should be noted that due to the lack of adopted highway further north, there are little opportunities for improvements to Biddestone Lane in that location.
Impact on existing Infrastructure – GP & School	

You mentioned the GP surgery which is already at high capacity and has no additional rooms available. How do you propose supporting them with the potential hundreds of extra patients it will undoubtedly receive? Will there be long term financial contributions to support them?	There will be engagement with the Local Planning Authority (and through that, the local services), during the planning application with regard to community infrastructure provision. This will establish if contributions are required to make the development acceptable in planning terms. We have held discussions with the Practice Manager and the GP surgery to discuss capacity and resourcing.
Can you ensure that the schools can cope with extra people?	There will be engagement with the Local Planning Authority (and through that, the local services), during the planning application with regard to community infrastructure provision. This will establish if contributions are required to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
Affordable Housing	
You say that 40% of the homes will be affordable- have you undertaken a survey to see what is affordable to the locals that actually need the housing? In the other new build sites that we have seen, there is nothing in the 80-125k bracket, with most seeming to be over 400k.	If planning permission is granted, the provision of affordable homes will be secured through a legal agreement between the council and Cotswold Homes, and then sold to a Housing Association at a heavily discounted rate. The affordable homes will be a mix of shared ownership and social rent, of which the majority will be social rent. Social rent is normally no more than 50% of market rate and these rent rates are controlled by the Government. Shared ownership is no more than 75% of market value but importantly allows first-time buyers to put down deposits of no more than 5% and buy more shares of the property as time goes on. Please note that Cotswold Homes will have no input into the rental or purchase prices of these properties.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 As outlined throughout this document, Cotswold Homes has carried out a programme of pre-application engagement and consultation, which has met the requirements laid out as part of the NPPF, the Localism Act, Wiltshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement and their own high requirements.
- 6.2 The team has proactively sought to engage with stakeholders and the local community via a number of means, including direct contact with stakeholders, a meeting with representatives of the Parish Council, delivering newsletters to the local community, and publishing a website where people can find out more, leave feedback and get in touch directly with the project team.
- 6.3 The consultation received a great deal of feedback as listed above, covering a wide area of topics and which we have tried to respond to. The key changes, as a result of feedback included:
- Utilisation of additional land from adjacent field to create a flood compensation area that will reduce surface water flooding of Biddestone Lane near the southwest corner of the site.
 - Evolution of the sustainable drainage strategy for the development.
 - Changes to the proposed mix of units by increasing the number of two-bedroom homes and providing a range of terrace, semi-detached, detached homes.
 - Revising proposed house types to include a bungalow and flats (in the form of a maisonette).
 - Refinement of the design to include predominantly natural stone walls to dwellings and stone detailing.
 - Commitment to prioritising local residents for affordable housing (this will be at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority).
- 6.4 Wiltshire Council will now undertake the formal consultation; however, Cotswold Homes will continue to engage locally during the determination period.