

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Section 78 Appeal by LPC Ltd Planning on behalf of Robert Vaughan

**Site address: Land North of West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham,
SN15 5EH**

Appeal against refusal of Planning Permission

Statement of Case by Wiltshire Council as Local Planning Authority

Case Officer: Isobella Wise

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of Wiltshire Council to justify the refusal of application PL/2026/01620 where Permission in Principle for 'Erection of up to 2 No. dwellings' was sought. The refusal reasons for the application are as follows:

1.1.1 (1) *The proposed development would result in the loss of an undeveloped field frontage which forms a historic and visually important break in built development along West Street which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Great Somerford Conservation Area.*

The proposed development in the proposed location would harm the significance of the Conservation Area and the scheme therefore conflicts with section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, heritage aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

1.1.2 (2) *The application site lies adjacent to Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse and its historic garden boundary wall. The undeveloped nature of the site forms part of the setting of the listed building and contributes to its significance. The proposed development fails to adequately assess or demonstrate the acceptability of the impact of the development on the setting of the listed building.*

The proposed development therefore fails the statutory duty under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, and is contrary to heritage aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

- 1.1.3 (3) *The application site forms part of Neighbourhood Development Plan designated Local Green Space (LGS7). Evidence from public representations and site observations confirms that the proposed location for the development remains demonstrably special to the local community, providing an accessible and well-used green space valued for recreation, social interaction, tranquility, and for maintaining openness and green gaps within the village.*

While the proposal would not result in the loss of the entirety of the Local Green Space, the part affected is of high visual and functional importance. The proposed development in the proposed location would therefore result in permanent and irreversible harm to the value and function of the Local Green Space which could not be adequately mitigated through landscaping or design measures. The proposal cannot reasonably be construed as limited infilling for the purposes of paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework and, in the absence of clearly demonstrated very special circumstances, the scheme is contrary to local green space aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and unacceptable in principle.

- 1.2 The Delegated Report and Decision Notice associated with the PL/2026/01620 will be included as Appendix A and B respectively.
- 1.3 Artificial Intelligence use declaration: In accordance with the Planning Inspectorates Guidance on the *use of artificial intelligence in casework evidence*, it is confirmed that this document was prepared with assistance from Microsoft Copilot. Microsoft Copilot was used solely for proofreading purposes, any suggested amendments made by Microsoft Copilot were reviewed and verified by the author to ensure that the content is accurate and fully reflects the Council's intended position and the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) professional assessment.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for up to 2no dwellings. The application was made as a request for Permission in Principle
- 2.2 At the time of the decision made under PL/2026/01620, the tilted balance applied.

2.2.1 At the of writing this appeal statement, the title balance still applies.

2.3 For the avoidance of doubt, the application was made without first engaging in pre-application discussions to allow for meaningful front-loading.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Other than the planning application to which this appeal relates, there is no recent planning history associated with the red-line of the application site.

3.2 Review of planning history near the application site was carried out as part of application assessment, these are included under the 'Planning History' section of the Delegated Report.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES / REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Application responses and representations are included as summaries under the 'consultation' and 'representation' sections within the Officers Report.

4.2 The full Conservation Officers representation, outlining specialist assessment of heritage harm which formed the basis for refusal reasons 1 and 2, will be included as Appendix C along with the Great Somerford Conservation Area map as Appendix D.

4.2.1 Informal appeal consultation with the Councils Conservation Team has been carried out and is included as Appendix G

4.3 The full representation made on behalf of Great Somerford Parish Council, outlining objections, will be included as Appendix E along with a PDF copy of the Great Somerford Neighbourhood Plan which includes a map of the local green spaces, including LGS7 where this site is located, as Appendix F

5. CASE FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

5.1 The main case for the LPA is set out in the delegated report for PL/2026/01620. Select, succinct, elaborations in response to the appellant's statement of case are also provided below.

6. RESPONSE TO THE APPELLANT'S STATEMENT OF CASE

- 6.1 The Appellant indicates at paragraph 4.14 that the appeal site as a gap within an otherwise built-up frontage, asserting that *there is no reason or need for the appeal site to remain open* and that *a sensitive residential development scheme would preserve the character and appearance of the* Great Somerford Conservation Area. The LPA does not agree with this position.
- 6.2 Notwithstanding that individual dwellings along West Street do not have complete uniformity in their design and scale, it is the LPAs assessment that interspersed open field frontages, which provide breaks in built form along the street, represents a deliberate and characteristic pattern of development which reinforces the rural character of the area.
- 6.2.1 The pattern was recognised by the Inspector in the 2024 appeal decision (land at West Street) who identified the importance of such gaps to the experience of the street scene.
- 6.2.2 It is the LPAs assessment, informed by the Councils Conservation Officer, that the appeal site is a key component of the Conservation Area's significance, and that its loss would erode the established spatial pattern.
- 6.3 The LPA respectfully suggests that the Appellant has not meaningfully engaged with the specific contribution that the appeal site provides to the character of the Conservation Area, with their statement of case instead relying on general assertions.
- 6.3.1 In particular, the LPA suggests that the Appellants statement of case does not sufficiently address or assess the visibility of the site from West Street and Public Right of Way GSOM27.
- 6.3.2 The LPA further suggests that the Appellants statement of case does not sufficiently address or assess the role of the site as a visually intact and legible field frontage, nor the way in which the site contributes to the rhythm of openness and enclosure which defines this part of the Conservation Area.
- 6.4 The Appellant indicates under paragraph 4.14 that *the existing low stone wall along West Street can be retained, including the hedgerow above*, suggesting that *there would be no change to the immediate street scene*; however, the LPA considers that this position fails to recognise that the significance of the site on

the Conservation Area setting lies not only in the edges but in the openness, depth, and visual relationship with the surrounding built form and footpath.

