

Planning Registration Team, Wiltshire Council
SHELAA Ref: 3842
Grid Ref: X (Easting) 384898; and Y (Northing) 186037
Our reference: 26006.cd/cb
28th May 2026

Dear Sir or Madam

Permission in Principle Application: Land at Sopworth Road, Sherston, Wiltshire
Description: Erection of up to 5 No. Accessible Single Storey Dwellings and Associated Works

1.0 Introduction

PlanningSphere are instructed by Kevin Bird and Hayley Hyde-Andrews who are the freehold owners of the application site.

We are instructed to submit an application for a Permission in Principle (PiP) for the development of up to 5 No. accessible single storey residential dwellings and associated works on land at Sopworth Road, Sherston, Wiltshire.

The application has been formulated following input from specialist landscape and ecological consultants and has included a site area context assessment to inform a Landscape Framework Plan. The enclosed 'permission-in-principle' application submission comprises the following information:

- Planning Portal Permission in Principle Application Form: PlanningSphere
- Application fee: £2,560.00¹: The Silverwood Partnership
- Site Location Plan: Greenhalgh LA
- Landscape Framework Plan: Greenhalgh LA
- Agricultural Land Classification Survey: John Coad & Son
- Ecological Appraisal: Crossman Ecology
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Greenhalgh LA
- Planning Cover Letter: PlanningSphere

2.0 Relevant Background Information

(i) Site Description

The 0.49ha application site, as shown on Figure 1, below comprises the south eastern corner of a moderately sized agricultural field off Sopworth Road on the western edge of Sherston in Wiltshire.

The site is bounded by a mix of hedgerow, timber close board fence and dry-stone walling to the south and east. To the north and west the site boundaries are open to the wider agricultural field which itself is bordered by mature field hedgerows. Hillberry Lodge abuts the sites eastern boundary beyond which is Sherson Church of England (CoE) Primary School and the village centre. Sherston is located approximately 8 km to the west of Malmesbury. The village is rural in character and surrounded mainly by open countryside. The site and village sit just inside the eastern boundary of the designated Cotswold National Landscape.

¹ The application fee is calculated on the basis of £512.00 per 0.1 ha or part thereof in accordance with the fee regulations. The required fee of £2,560.00 will be paid by BACS upon receipt of registration number from the Council to ensure that it is matched to the application.



Figure 1 Extract from site location plan illustrating redline application site boundary and the adjacent ownership boundary (blue line).

(ii) SHELAA and Planning History

The site was put forward for the Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment: SHELAA Ref. No. 3842: Land north of Sopworth Road, east of Stanbridge Road, Sherston.

Recorded planning history relating to the application site includes the following decisions:

Application Ref.	Description	Decision
PL/2025/00021	Change of Use from agriculture to equine for the exercise, training, schooling and rehabilitation of horses, including the siting of a mobile field shelter.	Permitted 27.03.2025
PL/2024/03432	Change of use from agricultural land to a secure dog walking site, including the erection of secure fencing and hardstanding car parking	Refused 14.11.2024

Relevant planning history for the adjacent site is summarised below: land Adjacent to Sherston Church of England Primary School, Sherston.

Application Ref.	Description	Decision
PL/2024/00865	Residential development for 45 dwellings, vehicular and pedestrian access including a new footway to Sopworth Lane, associated parking, open space, landscaping, and associated infrastructure.	Pending ²
PL/2021/10696	Proposed erection of a GP Surgery (Class E(e)), car park and associated works (Outline application relating to access)	Permitted 02.03.2022

Although the GP surgery permission PL/2021/10696 is now lapsed, the site does form part of the Site 1 allocation in the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan. Furthermore, it is understood that on the 12th March 2026 at a meeting of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB), the principle of the new Tolsey Surgery scheme was confirmed. This

² A finalised unsigned s.106 agreement was uploaded to the Council's website on 8th May 2026.

will now enable Wiltshire Council, supported by Sherston PC, to proceed with the development of the surgery.

To assist the delivery of the prospective Medical Centre Site, the applicant would be willing to discuss with the promoters of the new surgery the potential provision of part of the blue lined paddock for biodiversity net gain, should this be required as part of a new planning application for the proposed medical centre.

