

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

URBAN DESIGN

Officer name:

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Application No: PL/2026/00195

Proposal: Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved except for access for the erection of up to 205 no. dwellings, community hub, public open space, access, infrastructure and associated works, with all other matters reserved.

Site Address: Land West of Westbury Road, Warminster

Case Officer: Gen Collins

Reference:

Drawings and documents indexed 12th to the 20th January 2026 on application webpage, including:

- 0736-2001 – Development Considerations Plan
- 0736-2002 – Illustrative Masterplan
- 0736-2004 – Connectivity Plan
- 0736-2005-1 – Parameter Plan – Access and Movement
- 0736-2005-2 – Parameter Plan – Green Infrastructure
- 0736-2005-3 – Parameter Plan – Building Heights
- 0736-2005-4 – Parameter Plan – Land Budget
- 0736-2006 – Concept Plan
- 403.066266.00001 W-71 – Illustrative Landscape Masterplan
- Design and Access Statement

Policy and guidance:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy, Core Policy 57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping' (Abbreviated CP57)
- Wiltshire Local Plan Review - Pre-Submission Draft 2020-2038 (Regulation 19) (September 2023) (abbreviated WLPR)
- Wiltshire Design Guide – Wiltshire Council Supplementary Planning Document adopted 25th March 2024 (abbreviated WDG)
- National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG December 2024) (abbreviated NPPF)
- National Design Guide (MHCLG January 2021) (abbreviated NDG)
- Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England June 2020) (referenced in the NPPF) (abbreviated BfHL)
- Streets for a Healthy Life: A companion guide to Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England) (abbreviated SFHL)
- Warminster Neighbourhood Plan (Made March 2016) (abbreviated WNP)
- Warminster Neighbourhood Plan 2 (Regulation 14 consultation) (abbreviated WNP2)

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Observations

The site has previously been the subject of an outline planning application PL/2021/09013, which was dismissed at an uncontested appeal (APP/Y3940/W/24/3338217) earlier this year. The current proposals are substantively similar in form and layout to that earlier scheme. As a result, most of the urban design concerns raised during the previous application continue to apply and are not repeated here.

The site lies outside the current settlement boundary for Warminster (2020) and is not identified for development in either the emerging Wiltshire Council Local Plan (January 2023) or the Warminster Neighbourhood Plan 2 (WNP2). As such, the proposal is considered speculative at this stage.

Notwithstanding this, should the principle of development on this site be considered, I have the following comments on the development proposals. At this early stage no specific house designs have been submitted, and my observations are therefore generally related to the layout in outline.

Objection

- 1) Proximity to local facilities - *'Reasonable limits on walking distance from new dwellings in villages and towns to key facilities are given in the Urban Design Compendium Volume 1 (typically within 800 metres to a local shop, primary school and community centre)';* (WDG).

The Connectivity Plan demonstrates that most local facilities fall beyond an 800-metre walking catchment. Fields in Trust guidance states that accessibility should be measured by actual walking routes rather than straight-line distance, and on this basis the development would not be considered sustainable unless key day-to-day facilities are provided on-site within the proposed community hub, such as a small mobility hub, local convenience store or café and/or parcel drop-off etc.

While the community hub is included in the description of development, the Resubmission Planning Statement and Parameter Plans indicate that only the land will be provided rather than the facility itself. This approach is inadequate. The community hub is a critical piece of infrastructure that underpins the sustainability of the scheme, and its location, range of uses, and parking and servicing requirements must be clearly established at this stage.

The Illustrative Masterplan currently places the hub adjacent to the allotments and open space, which reduces accessibility for residents in the southern part of the development. Furthermore, only four parking spaces are shown, shared between allotment users, visitors to the open space and kickabout area, and users of the hub. At peak times, this is likely to lead to overspill parking onto surrounding residential streets and potential conflict with residents.