6.5 The Appellant further indicates under paragraph 4.15 that the land at West Street appeal is a *key material planning consideration*. This matter was carefully considered in the delegated report for PL/2026/01620, and the LPA maintains the position set out under the 'planning history' section of the report:

6.5.1 *Given the close proximity between this application site and the appeal site 'Land at West Street', very careful consideration has been given to the findings of that appeal decision. It is Officers opinion that the appeal decision provides clear contextual guidance but does not give determinative precedent value for other PiP applications in this area unless the site circumstances are genuinely comparable. This is because the inspector's conclusions were expressly tied to the characteristics of the appeal site. Whilst, for the appeal site, it was found that the loss of openness would not cause harm to the character or appearance of the CA, it is Officers opinion that this finding would not routinely apply to other nearby local green spaces - particularly not to those which are more visually prominent, more intact as field breaks, or more closely related to listed buildings and their settings.*

6.5.2 The LPA considers that limited weight can be attached to the Appellants reliance on the land at West Street appeal decision. This appeal site is materially different from the land at West Street site by virtue of being more visually prominent, more closely related to designated heritage assets, and that it forms a more intact and legible open break within the street frontage.

6.6 The Appellant indicates under 4.16 that there would *be no harm to the designated heritage asset* Grade II Listed Manor Farmhouse and its setting. The LPA do not share this view.

6.6.1 As set out in the delegated report, the appeal site lies immediately adjacent to the historic boundary wall of the Farmhouse, which forms a key element of its setting and historic enclosure. The appeal site contributes to the setting of the listed building arises from the following:

- The open and undeveloped character, directly adjoining the listed boundary wall
- The role in maintaining a transition between the listed building, its curtilage, and the wider rural landscape
- The contribution to the collective historic environment of the Conservation Area, of which the listed building forms a focal component

- 6.6.2 The Appellants statement fails to recognise that the listed building setting is not limited to direct views but includes the spatial, functional and historic relationships between a heritage asset and its surroundings.
- 6.6.3 The Appellants statement does not identify or assess the historic garden boundary wall, and the LPA disagrees with the Appellant's assertion that a *lack of intervisibility precludes harm*.
- 6.6.4 The appeal site forms part of the listed setting through its role in maintaining the open foreground to the boundary wall and the transition between the farmhouse curtilage and the wider rural landscape. Development of the site would erode this relationship, interrupt key views across the field towards the wall, and diminish its prominence and significance as part of the listed asset.
- 6.7 The delegated report expresses that proposals affecting the setting of listed buildings require clear and proportionate assessment at the principle stage. The LPAs concern that there has been an absence of a sufficiently robust assessment to demonstrate that harm to the setting of the listed building could be avoided or reduced remains.
- 6.8 The Appellant indicates at paragraph 4.23 that *the tilted balance is engaged with substantial weight in favour of sustainable housing. A local designation should therefore not frustrate national housing objectives*. The LPA does not agree with this position.
- 6.9 The delegated report includes conclusion of careful consideration of the scheme against national policy for Green Belts as set out in chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 6.9.1 The LPAs assessment of the scheme outlines that the appeal site does not represent a genuine infill plot, that development would result in the loss of protected open land that performs a specific and recognised function and that the scheme falls outside of the intended scope of the exceptions set out under paragraph 154.
- 6.9.2 The decision under PL/2026/01620 is clear that the LPA do not consider there to have been any very special circumstances have demonstrated under the submission. This position is maintained after review of the Appellants statement of case.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 For the reasons set out within the Delegated Report for the application and comments provided above, the LPA respectfully requests that the appeal be dismissed.

- 7.2 Without prejudice to the Councils case, should the Inspector be minded to allow the appeal, the LPA notes that Planning Practice Guidance confirms that Permission in Principle may only establish the location, use and amount of development, and that detailed matters cannot be controlled by condition at this stage. The LPA therefore have not provided a suggested list of conditions as an appendix to this statement.

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/01620
APPLICATION TYPE:	Permission in Principle
SITE ADDRESS:	Land North of West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, SN15 5EH
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Permission in Principle for Erection of up to 2 No. dwellings
RECOMMENDATION:	Planning Permission be REFUSED

PROPOSAL AND SITE DESCRIPTION

This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for up to 2no dwellings. The application site comprises undeveloped agricultural land in 'Great Somerford', a large village part of the Malmesbury community area. Great Somerford benefits from a neighbourhood development plan (NDP) covering the period 2016-2026, and a defined framework boundary. All but the south-eastern corner of the site is outside of the framework boundary; however, both the east and western edges of the site are directly adjacent to the boundary. The degree of spatial link that the site has to these boundaries provides clear connection to the settlement whilst the exclusion from the framework boundary indicates the value that the visual break of built form provides between the dwellings east and west of the public right of way (PRoW) 'GSOM27'. This value is further indicated by the sites inclusion as part of the NDP's designation of the wider parcel (LGS7) as local green space.



Figure 1: site(red) & PRow (purple) Figure 2: site & framework boundary (black) Figure 3: Officer site photos (2026)

The site is highly visible from the PRow, which runs through the eastern edge of the site, and is also highly visible from parts of the adjacent classified C road 'West Street'; there is gated access to the site via a private track connected to the highway. The site is within the Great Somerford Conservation Area (CA) and near Grade II listed 'Manor Farmhouse'. At the time of writing, the CA does not benefit from a made appraisal or management plan; however, part of the site (the

northeast corner) sits within the historic settlement boundary for Great Somerford and as such has potential for archaeological value.

The Environment Agency (EA) identifies the site as being within flood zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and seas and indicates that the site is within the inner zone (SPZ1) for groundwater source protection. The Councils Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) indicates that the site is likely to be at very low risk of surface water flooding and medium level risk of groundwater flooding.

PLANNING HISTORY

Relevant planning history at the site:

None

Recent, relevant planning history near the site (inter alia):

Manor Farm House: (directly adjacent to site, within CA, within framework boundary)

- N/04/01519/FUL and N/04/01520/LBC granted renewed planning permission and listed building consent, respectively, for *conversion of barn to dwelling* on 21.07.2004

Broadfield Farm: (less than 500m south-east, adjacent to CA, within framework boundary)

- 21/01950/FUL for *Proposed development of 21 residential dwellings, vehicular access from Broadfield Farm, ancillary works and associated infrastructure* was granted planning permission at appeal on 28.03.2023
- PL/2024/06427 granted planning permission for *1 no self build dwelling* on 07.11.2024

Land at West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham (opposite to the site, within CA, outside of framework boundary)

- PL/2023/06033 for *permission in principle for development of up to 2 no dwellings* was refused under delegated powers on 21.05.2024
 - o Appeal APP/Y3940/W/24/3345527 against the decision was allowed on 09.11.2024

Officer Note:

Given the close proximity between this application site and the appeal site 'Land at West Street, very careful consideration has been given to the findings of that appeal decision.