3.0 Summary of Proposals

The application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the erection of up to 5 No. accessible single storey dwellings and associated works. It is noted that census data indicated that Sherston has a relatively high average population of c.45 years. The intent behind the commitment to provide accessible single storey homes is to meet a local need for accessible housing. This in turn could free up a number of existing larger homes in the village for family occupation,

The proposal is supported by a Landscape Framework Plan, which has been informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal. The Landscape Framework Plan, as shown in Figure 2 below, shows a developable parcel set back from the road frontage and in line with Hillberry Lodge, sufficient in area to accommodate up to 5 No. dwellings taking access from Sopworth Road. The plan also makes provision for green infrastructure and screen planting on the site boundaries.



Figure 2. Extract from Landscape Framework Plan

The proposed development would be integrated into the village, where it would be read in the context of the recently consented 45 homes (PL/2024/00865) and new medical centre (PL/2021/10696). It is also noted that Hillberry Lodge is short listed for allocation. In spatial planning terms, the proposal creates a 'designed' edge that would round off this part of the village.

A summary of the proposed key elements of the proposal is set out below, with a detailed explanation of the design rationale set out in Chapter 3.0 of the LVIA.

- A private drive access off Sopworth Road positioned so as to retain the existing tree along the southern boundary;
- A 4m wide strategic planting along the Hillberry Lodge boundary, with a 13m no-build offset from Hillberry Lodge.
- Open space positioned at the southern end of the site, including new tree planting and potential surface water drainage attenuation (SuDs) features.
- A minimum 7m wide band of strategic copse tree planting with native hedgerow around the western and northern site boundaries.
- A developable area sufficient to accommodate up to five single storey dwellings.
- An offsite 13m band of structural woodland within the applicant's land ownership to reinforce the western edge of Sherston.

Access and Active Travel Links

The Landscape Framework Plan indicates the location of a potential vehicular access onto Sopworth Road through the creation of a new simple priority junction, which would have the full standard of required visibility splays in both directions. An on-site layout could be designed to include a turning head of an appropriate size to accommodate the turning requirements of the Council's standard Refuse Collection Vehicle. Car and cycle parking would be provided in full accordance with the Council's standards. The proposed traffic generation would be relatively modest and would not raise any adverse highway capacity or safety issues. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure would be provided in accordance with Building Regulation requirements along with secure cycle storage.

Sherston is a settlement with a population of 1,585 according to the 2021 census and has status as a *Large Village* in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy. The village benefits from a wide range of existing services and community facilities. Sherston is situated on the B4040, linking Malmesbury and Bath, approximately 7 miles from Junction 17 of the M4 and providing strategic connectivity to Bristol and Swindon.

Public transport includes the No. 41 bus service to Malmesbury and Yate, while mainline rail stations at Chippenham and Kemble offer direct services to London Paddington.

The application site is conveniently located in close proximity to a wide range of local facilities within the village core, which can be accessed using sustainable modes of transport (walking or cycling). The site is well situated for access to Sherston Church of England Primary School (approximately 85m to the east) and shops and facilities along the village High Street (approximately 415m to the south east). A network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) provides connections along the villages urban fringe as well as into the wider rural landscape, encouraging walking and outdoor recreation.

Landscape Strategy:

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) analyses the existing site context and baseline conditions including an assessment of the key approach roads into the village and wider landscape setting, proposing a Landscape Framework Plan to inform the proposed application.

In the context of recently consented development along the western approach, including Hillberry Cottage, and the consented residential and GP surgery schemes (PL/2024/00865 and PL/2021/10696), the site presents an opportunity to re-establish a coherent rural-to-settlement transition which is characteristic of the area, while reinforcing a clearly defined and sensitive western edge to Sherston having only a localised visual impact which can be mitigated by new planting.

4.0 Planning Policy

Section 38 (6) of the Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise.

(i) The Development Plan and Applicable Designations

The statutory development plan comprises: the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015); the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation Plan (2020); and the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan made in 2019.

Sherston is categorised as a '*Large Village*' in the adopted Core Strategy under Core Policy CP1 where development is acceptable to meet housing needs and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities.

The site is not located within a defined settlement boundary in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and is therefore categorised as open countryside in planning terms. Sherston and the site are located within the Cotswold National Landscape.

The site is located outside of the Sherston Conservation Area. There are no listed buildings located within the site or in the immediate surrounding. A Scheduled Monument is located a short distance to the south. The site is in Flood Zone 1 as annotated on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning.

Relevant adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy policies include:

- CP1: Settlement Strategy
- CP2: Delivery Strategy
- CP13: Spatial Strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area
- CP41: Sustainable Construction
- CP45: Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs
- CP50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- CP51: Landscape
- CP52: Green Infrastructure
- CP57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place-shaping
- CP58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
- CP60: Sustainable Transport
- CP61: Transport and New Development
- CP67: Flood Risk

There are no relevant or applicable policies in the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation Plan (2020).

