

Rec'd 12/2/26



MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

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The Planning Inspectorate
c/o QUADIENT
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

6th February 2026

Reference: 6003438

Appeal Site: Land south of 214B Corsham Road, Whitley, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 8QF

Planning Application Ref: PL/2025/08613

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

Please find below the written representations from Melksham Without Parish Council. These comprise of the comments submitted by the parish council in objection to the planning application (PL/2025/08613).

Comments:

Melksham Without Parish Council feels strongly that this application should be refused for the following reasons:

1) The application is speculative and not in either the Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan 2 (made on 4th August 2025) or the emerging Wiltshire Council Local Plan. Wiltshire Council's current Core Strategy, and its emerging Local Plan do not include this site as a strategic allocation. Members believe that it should be refused for the same reasons as for application PL/2024/07097 Land south of Snarlton Farm (300 dwellings), which was refused at the Strategic Planning committee on 5th August 2025. This has now gone to Appeal, and the Case set out by Wiltshire Council is still relevant and applies to this application. It details that the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan has full statutory weight, that the site conflicts with the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) spatial strategy, that the NHP allocates sufficient housing and in fact, exceeds requirements and that paragraph 14 of the NPPF applies. The parish council request that Wiltshire Council are consistent in their approach and apply these principles to this speculative development, outside of the settlement boundary.

Serving rural communities around Melksham

Decision reason for PL/2024/07907:

“The development as proposed, would materially conflict with the Council's strategic core policies CP1, CP2 and CP15 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy, as well as significantly and demonstrably conflicting with the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2, which allocates other land for housing (as made on 4 August 2025) and that the benefits of the development would not outweigh the aforesaid Plan conflicts and that the application is hereby refused in full compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 14”

At the 5th August 2025 Strategic Committee meeting there was discussion as to whether the Plan allocations (Local and Neighbourhood) were coming to fruition, and that is detailed below. The plan led approach is working, with applications coming forward for pretty much all of the sites in both plans, ahead of them being made, and therefore this speculative site is not required to contribute to the 5-year housing land supply in this Melksham Neighbourhood Plan area. It is not the role of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan to fulfil the shortfall in the 5-year land supply for the whole of Wiltshire.

For the refreshed Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2, the Qualifying Bodies were given an indicative number to allocate by Wiltshire Council of 200 houses in Melksham and Bowerhill and 70 in Shaw and Whitley, a total of 270. The completed Neighbourhood Plan proposes a total of 453, enough to cover any potential increase of housing numbers required in the Local Plan when finalised.

- Policy 7.1 Cooper Tires a brownfield site for 100 dwellings, the site has been recently sold, and some light touch demolition work has commenced in August with a further demolition application now approved PL/2025/07169
- Policy 7.2 Land at the former Melksham Library site, a brownfield site 50 dwellings for older people. This project is being progressed by Wiltshire Council as landowner and developer, with pre application meetings arranged with the qualifying bodies in September and a public consultation undertaken on 20th October. Planning application to be submitted in January 2026. The existing buildings were demolished some time ago.
- Policy 7.3 Land South of Western Way, Bowerhill for 210 houses and 70 bed care home. This site has outline permission following Appeal and has been bought by Barratt Homes who have submitted a Reserved Matters application PL/2025/07391.
- Policy 7.4 Land at Whitley Farm, Whitley, this is for a heritage led development and as such has no housing number assigned, but in previous Regulation 14 versions of the Plan had a nominal 10 and 15 dwellings indicated.
- Policy 7.5 Land at Middle Farm, Whitley, this has an allocation for 50 dwellings, an increase on its original allocation of 18 dwelling in the first Neighbourhood Plan, and a current planning application for 22 dwellings awaiting decision; and includes an illustrative masterplan with 57 dwellings. PL/2024/09725.

Wiltshire Council's three Melksham sites in the Local Plan have already started their journey through the planning system, increasing in housing numbers as they do so.

- Policy 18 for Blackmore Farm has an approved outline application for 500 dwellings (425 dwellings in the policy which covers a larger site area).
- Policy 19 for land adjacent to Melksham Oak School has met with the parish council at pre application stage, and has conducted public consultation, with a planning application for some 205 houses submitted PL/2025/06749 (135 dwellings in the policy)
- Policy 20 Land at the A3102/New Road Farm is a current planning application (full, not outline) and has been for some time, for 295 dwellings (285 dwellings in the policy).PL/2024/10345

As they stand today, they will bring 1000 more houses to the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan area. With the new Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 numbers, this gives a projected number of 1,453 extra houses by 2038 against the identified number in the Local Plan of 1,120.

For Shaw & Whitley, specifically, the figures below are those that have planning permission, built already, pending a planning decision, and an estimate based on all the evidence in the Reg 14 A and Reg 14 B consultations (which had 15 and then 10 dwellings) for the Whitley Farm site allocation in the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2. The Reg 14 A and Reg 14 B consultations for Whitley Farm site included viability assessment and initial pre application discussions showed more houses than those in the Regulation 14 versions of NHP2. The total comes to 75, with the emerging Local Plan saying approx. 70/ 73 dwellings requirement. In addition, the NHP2 site allocation for Middle Farm is a planning application for 22 dwellings, with a NHP2 site allocation for 55 dwellings, but an indicative masterplan showing 57 dwellings has now been uploaded to the planning portal PL/2024/09725. The parish council believe that these planned numbers are more than sufficient to meet the needs of the community and speculative developments need not, and should not, be considered at this time.