It is Officers opinion that the appeal decision provides clear contextual guidance but does not give determinative precedent value for other PiP applications in this area unless the site circumstances are genuinely comparable. This is because the inspector's conclusions were expressly tied to the characteristics of the appeal site. Whilst, for the appeal site, it was found that the loss of openness would not cause harm to the character or appearance of the CA, it is Officers opinion that this finding would not routinely apply to other nearby local green spaces - particularly not to those which are more visually prominent, more intact as field breaks, or more closely related to listed buildings and their settings.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Though considered as a whole, applicable Development Plan policies are listed below along with relevant legislation and guidance.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) – Adopted 2015

- CP1: Settlement Strategy
- CP2: Delivery Strategy
- CP13: Spatial Strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area
- CP45: Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs
- CP48: Supporting Rural Life
- 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 Development
- CP64: Demand Management
- CP67: Flood Risk

Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP)

- H4: Residential Development in the Open Countryside

Great Somerford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

- Section 6: Settlement Boundary
- Policy GSNP7: Local Green Spaces

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan 2020

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)

Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (2017 order)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (habitats regulations)

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA regulations)

HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

The Councils Housing Land Supply (HLS) Statement (base date: April 2024) was published in June 2025 and covers the HLS for Wiltshire and each Housing Market Area within Wiltshire as set

out in the WCS. The HLS position identified under section 6 of the statement expresses that the current number of years deliverable supply is 2.42 years.

Briefing Note (No. [25 – 04](#)) dated 18.06.2025 reiterates that position and states under section 2.3 that: *The council cannot demonstrate the requisite five-year housing land supply. The current position indicates there is a 2.42 years supply.*

ISSUES

The main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Whether the development is exempt from permission in principle
- Whether the site location, land use, and amount of development is suitable in principle
- Whether the land use is suitable in principle
- Whether the amount of development is suitable in principle

CONSULTATION

Great Somerford Parish Council: Object

On behalf of Great Somerford Parish Council, I am instructed to make representation in respect of the above referenced planning application. The Parish Council OBJECTS to the development proceeding. Reasons for the objection include the following:

- *Conflict with the strategic aims of the development plan;*
- *Development in conflict with the aims of designation of the land as Local Green Space;*
- *Harm to heritage assets, in particular the Great Somerford Conservation Area;*
- *Inability to provide safe access and egress onto the highway; and*
- *Harm to the character and appearance of the area.*

[...]

The development would conflict with the purposes of the site's designation as Local Green Space, eroding the quality and availability of green space within the village of Great Somerford and having a harmful impact on the local character and the Great Somerford Conservation Area. Harmful impacts on the LGS and the CA are strong reasons for refusing planning permission, and there is no 'tilted balance' operative in this case. The development is contrary to the overarching strategic policies of the development plan set out at Core Policies 1, 2 and (for the purposes of this area) 13. Due to this significant policy conflict and as there is no tilted balance necessary, the development should be considered unacceptable in principle. There are significant tensions between highways visibility, the footpath and the historic environment inherent in developing this site. It is not at all clear that these tensions are capable of being resolved satisfactorily. Given the limitations of the Permission in Principle process it is therefore the Parish Council's view that this application should be refused for these reasons as well.

Councils Archaeology Team: No Comment

I have no comment to make on this Permission in Principle application but would ask that Archaeology is consulted again if a Technical Details application is made.

Councils Conservation Team: Object

The site is the southern end of a larger agricultural field extending to the north from West Street. It is bounded to West Street by a low stone wall with hedge behind which forms a significant break in the built form on West Street. The west boundary of the site is formed by the brick boundary garden wall of the listed Manor Farmhouse. The east boundary is The Manor Stables and The Granary now converted but formerly part of the agricultural building related to the Manor on the south side of West Street a substantial 19th century house.

*There is a public footpath and field access to the paddock from the south eastern corner.
[...]*

In this case the significance of the listed buildings comes from their historic walling fabric and vernacular architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of local design approaches and materials which have some significant aesthetic and architectural interest. In addition, they make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation area as does the break in the development frontage afforded by this field.

The Inspector for the recent November 2024 (APP/X3940/W/24/3345527) extracted in the application planning statement very clearly describes West Street at paragraph 8 as

‘characterised by linear housing development of varying designs, ages and sizes. Some are set behind domestic hedges, others behind fences and historic stone boundary walls and others have a more open frontage. The overall sense travelling along the road is of being within a loosely developed village interspersed with gaps provided by field frontages. The appeal site is one such gap, positioned between existing development.’

These comments succinctly highlight the importance of these field breaks as part of the Conservation Area character and appearance and make a positive contribution to the Area.[...]

The application examines the impact on the Conservation Area character and appearance but does not assess the impact on the setting of the Manor Farmhouse and in particular the garden wall that forms the west boarder of the site.

With respect the Conservation Area the impacts and landscape setting the applicant has taken significant reference to the recent appeal decision on land to the south of West Street for two dwellings (APP/X3940/W/24/3345527) [...]

I would disagree with the narrow reliance on this previous appeal decision and the impact on the Conservation Area. While the amount of development is the same as two dwelling, the sites are very different in character and context and cannot be relied on. I consider the significant character and appearance of the Conservation Area is of these informal brakes to the road frontage of built development by being interspersed by small fields with field boundaries and hedgerows and the loss of this site would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

*In addition the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.*

This 'special regard' obligation requires a Local Planning Authority to consider the setting of listed buildings. This means the standard assessment for a PIP is overridden by this legal duty to protect the heritage assets affected. Any application for a proposal for two houses on this land requires detailed and specific assessment of the impact on setting of the listed buildings and in this case the Manor Farmhouse garden walls that bord the west side of the site. Therefore the application must come under the traditional planning route.