(ii) Sherston Neighbourhood Plan (2006-2026)

The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) was made in May 2019 and allocated three development sites within the village, including land east of Hillberry Lodge (Policy 4).

Objective 4 of the SNP is particularly relevant to the application proposal, noting the commitment to deliver 'accessible' single storey homes:

Objective 4:

The Plan will seek to provide for the housing needs of the community. It will do this through:

- Allowing an appropriate amount of development in selected locations – to include houses for sale on the open market, affordable rented and shared equity housing, and sheltered elderly persons accommodation;
- Ensuring that all such development includes a mix of house types capable of meeting the identified local need;
- Considering the redevelopment of existing brown field development opportunities first;
- Supporting the provision of a replacement dwelling for the local vicar in an appropriate location.

Figure 3. Extract from P.11 of the SNP

The SNP expired on 1st June 2026. A Site Assessment Report (SAR) was prepared by Master Land and Planning in 2025 to consider potential housing allocations within the village to support a replacement Neighbourhood Plan.

Ten sites were assessed, of which six were identified as 'potentially suitable'. The closest to the application site is Site 9, comprising Hillberry Lodge and its associated curtilage. This site is also identified within the Councils Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) as having a potential capacity for 16 dwellings.

The application site, along with the wider field within which it is located, was assessed within the SAR as site 7. However, it was concluded to be 'not currently available, suitable, and deliverable', primarily due to its contribution to the village's rural setting, its openness, and its separation from the settlement boundary. However, the assessment also acknowledges that *'the context of the site may change significantly once the allocated site in Policy 4 is developed, including the expansion of the built form of the village and the creation of a new footway. This may allow the site to be re-assessed in the future, and a different conclusion to be reached.'*

In view of the recent planning permissions between the application site and the existing development along Knockdown Road, together with the draft allocation of Site 9, it is clearly the case that the village is expanding westwards towards the proposed application site. The site can be considered to adjoin the village's emerging western edge and accordingly the permission in principle application can be credibly considered in this context.



Figure 4: Extract of LVIA illustrating site context with reference to Sherston Neighbourhood Plan and recent planning permissions.

(iv) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National planning policy is set out in the NPPF (last updated in February 2025)³. The NPPF places a renewed emphasis on delivering more quality, well-designed homes in areas where they are needed and the importance of providing a choice of homes to address a national shortage. The NPPF reaffirms the legal requirement that applications for planning permission must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Paragraph 210, NPPF). The NPPF is itself a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (Paragraph 212, NPPF).

A summary of the applicable NPPF policies is set out below:

- Achieving sustainable development: 7-10
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development: 11-14
- Decision Making: 39
- Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Housing: 61, 73, 82, 83
- Achieving well-designed places: 131, 135, 139
- Promoting sustainable transport: 109, 115, 116, 117
- Making effective use of land: 124, 125
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change: 166, 170, 181
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment: 187, 189, 190

³ At the time of writing an updated draft NPPF has been issued, and the Government concluded a consultation in March 2026. If a new NPPF is subsequently issued before the application is determined, any changes relevant to the application will be addressed through a post-submission update, as necessary.

- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment: 202, 207, 210
- Annex 1: Implementation: 231-233

Of relevance to this proposal are the following paragraphs and extracts from the NPPF:

Paragraphs 7 and 8 note that the function of planning is to contribute to achieving sustainable development with three overarching interdependent objectives: an economic objective; a social objective; and an environmental objective.

Paragraph 39 states:

39. Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 61 sets out the government's key planning objectives to '...significantly boost' housing delivery with a sufficient amount and variety of land to come forward where it is needed, meeting the needs of groups with specific housing requirements.

Paragraph 89 states that:

Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

Paragraph 189 covers development within National Landscapes – in this regard it is notable that this proposal is classified as 'non-major'.