Site	Planning Application	Number of Dwellings	Status as at 3/10/25
Middle Farm Site Allocation in adopted NHP2 (55 dwellings)		55	NHP2 made 4 th August 2025
Whitley Farm NP2 (number is approximate)	Conservation led redevelopment of redundant modern agricultural buildings and barns and conservation and reuse of Grade II listed Whitley Farm barn 10 & 15 dwellings in Reg 14 versions of the NHP and viability report in NHP evidence base, but no actual housing number in NHP2 https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/files/ugd/c4c117_67500181f96c450fab9633b614ac5f6f.pdf	10	NHP2 made 4 th August 2025

Land Adjacent 1 Eden Grove, Whitley	PL/2023/00625	1	Built
39 Eden Grove, Whitley	21/01791/FUL	2	Built
178 Top Lane, Whitley	20/04234/FUL	1	Built
89 Corsham Road, Whitley	PL/2025/03261	1	Approved 01/7/25
Mavern House, Corsham Road, Shaw	2024/00631	1	Approved
Home Farm, Shaw	PL/2025/00965	2	Awaiting decision
Land South East of Poplar Farm, Shaw	20/11342/FUL	1	Approved
26 Shaw Hill	PL/2023/06990	1	Approved
	Total	75	

- 2) The site is outside the settlement boundary for Shaw/Whitley as defined in Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies 1 and 15. Policy 6: Housing at Defined Settlements in Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan only supports developments within existing settlement boundaries unless there is an evidenced local housing need.
- 3) The site is adjacent to and connected to the settlement boundary of Whitley. This development would increase the risk of coalescence of Whitley and Shaw in contradiction to Policy 19: Separation of Settlement in Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan which requires development proposals to respect the separation between Whitley and Shaw. Members do not believe that there are any economic, community and/or environmental benefits which would outweigh the harm to the area between the two settlements.
- 4) The site is in the Southbrook catchment area which has been identified as a priority flood risk area due to surface water flooding. Water from the higher ground in Shaw and Whitley is diverted across Corsham Road and on to the Shaw School Playing Field and internal property flooding regularly occurring in properties south of Corsham Road. We have copied our comments to the Drainage team and think they should be asked to comment on this application. Please pay particular attention to NHP Policy 3 Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management especially "Development proposals in locations with known flooding issues should include appropriate mitigation and construction methods, and, where appropriate, contributions towards wider catchment projects.

- 5) A previous application on the site (16/11951/FUL) was refused and the subsequent appeal (APP/Y3940/W/17/3185863) dismissed. The Planning Inspector for the appeal commented:

"Taking all of the above into account, whilst recognising there would be some small social and economic benefits, these clearly do not outweigh the environmental harm that would come about from the site's location beyond settlement limits and within the open countryside. Even if there was still a housing land shortfall, the harms would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The environmental harm indicates the proposal would not be sustainable development"

Members believe that this statement is still valid.

- 6) The site was considered in the development of Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan 2 and was included in the AECOM Site Options and Assessment 2023 report as site 3246. The site was identified as potentially suitable for development (amber) but was not taken forward in the Neighbourhood Plan. The report concluded:

"The site is potentially suitable for allocation for residential development. The site is adjacent and connected to the settlement boundary of Whitley. It is excellently located at existing bus stops with local public transport links into Melksham Town Centre and is in close proximity to local services in Shaw and Whitley. Suitable access could be created to support residential development. It is connected to a continuous pedestrian network.

The site is relatively free from development constraints, however development of the site would increase the risk of coalescence of Shaw and Whitey with some impacts on the local landscape character. In particular, the southern section of the site contributes to the rural separation of the two settlements and should remain relatively open in character.

At present Whitley does not have a clear southern settlement edge to the east of Corsham Road. Existing mature trees along the site's southern boundary could potentially help soften the settlement edge and support the rural transition of Whitley to the open countryside. Any potential mitigation landscape buffers should consider how they may support the local green infrastructure network. The site falls under the recommended Green Wedge between Whitley and Shaw (Location 1) of the JMNP Green Gap and Green Wedge Assessment 2023.

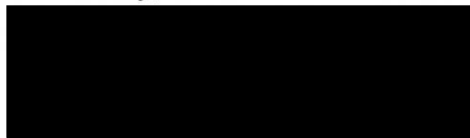
Development of the site may also have some impact on the character of short views to and from the Public Rights of Way to the north which would need to be appropriately mitigated. Further heritage assessment would be required to understand the development impacts on the setting of a number of listed buildings in close proximity.

Development of the site may lead to the loss of the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land subject to detailed surveys (Grade 3)"

The full report can be read here

https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/files/ugd/fcc864_5b51e5ab85a04bf0ae388ad92d5fb754.pdf

Your sincerely,



Fiona Dey
Parish Officer
Melksham Without Parish Council