This PIP should therefore not progress beyond stage one as it fails the first stage (or permission in principle stage) as it does not establish that this site is suitable in-principle. [...]

Councils Drainage Team: No Objection

The LLFA have no objections to this permission in principle. The site is situated within Flood Zone 1 with a very low risk of surface water flooding and medium level risk of groundwater flooding. This land is compatible with the vulnerability of the proposed development.

Councils Highways Team: Comment

The site is located in the village of Great Somerford, outside of but adjacent to the settlement boundary and I will be guided by you as to whether you consider the proposal to be contrary to policies CP57 (xiv), CP60(i) and CP61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the NPPF 2024 paras 109-111 which seek to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and support and encourage sustainable, safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

No specific details have been included with regards to the vehicle access other than the gateway into the field is to be used. There is PROW that runs across this gateway and I am aware that the Rights of Way team have also been consulted and the PROW must be taken into consideration. [...]

Councils Rights of Way Team: Comment

I note the planning statement includes an extract from the digital rights of way map showing public footpath GSOM27 running along the driveway adjacent to the site. The digital mapping is a "working copy" of the Definitive Map of public rights of way and, as stated on our online map, should not be regarded as the definitive map and must not be used as a true legal record. We have checked the route of footpath GSOM27 on the Definitive Map and it runs through the field on the route available on the ground. The digital layer has therefore been amended to match the Definitive Map.

I have no objection to the proposal, subject to the public footpath remaining available

through the site at a minimum width of 2 metres. Where any gates across the footpath are no longer required for stock control they should be removed and left as a gap. The footpath should be shown on the site plan submitted at detailed planning stage and proposals for any changes to surfacing and boundaries affecting the path should be provided.

REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of writing more than 100 public representations of objection, including an objection on behalf of the 'Campaign to Protect Rural England', have been received, providing the following summarised concerns:

- Loss of local green space
- Loss of area frequently used by members of the community – particular concern RE loss of accessible green space
- No urgent local housing need
- Impact on the PRow
- Inaccuracies within the application submission
- Impact on the CA
- Impact on setting of Grade II listed building
- Impact on non-designated heritage assets
- Visual impact through loss of a key open break in built development
- Erosion of rural character
- Cumulative overdevelopment in the wider area
- Nearby appeal does not set precedent for this development
- Precedent would be set if permission granted
- Highway safety impacts
- Flood risk
- Impact on biodiversity
- Short consultation timeframe

ASSESSMENT

PiP provides an alternative route for obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The PiP stage establishes whether a site is suitable in principle (limited to the location, land use and amount of development) and the technical details consent (TDC) stage considers the detailed design, layout, mitigation and all other reserved matters.

Article 5B of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 prevents the grant of PiP for certain development. Where a proposal is assessed as falling within one of the Article 5B exclusions, the LPA has no power to grant PiP and the application must be refused. The primary assessment to be made at PiP stage is, therefore, whether the proposal is excluded from the PiP regime by Article 5B.

Where the proposal is not excluded by Article 5B, a secondary assessment is undertaken to determine whether the site is suitable in principle regarding the location, proposed land use and amount of development.

As planning conditions cannot be imposed at the PiP stage, whilst any mitigation that is required to make a proposal acceptable in principle must be clearly established at the PiP stage, any mitigation that relates to reserved matters may be separately addressed at the TDC stage. Broadly, however, where mitigation is necessary to avoid or rule out impacts that would otherwise prevent the grant of PiP, the proposal would fall outside the scope of the PiP regime.

Whether the Development is Exempt from Permission in Principle

Context

Article 5B(1) of the 2017 Order directs that an LPA may not grant PiP in relation to development which is:

- Major development
- Habitats development
- Householder development; or
- Schedule 1 development

Article 5B(2) of the 2017 Order further directs circumstances where Schedule 2 development cannot be granted PiP by the LPA.

Exemption Assessment

The scheme is for 2no. dwelling and as such is not proposing major development and is not householder development. The site is not in, or in close proximity to, a European site and consequently the scheme does not require consent under regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations and the proposal is not habitats development. Furthermore, insofar as the EIA regulations apply, the development is not Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development.

The proposal is not excluded from the PiP regime by Article 5B; assessment on the principle of development can therefore be carried out.

Whether the Site Location and Land Use is Suitable in Principle

Development Plan Context

Policies CP1 and CP2 of the WCS relate to the spatial strategy for Wiltshire, setting the policy foundations for the promotion of sustainable development within the county. CP13 expresses that development in the Malmesbury Community Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy Set out in CP1.

The majority of the site is outside of, but adjacent to the defined Great Somerford framework settlement boundary. Residential development in this location is broadly not supported by CP1, CP2, and CP13; furthermore, the development does not meet the exemption policies (CP34, CP37, CP39, CP40, CP44, CP46, CP47 or CP48) within the WCS or the aims of saved policy H4 of the NWLP.

CP51 of the WCS sets expectations for development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character; CP57 requires development to enhance local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment; and CP58 further requires development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Tilted Balance Context

The Council have accepted that the requisite housing land supply cannot be demonstrated and as such, for applications including housing provision, the policies which are most important for determining the application should be considered out-of-date.

11(d) of the NPPF directs that in these circumstances planning permission should be granted unless one or both of the following apply:

- (i) *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- (ii) *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.*

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF goes on to further express that:

In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply: (a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and (b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

For the avoidance of doubt, as the NDP was made in November 2017 (and therefore became part of the development plan more than 5 years ago) the requirements of paragraph 14(a) of the NPPF have not been met.

Paragraph 11d(i)

The site is located within flood zone 1 and has not been identified within the SFRA as being in an area at high risk of surface or ground water flooding. The site is not located within (or in close

proximity to) a SSSI, SAC, Ramsar, SPA, SAC or CWS and is not designated as green belt; however, it is designated as local green space within the NDP.