(v) National Planning Practice Guidance (Published from 2014)

Relevant guidance on Permission in Principle (PiP) is set out in National Planning Practice Guidance under Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 58-004-20190315. The following table sets out the eligibility criteria for Pip applications:

Type of development or land	Route to permission in principle: Following an application	Route to permission in principle: Entering a site in Part 2 of a brownfield land register
Householder development	X	X
Major development	X	✓
Development on land not defined as previously developed	✓	X
Development consisting of the winning and working of minerals	X	X
Environmental Impact Assessment development	X	X
Habitats development	X	X

Figure 5. Extract from nPPG

(vi) Wiltshire Local Plan Review

A Regulation 19 iteration of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review (ELP) was submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government for examination on 28 November 2024. The two planning inspectors raised fundamental concerns in respect of the spatial strategy, plan period and insufficient consideration of reasonable alternatives in their letter to the Council dated 22nd December 2025 (Exam Ref: ID.11). A subsequent letter to the Council dated 27th February 2026 recommended that the most efficient and effective course of action for all parties to avoid an overly long examination would be for the Council to withdraw the submitted Plan and address matters through the preparation of the new plan under the new local plan-making system (Exam Ref: ID.13).

On 22nd May 2026, the Council issued a Notice of Withdrawal of ELP pursuant to section 22 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2024. Work will now commence on a new replacement plan in accordance with the regulations introduced under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 which came into force on 25th March 2026. The new local plan regulations mandate a faster 30-month digital-first plan-making system. Accordingly, no weight can be ascribed to the development management policies and allocations contained within the now withdrawn ELP.

(vii) Wiltshire Housing Land Supply

Following publication of the December 2024 iteration of the NPPF, Wiltshire Council's annual housing requirement has been significantly increased from 1,917 to 3,525 dwellings per annum. At the time of writing, Wiltshire Council can only demonstrate 2.42 years of housing land supply. This level of housing land supply has been acknowledged in recently published committee reports⁴ and appeal decisions and constitutes a severe shortfall in housing land supply.

(viii) Wiltshire Council Design Guide 2023

This Supplementary Planning Document expands upon Core Policy 57 Ensuring high quality design and place shaping in the adopted Core Strategy and is intended to ensure that new developments are well grounded in their locality and create a positive sense of place. The proposed scheme will be designed to comply with the SPD, with full details set out in the Technical Details Stage.

(ix) Other relevant legislation and guidance

The following is relevant to the application:

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended
- Environment Act 2021
- Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030

⁴ The Officer Report prepared for the August 2025 meeting of the Council's Strategic planning Committee in respect of planning application PL/2024/07097 (Land South of Snarlton Lane, Melksham) stated that the Council can demonstrate a housing supply of 2.42 years.

5.0 Planning Assessment

(i) Procedural Compliance

The scope of the PiP application is limited to location, land use and amount of development. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent Technical Details Consent (TDC) application in the event that permission in principle is granted.

This Planning Cover Letter explains the background to the application and provides necessary information to enable assessment and determination by the Council.

Other matters outside of the scope of the PiP will be considered at a subsequent 'Technical Details' Consent stage. Notwithstanding that there is no requirement for technical reports to accompany PiP submissions, the application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment and a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to assist the decision-making process. An Illustrative Landscape Framework Plan has been provided to demonstrate that up to 5 No. single storey dwellings could be satisfactorily accommodated on the application site.

(ii) Principle of Development

Sherston is designated as a 'large village' under Core Policy CP1 where development is acceptable to meet housing needs and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities.

The site is located outside of the Sherston defined settlement boundary. However, Wiltshire Council's severe and persistent lack of housing land supply, as outlined in the preceding Policy Section 4.0, which is highly relevant. This reduces the weight in the planning balance that can be attached to the development plan's spatial strategy, which directs new housing in Large Villages to within settlement boundaries. Furthermore, it noted that the respective plan periods of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan are now both time expired

Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF note that the function of planning is to contribute to achieving sustainable development with three overarching interdependent objectives: economic, social and environmental.

The proposals, as demonstrated below, are sustainable and would meet the Framework's three-dimensional tests for 'sustainable development' (NPPF: 7-10) whilst making a modest but important contribution to housing supply which in the context of the Council's significant undersupply should be given significant weight as a benefit to the proposed scheme.

Five Year Housing Land Supply Deficit

Following changes introduced to the 'Standard Method' of calculating housing need by the revised NPPF (December 2024), there has been an increase of 84% of Wiltshire Council's Housing Need: rising from 1,917 to 3,525 homes per annum. The recalculation has led to a significant reduction in housing land supply to 2.42, as noted In Section 4.0 above.

The importance of providing a consistent supply of homes is strongly recognised in the NPPF and in recent appeal precedents where the Planning Inspectorate has taken a pragmatic approach when Councils are faced with major shortfalls, recognising that sites of all sizes are needed to help make up the housing land supply deficit. There is an increasing recognition of the importance of delivery by SME developers who find it difficult to compete in the land market with national volume housebuilders. The provision of up to 5 No. single storey homes would make a positive contribution

to meeting identified local housing need in accordance with Section 5 of the Framework.