A more effective approach could be to incorporate the community hub into the ground floor of a mixed-use building on the main village street. This would provide a more central and accessible location, reinforce the role of the village street as the community's heart, and improve walkability and visibility. Repositioning the hub in this way would strengthen its function as a key community asset and support the creation of a more vibrant and well-integrated neighbourhood.

Recommendation: The community hub should be fully delivered as part of the development. A clear brief is required, setting out the floorspace and uses necessary to support local needs and minimise off-site travel, together with parking, servicing, and delivery requirements for all non-

residential uses. These details should be embedded within the Framework Travel Plan and secured through the planning process.

- 2) The proposed attenuation basin appears as a simple grassed depression with an engineered character, lacking the naturalistic qualities expected of integrated landscape features. This design presents a poor visual impression and does not meet the expectations of CP57 (ii).

In accordance with WDG expectations 6.3 and 6.5, attenuation features should be designed to blend into the landscape, avoiding the appearance of artificial depressions. A more appropriate approach would distribute water volumes across the site using a combination of wetlands, rain gardens, small ponds, and permeable surfaces.

Incorporating these elements at the plot and street level would not only enhance the visual quality of the development but also ensure the drainage strategy aligns with local design guidance and contributes positively to the site's character.

Recommendation: Revise the drainage strategy to ensure full compliance with DEFRA SuDS National Standards (June 2025) and align with WDG expectations for green and blue infrastructure. Incorporate BfHL principles by introducing naturalistic features such as rain gardens, swales, and wetlands to enhance visual quality, biodiversity, and site character.

- 3) Wiltshire is part of the recently created Western Forest which is a new National Forest for the nation whose aims and objectives are to substantially increase canopy cover across its geographical area. The aims and objectives of National Forests are planning consideration under para 152 of the NPPF (2024).

The development proposals include 'New structural habitat planting and traditional orchard planting along north boundary to enhance northern GI link, and replacement hedgerow planting to maintain link to wet woodland and railway corridor', however, it does not specify woodland planting.

The existing watercourse along the northern boundary has an EA 20meter buffer requirement. Although this relates to restrictions on farming practice this could be used for new woodland planting along this edge.

Recommendation: To achieve full compliance with the NPPF and strengthen integration with the wider landscape, woodland planting should also be introduced along the northern boundary and within the adjacent open spaces. This will soften the settlement edge, enhance biodiversity, and create a more natural transition to the surrounding countryside.

Please note the Ecology Officer recommendation (application PL/2021/09013 dated 16.03.2022) for the GI Parameter Plan to be amended to identify the minimum width (in metres) of undeveloped buffer for retained features and site boundaries.

- 4) Westbury Road displays a clear and consistent character from its junction with Elm Hill. It is defined by larger-footprint properties set well back from the carriageway, with generous front gardens edged by mature hedgerows and trees. Individual plots are typically accessed directly from Westbury Road, with only occasional shared access points serving development to the rear.

The DAS recognises these characteristics and proposes a lower-density edge along Westbury Road. However, the Illustrative Masterplan does not fully reflect this established identity. The introduction of private drives running parallel to Westbury Road creates an unnecessary double-perimeter road, and the indicative built form is shown positioned close to these drives with minimal front-garden depth. This arrangement would significantly weaken the existing pattern of spacious, landscaped frontages

Recommendation: The scheme should more closely align with the distinctive character of Westbury Road by incorporating lower-density development with larger building footprints, generous front gardens, and - where feasible - direct plot access from Westbury Road. This approach would help integrate the development more sensitively into its context, consistent with the principles of the WDG and BfHL.

Conclusion

As it stands, the development does not meet the high standards of design and place shaping required by Core Policy 57. Based on the points above, the Illustrative Masterplan does not

- Integrate green and blue infrastructure at the plot and street level as required by DEFRA SuDS National Standards (June 2025);
- Preserve the prevailing character of Western Road;
- Provide sufficient information regarding the provision of the community hub and parking; and
- Provide sufficient woodland planting along the northern edge.