Furthermore, whilst the site is not within a National Landscape area, part of a National Park area, or defined as Heritage Coast, irreplaceable habitat, or a designated heritage asset, it is within the Great Somerford CA and within the setting of Grade II listed building 'Manor Farmhouse'.

Paragraph 11d(ii)

The development is not major development, and permission would not result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside. Furthermore, the site is in an area which would not require any future occupants to be wholly reliant on the private car to access facilities. At the time of writing, the site is considered to be in a sustainable location.

Public concerns have, however, been raised around whether safe and suitable access to the site is achievable. Further concerns have been raised regarding whether there is a need for the proposed housing, as well as the impact on the character and setting of the area.

Summary

The scheme proposes 2no dwellings which would bring about some benefit to the HLS for Wiltshire. No further benefits have been indicated within the application submission; it is nonetheless acknowledged that some limited localised economic benefit would be likely to arise during the construction phase of the development, and it is anticipated that there would be some ongoing economic benefit when the dwellings are occupied by virtue of receipt of council tax etc. Overall, however, given the scale of the development, the benefits associated with the construction of 2no dwellings are likely to be modest.

Taking into account the site and development specific circumstances, initial assessment regarding the impact of the development on the local green space designation and heritage assets must be made. Depending on the assessment made, impacts identified may result in provide a strong reason for refusing the development.

Particularly in circumstances where there isn't a strong reason for refusing the development identified as part of that initial assessment against the provisions of paragraph 11d(i), secondary assessment regarding whether any adverse impacts of granting PiP - in relation to the provisions of paragraph 11d(ii) - would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of 2no dwellings will also be made.

In circumstances where there is no strong reason for refusal and where the adverse impacts of granting PiP do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, the application should be approved.

Location and Land Use Assessment

Impact on the Local Green Space

The application site forms part of an NDP designated local green space – referenced LGS7. The NDP does not make explicit comment, under policy GSNP7, on what features resulted in the site being included within the list; however, does broadly indicate that all green space designations within the NDP are:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- demonstrably special to the local community
- local in character

Paragraph 108 of the NPPF directs that decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts as set out in chapter 13 of the NPPF, other than the provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land.

For the avoidance of doubt, chapter 13 of the NPPF expresses how the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, with paragraph 153 directing that *inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful*. Paragraph 154 instructs Local Planning Authorities to regard development as inappropriate unless a set exception applies, summarised below:

- (a) *buildings for agriculture and forestry*
- (b) *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments [...]*
- (c) *the extension or alteration of a building [...]*
- (d) *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.*
- (e) *limited infilling in villages*
- (f) *limited affordable housing [...]*
- (g) *limited infilling or complete redevelopment of previously development land [...]*
- (h) *other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*
 - (i) *mineral extraction*
 - (ii) *engineering operations*
 - (iii) *local transport infrastructure [...]*
 - (iv) *the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction*
 - (v) *material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
 - (vi) *development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order*

The development site relates to an area of land which, whilst it reads as being within the settlement, is outside of the defined framework boundary and is designated as local green space. The site is valued as an undeveloped visual break in built form which enhances the rural local character and makes a meaningful contribution to the appearance of the area. Whilst paragraph 154(e) recognises 'limited infilling in villages' as development which may (by exemption) be development that is not inappropriate, the purpose of this exemption is to enable the consolidation of existing built form and should not be taken as justification for the loss of protected open land.

It is clear from the number and content of public objections received on this application that the greenspace offers special value to residents in the following summarised ways:

- used for walking and enjoyment of the outside space which benefits physical and mental wellbeing
- used for dog walking and picnicking
- particularly cherished for its accessibility by virtue of it being relatively flat
- used as a community meeting point which reduces loneliness, particularly for older residents
- as the village lacks a formal central green, this area acts in a similar way and is somewhat irreplaceable
- it gives an immediate sense of rural beauty
- it maintains open views and green gaps
- it contributes positively to the CA setting
- it provides for biodiversity

In addition, as part of a site visit carried out by the local planning authority, a number of these points were observed, including:

- the green space was well maintained and easy to traverse
- members of the public were seen walking and greeting one another
- dogs were seen being walked
- the visual value of the greenspace in providing a gap in built form was evident
- the general sense of tranquility was evident

The public objections raise substantial and consistent evidence that the green space is demonstrably special to the local community, performing an important role as an accessible green space used daily for recreation, social interaction and wellbeing including by older residents, children and people with limited mobility. The above factors align closely with the purposes of local green space designations, and, whilst the scale of the development is such that not all of the green space would be lost, the part that would be lost is of high visual value, providing a break in built form that enhances the character of the area and existing buildings therein. On this occasion, it is not considered that careful landscaping and design associated with the 2no dwellings would be sufficient to ensure that the permanent and irreversible harm to public amenity, community wellbeing and the village character is appropriately mitigated.

The development would result in the erosion of a local green space which is deliberately maintained as undeveloped and clearly makes a meaningful contribution to the special character of the setting; as such, the proposal goes beyond that which could reasonably be considered a genuine gap site and consequently is considered to fall outside of the intended scope of limited infilling insofar as paragraph 154(e) of the NPPF applies. The proposed development of 2no dwellings on local green space should, therefore, not be approved except in very special circumstances. In the absence of clearly demonstrated very special circumstances, the proposed development within the local green space is unacceptable in principle.

Designated Heritage Impacts

The application site is within the Great Somerford CA and is adjacent to Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse with its historic garden and boundary wall at the western boundary. Consultation with the Councils Conservation team has been carried out which has resulted in objection following an assessment of harm to these heritage assets. Their specialist review indicates that the undeveloped site provides a distinct and important green gap that contributes positively to the historic setting and raises the following summarised heritage concerns relevant to the location:

- development in this location would result in loss of an important open field frontage, eroding the established rhythm of development and openness in this part of the CA
- development in this location has the potential to harm the setting of Grade II listed Manor Farm by virtue of the proximity to the historic garden wall
- insufficient heritage assessment, particularly regarding the listed building setting, has been provided with the application submission – a proposal for development in this location requires full, detailed assessment

Whilst the representation does not clearly conclude what level of heritage harm would be likely should development in this location be consented, due to the limited information provided, it is clear that development in this location would result in harm to heritage settings and that the local planning authority would not be meeting their statutory 'special regard' duty under sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 if they were to approve planning permission.