Although the village of Sherston is protected under Footnote 7 of paragraph 11(d) given its location within a National Landscape, it is considered that the conflict with the Council's spatial development policy CP2 (i.e. limiting need for development on greenfield sites and permitting development outside the limits of the development boundary), is outweighed by the following:

- The severity of the housing land supply shortfall in Wiltshire, i.e. 2.42 years.
- Full compliance with the applicable development plan (development management) policies.
- Contribution towards the delivery of the Malmesbury Community Area Strategy.
- Delivery of economic, social, environmental benefits, i.e. meeting the Framework's three-dimensional sustainable development test, as summarised below:

Sustainable Location

As referenced in Section 2.0, Sherston, being designated in the WCS settlement hierarchy a Large Village, benefits from a range of community facilities and services that are within walking and cycling distance of the application site. Public transport bus connections are also available to higher order settlements within the Malmesbury Community Area.

Paragraph 89 of the NPPF confirms that decisions should *recognise that sites to meet local community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.*

The proposed development will provide a positive approach to sustainable growth, knitting into the existing infrastructure including the recent planning consents for 45 dwellings and a new medical centre set within a landscaped and ecological buffer that will sensitively compliment the edge of the village, rounding it off in this location.

Socio-economic benefits

Socio-economic benefits of housing are recognised by Inspectors in appeal decisions and there is a clear political commitment to solving the housing crisis, with council's having a role in addressing this through positive decision making. The economic benefits of new housing are now vitally important and should be viewed as a crucial component of the planning balance. The application proposal will add new social vitality to Sherston and contribute to the Council's housing shortfall. The combination of economic benefits including: (i) construction phase (i.e. construction employment and training, and local supply chain support; and (ii) the occupation phase including local spending power of future residents, and payments such as Council Tax, contribute towards the planning balance.

Environmental Objectives

The proposal will result in the loss of grade 3b agricultural land as determined in the enclosed Agricultural Land Classification report. However, the site is a relatively small area of land, and there is a significant stock of such land in the surrounding area. Ecological advice has confirmed that it will be possible to deliver mandatory requirements of biodiversity net gain on site.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, combined with ecological studies, has informed the approach to propose an illustrative masterplan that will create a new soft and low impact landscaped edge rounding off this part village. The Landscape Framework Plan demonstrates that the proposal makes provision for structural landscaping mitigation with associated ecological

enhancement, as part of a 'designed' edge to this part of the village.

The dwellings themselves would be constructed to Future Homes Standards pursuant to recently introduced amendment to Part L of the Building Regulations, which will ensure the delivery of net zero dwellings.

The inclusion of 'accessible single storey dwellings' in the description of development aligns with Objective 4 of the SNP on the basis that proposal will meet a local need for accessible housing creating the potential of existing larger under occupied homes to be re-used by families.

Matters relating to sustainable construction, a commitment to Part M4 (2) or (3) accessible housing, biodiversity gain, landscaping and detailed drainage design can be secured at a subsequent Technical Details Stage.

The proposal is considered to be sustainable and is considered to meet the Framework's three-dimensional tests for 'sustainable development' (NPPF: 7-10) in principle.

(iii) Landscape impact, character and appearance

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires 'great weight' to be given to conserving scenic beauty but does not prohibit small-scale (non-major) housing development.

The enclosed LVIA provides an overview of the landscape character, views and visual amenity of the site and its setting, together with an assessment of how the proposed development would be received in the immediate and wider context.

No detailed design proposals are required as part of this stage of the Permission in Principle application. However, The LVIA has directly informed the enclosed Landscape Framework Plan which demonstrates how up to 5 No. single storey dwellings could be accommodated on the site with potential for enhanced landscaping to create a soft edge rounding off this part of the settlement.

Specific regard is given to key publicly accessible viewpoints from within the Cotswold National Landscape noting the anticipated height or mass of new built form, the ability to contain domestic gardens, minimise external lighting impacts, with the Landscape Framework Plan making explicit provision for the implementation of a comprehensive new planting scheme alongside the management of existing trees and vegetation.

The evidence set out in the LVIA demonstrates that the scale and location of the proposal is such that there would be very limited harm to the National Landscape, and as such, the proposal is considered to be compliant with WCS Policy 51.