Location Conclusion

The site is adjacent to the defined framework boundary and consequently has good access to local facilities. The site is, however, adjacent to a Grade II listed building, within a CA and forms part of a designated local green space; on this occasion, taking all information available to me into account, it is considered that granting permission in principle for development in this location would result in heritage harm and harm to the local green space which arise directly from the location of the site and consequently cannot be resolved at the TDC stage.

Given the above, the harm to the local green space and heritage assets resultant from development in this location has not been demonstrated to be suitable in principle.

Whether the Amount of Development is Suitable in Principle

At PiP stage, the assessment of the amount of development is somewhat limited to addressing whether the quantum of development proposed is so excessive, or so limited, that it would be inappropriate in principle, having regard to the site's location and the setting within which it sits.

In this circumstance, broadly, the size of the sufficient to reasonably accommodate 2 no dwellings with plot sizes commensurate to existing units in proximity.

Furthermore, whilst there have been significant concerns raised by members of the public that the cumulative impact of granting a further 2no dwellings alongside other previously consented development in the area would be inappropriate, 2no dwellings is considered to represent a modest level of growth relative to the size and character of Great Somerford.

Other Issues

Public Right of Way

PRoW 'GSOM27' runs through the edge of the site, including part of the area which is proposed for access to the proposed dwellings. Consultation with the Councils highways and rights of way teams has been carried out which resulted in no objection at PiP stage.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed 2 open-market dwellings would be in a sustainable location and the proposed amount of development is not so excessive that it would result in an inherent conflict with the scale or role of the settlement; however, whilst 2no dwellings may be broadly suitable within the context of the village, the location and use of the site is not acceptable by virtue of the identified harm to heritage assets and local green space.

Having considered the application against the development plan, the NPPF, and the statutory framework for PiP, notwithstanding the current housing land supply shortfall, it is concluded that the identified harm forms a strong reason to refuse the application.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

- The proposed development would result in the loss of an undeveloped field frontage which forms a historic and visually important break in built development along West Street which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Great Somerford Conservation Area.

The proposed development in the proposed location would harm the significance of the Conservation Area and the scheme therefore conflicts with section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, heritage aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

- The application site lies adjacent to Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse and its historic garden boundary wall. The undeveloped nature of the site forms part of the setting of the listed building and contributes to its significance. The proposed development fails to adequately assess or demonstrate the acceptability of the impact of the development on the setting of the listed building.

The proposed development therefore fails the statutory duty under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, and is contrary to heritage aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

- The application site forms part of Neighbourhood Development Plan designated Local Green Space (LGS7). Evidence from public representations and site observations confirms that the proposed location for the development remains demonstrably special to the local community, providing an accessible and well-used green space valued for recreation, social interaction, tranquility, and for maintaining openness and green gaps within the village.

While the proposal would not result in the loss of the entirety of the Local Green Space, the part affected is of high visual and functional importance. The proposed development in the proposed location would therefore result in permanent and irreversible harm to the value and function of the Local Green Space which could not be adequately mitigated through landscaping or design measures. The proposal cannot reasonably be construed as limited infilling for the purposes of paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework and, in the absence of clearly demonstrated very special circumstances, the scheme is contrary to local green space aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and unacceptable in principle.

INFORMATIVES TO THE APPLICANT:

- For the avoidance of doubt, plans and documents considered were:
Application Form; signed and dated 09.03.2026
Planning Statement; LPC, dated March 2026
Location Plan; received 09.03.2026
- On its website Wiltshire Council has made available statutory policies in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance. The Council also offer a full suite of pre-application advice services; however, on this occasion, the application was unfortunately submitted without any meaningful pre-application discussions.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 The Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017

Refusal of Permission in Principle

Application Reference Number: PL/2026/01620

Decision Date: 14/04/2026

Applicant:	CLLP 2010 Disc Trust
Particulars of Development:	Permission in Principle for Erection of up to 2 No. dwellings
At:	Land North of West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, SN15 5EH

In pursuance of their powers under the above Act, the Council hereby REFUSE Permission in Principle for the development referred to in the above application and plan submitted by you, for the following reason(s):

Refusal Reason

- 1 The proposed development would result in the loss of an undeveloped field frontage which forms a historic and visually important break in built development along West Street which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Great Somerford Conservation Area.

The proposed development in the proposed location would harm the significance of the Conservation Area and the scheme therefore conflicts with section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, heritage aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Refusal Reason

- 2 The application site lies adjacent to Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse and its historic garden boundary wall. The undeveloped nature of the site forms part of the setting of the listed building and contributes to its significance. The proposed development fails to adequately assess or demonstrate the acceptability of the impact of the development on the setting of the listed building.

The proposed development therefore fails the statutory duty under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, and is contrary to heritage aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Refusal Reason

- 3** The application site forms part of Neighbourhood Development Plan designated Local Green Space (LGS7). Evidence from public representations and site observations confirms that the proposed location for the development remains demonstrably special to the local community, providing an accessible and well-used green space valued for recreation, social interaction, tranquility, and for maintaining openness and green gaps within the village.

While the proposal would not result in the loss of the entirety of the Local Green Space, the part affected is of high visual and functional importance. The proposed development in the proposed location would therefore result in permanent and irreversible harm to the value and function of the Local Green Space which could not be adequately mitigated through landscaping or design measures. The proposal cannot reasonably be construed as limited infilling for the purposes of paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework and, in the absence of clearly demonstrated very special circumstances, the scheme is contrary to local green space aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and unacceptable in principle.

Informative

- 1** - For the avoidance of doubt, plans and documents considered were:

Application Form; signed and dated 09.03.2026

Planning Statement; LPC, dated March 2026

Location Plan; received 09.03.2026

- On its website Wiltshire Council has made available statutory policies in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance. The Council also offer a full suite of pre-application advice services; however, on this occasion, the application was unfortunately submitted without any meaningful pre-application discussions.

Níc Thomas - Director of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

1. Appeals

If the applicant is aggrieved by the decision of the Local Planning Authority to refuse permission for the proposed development, he/she may appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment in accordance with Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990. Forms can be downloaded from the web site: www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk or accessed via the Planning Portal: <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals>.

Appeals must be made within 6 months of the date of the refusal. The Secretary of State has power to allow a longer period for the giving of a notice of appeal but he will not normally be prepared to exercise this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal. The Secretary of State is not required to entertain an appeal if it appears to him that permission for the proposed development could not have been so granted by the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the Statutory requirements, to the provisions of the Development Order, and to any Directions given under the Order. A copy of the appeal documents should be sent direct to the Council using the following email address: planningappeals@wiltshire.gov.uk.

2026/01620 Permission in Principle

Site: Land North of West Street Great Somerford

Proposal: Permission in Principle (PIP) for the Proposed Erection of Up to two Dwellings

Recommendations:

☐	Comment
☐	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
☐	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
☒	Object (for reasons set out below)
☐	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Site Description:

The site is the southern end of a larger agricultural field extending to the north from West Street. It is bounded to West Street by a low stone wall with hedge behind which forms a significant break in the built form on West Street. The west boundary of the site is formed by the brick boundary garden wall of the listed Manor Farmhouse. The east boundary is The Manor Stables and The Granary now converted but formerly part of the agricultural building related to the Manor on the south side of West Street a substantial 19th century house.

There is a public footpath and field access to the paddock from the south eastern corner.

The site lies in the Great Somerford Conservation Area, which is shown on the map extract on the following page.

Heritage Assets:

Manor Farmhouse West Street Great Somerford grade II

Great Somerford Conservation Area

Relevant planning History:

N/A

The Proposal: Permission in Principle (PIP) for the Proposed Erection of Up to Two Dwellings

Policy: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

Paragraphs 213 -15 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance."

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.

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Issues: Impact on the setting of the Listed Buildings including the Manor Farmhouse garden wall.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest.

The interest may be **architectural**, or **historic** as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 S 1.

The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be, **architectural**, or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic, and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the listed buildings comes from their historic walling fabric and vernacular architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of local design approaches and materials which have some significant aesthetic and architectural interest. In addition, they make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation area as does the break in the development frontage afforded by this field.

The Inspector for the recent November 2024 (APP/X3940/W/24/3345527) extracted in the application planning statement very clearly describes West Street at paragraph 8 as 'characterised by linear housing development of varying designs, ages and sizes. Some are set behind domestic hedges, others behind fences and historic stone boundary walls and others have a more open frontage. The overall sense travelling along the road is of being within a loosely developed village interspersed with gaps provided by field frontages. The appeal site is one such gap, positioned between existing development.'

These comments succinctly highlight the importance of these field breaks as part of the Conservation Area character and appearance and make a positive contribution to the Area.

Assessment:

The applicant has provided a Planning Statement. It has indicated that the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), advises:

'The permission in principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.'

The applicant comments that The Government's guidance sets out that the scope of the first stage of permission in principle is limited to the assessment of:

- Location
- Land Use and
- The Amount of Development.

The application proposal has a narrow focus with only the principle of the proposed residential development being considered.

However, issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage.

The application examines the impact on the Conservation Area character and appearance but does not assess the impact on the setting of the Manor Farmhouse and in particular the garden wall that forms the west boarder of the site.

With respect the Conservation Area the impacts and landscape setting the applicant has taken significant reference to the recent appeal decision on land to the south of West Street for two dwellings (APP/X3940/W/24/3345527) and comment that

....In that regard the shape of the village is fragmented. It is dominated by ribbon development spread out along either side of the main streets with some pockets of houses in depth behind frontage development. The application proposals would be entirely consistent with this pattern and whilst the existing site is undeveloped it does not present as a unique gap site.

Furthermore, there is a large variety of building sizes and architectural styles in the Conservation Area from both modern and earlier periods with no overall uniformity or vernacular. Consequently, as the recent appeal decision confirms it is not possible to say that "in principle" a scheme of two additional plots would harm this context.

I would disagree with the narrow reliance on this previous appeal decision and the impact on the Conservation Area. While the amount of development is the same as two dwelling, the sites are very different in character and context and cannot be relied on. I consider the significant character and appearance of the Conservation Area is of these informal brakes to the road frontage of built development by being interspersed by small fields with field boundaries and hedgerows and the loss of this site would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

In addition, the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

This 'special regard' obligation requires a Local Planning Authority to consider the setting of listed buildings. This means the standard assessment for a PIP is overridden by this legal duty to protect the heritage assets affected. Any application for a proposal for two houses on this land requires detailed and specific assessment of the impact on setting of the listed buildings

and in this case the Manor Farmhouse garden walls that bord the west side of the site. Therefore the application must come under the traditional planning route.

This PIP should therefore not progress beyond stage one as it fails the first stage (or permission in principle stage) as it does not establish that this site is suitable in-principle

Heritage Conclusion and Balancing: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