(iv) Access and Highways

The Landscape Framework Plan makes provision for a new private drive access from Sopworth Road carefully positioned to retain the existing trees along the southern boundary, while also enabling the repair and retention of the existing dry-stone wall on either side of the access whilst providing adequate visibility splays with the lightly trafficked road. In the event that the PiP is approved, a detailed access design will be submitted pursuant to a subsequent technical design application. On this basis the proposal is considered to be compliant with WCS Policy 61.

(v) Arboricultural Implications

No tree survey is required at the PiP stage. However, the Ecological Appraisal identifies two trees along the south boundary and one along the east boundary. The site which is of low ecological interest offers opportunities for native hedgerow and tree enhancement. The Landscape Framework Plan identifies opportunities for landscaping and tree planting along the western and northern site boundaries, providing additional visual screening from the west and creating a copse-like character to enclose the development.

(vi) Ecological implications

No ecological survey is required at the PiP stage. However, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken and has helped to shape the proposals. Biodiversity enhancements would arise from new landscaping and habitat enhancements which would be submitted at a subsequent Technical Details Stage. On the basis the proposal is considered to be compliant with WCS Policy CP50 and applicable wildlife legislation.

(vii) Flooding and Drainage

The site is sited within Flood Zone 1 and as is therefore not at risk from flooding. The detailed design will follow national SuDs guidance and make provision for attenuation of surface water on site with climate change taken into account. Foul drainage will connect to existing mains services. A fully detailed and technically compliant Drainage Strategy will be included at the Technical Details Stage. On this basis the proposal is considered to be compliant with WCS Policy 67.

(viii) Residential amenity

The Framework Landscape Plan demonstrates that development of site would preserve the amenity and privacy of the nearest adjoining dwelling, Hillberry Lodge. Future residents of the proposed development would benefit from an attractive outlook and sufficient private external amenity space. On this basis, the proposal is considered to be compliant with WCS Policy 57.

6.0 Conclusion

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Footnote 7 of NPPF paragraph 11di is applicable insofar that The Site is located within the Cotswold National Landscape. However, the NPPF places a strong emphasis on delivering more quality, well-designed homes in areas where they are needed and the importance of providing a choice of homes to address a national shortage. This is acknowledged by the Council in the recently consented 45 dwelling scheme. It is clear that this permission combined with the allocation for the medical centre and potential future allocation of the Hillberry Lodge site has shifted the centre of gravity of the village westward creating a spatial planning context of this part of the village which can be sensitively augmented by the application proposals.

As noted in Sections 4.0 and 5.0, the Council has a persistent lack of housing land supply that is unlikely to be addressed for several years until such time as a replacement Local Plan has been formulated and tested through public examination.

Paragraphs 7 and 8 note that the function of planning is to contribute to achieving sustainable development with the overarching interdependent objectives: economic, social and environmental.

On the basis that the LVIA provides evidence to demonstrate that a small-scale residential development, with landscape mitigation, would have low visual impact upon the National Landscape, and that following the application of a 'flat' planning balancing exercise, the following scheme benefits indicate that a credible planning case can be made to grant permission in principle:

- The provision of up to 5 No. new homes that will contribute towards the Council's severe and persistent 5-year housing land supply deficit.
- Provision of accessible housing units, as referenced in the application description, will meet a local need that is aligned with Objective 4 of the SNP.
- The creation of a new soft and defensible landscaped edge to this part of the village would positively relate to both existing, permitted and planned built development.
- Provision of additional housing that would support existing local community facilities and services adding vitality to the village.
- A safe and suitable vehicular access solution is achievable from Sopworth Road with active travel opportunities to local services and facilities and the primary school. Public transport links are available to other higher order settlements in the Malmesbury Community Area.
- Delivery of onsite biodiversity gains through habitat creation and enhancement.
- Coordinated provision of green and blue infrastructure that will attenuate and manage the discharge of surface water to prevent downstream flood risk noting that the site is located away from the River Avon that constrains development to the south of the village.
- An opportunity for delivery by a local SME developer with associated construction phase benefits providing employment and training opportunities on site and support for the local supply chain.
- CIL receipts including 25% of CIL payments to be made available to the Parish Council for reinvestment in local community infrastructure.
- Additional post-development Council Tax revenue.

It is concluded that the limited harm arising from the conflict with the spatial strategy of the out-of-date WCS is outweighed by the scheme benefits. The illustrative Landscape Framework Plan, when read with the LVIA, demonstrates that the proposal will be well-contained and spatially integrated with the adjacent existing and permitted development with only a very limited visual impact on this part of the National Landscape. On this basis, the Council is respectfully requested to approve the enclosed application for permission in principle.

Yours faithfully

Chris Beaver
Director

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