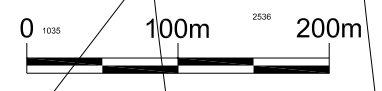
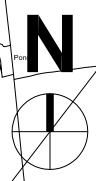
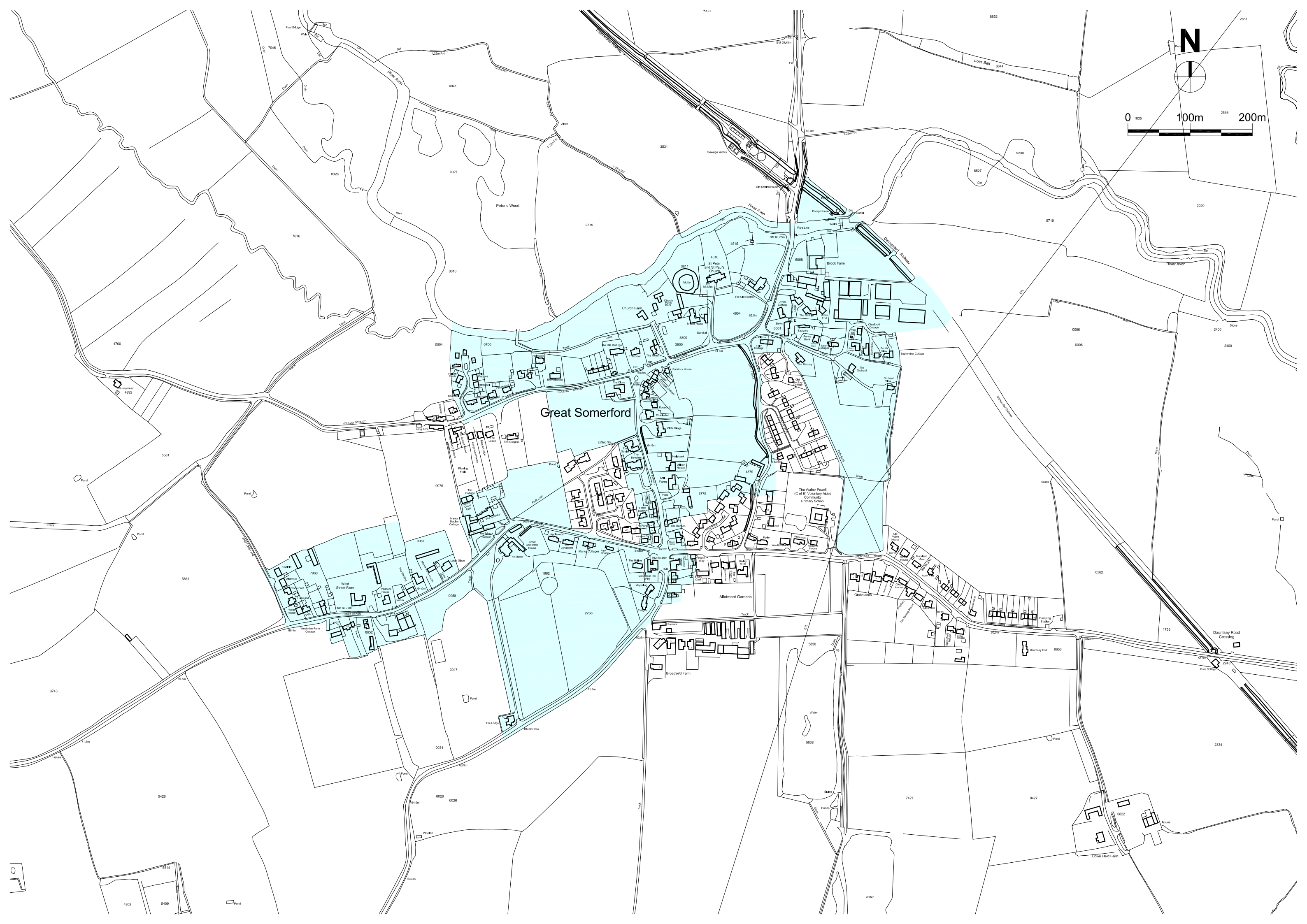
The 'special regard' under Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. S 16 and S.66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

This obligation requires a Local Planning Authority to consider the setting of listed buildings and means the standard assessment for a PIP is overridden by this legal duty to protect the heritage assets affected.

Any application for a proposal for two houses on this land requires detailed and specific assessment of the impact on setting of the listed buildings and listed wall and this must come under the traditional planning route.

In addition there is an identified harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through the loss of this open field braking the development on West Street which cannot be assessed through this PIP.

This PIP should therefore not progress beyond stage one as it fails the first stage (or permission in principle stage) as it does not establish that this site is suitable in-principle.



Great Somerford

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Walter Ponsell (C of E) Voluntary Aided Community Primary School

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm

Down Field Farm

Dauntsey Road Crossing

Albion Gardens

Brook Farm

Church Farm

St Peter and St Pauls Church

The Manor

West Street Farm



Isobella Wise
Development Management
Wiltshire Council
Monkton Park
Chippenham
SN15 1ER

1 April 2026

Planning Application Reference: PL/2026/01620
Our reference: MLP26016

E: c.powers@masterlp.co.uk

Dear Isobella,

PL/2026/01620 for 'Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 2 no. dwellings' at Land North of West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, SN15 5EH

On behalf of **Great Somerford Parish Council**, I am instructed to make representation in respect of the above referenced planning application. The Parish Council **OBJECTS** to the development proceeding.

Reasons for the objection include the following:

- Conflict with the strategic aims of the development plan;
- Development in conflict with the aims of designation of the land as Local Green Space;
- Harm to heritage assets, in particular the Great Somerford Conservation Area;
- Inability to provide safe access and egress onto the highway; and
- Harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Conflict with the strategic aims of the development plan

The development would conflict with the development plan in terms of its strategic policy, being the interrelated Core Policies 1, 2 and 13, in proposing development outside of the limits of development for Great Somerford, with none of the identified policy exceptions to the general policy of restraint in the countryside providing a basis for policy support. Moreover, Policy GSNP1 of the Great Somerford (incorporating Startley) Neighbourhood Plan (GSNP) confirms that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development on the allocated sites and others falling within the revised limits of development boundaries, shown on Appendix D2.

Whilst the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five years' supply of housing, policies of the Framework that protect areas and assets of particular importance can represent strong reasons for refusing development (as will be demonstrated later in this letter). As a result it is submitted that the tilted balance is not operative in this case and in this case the consequence is clear: this application should be refused first and foremost due to the in-principle strategic conflict.

Local Green Space

The site forms of part of a Local Green Space (LGS) identified within the GSNP. LGS is a nationally defined, locally designated policy tool as confirmed in footnote 7 of the Framework. The Framework provides at Paragraph 108 that decisions for managing development within a

MASTERLP.CO.UK

ADDRESS: UNIT 7 OAKRIDGE OFFICE PARK, WHADDON, WILTSHIRE, SP5 3HT
PHONE: 01722 580 550 | COMPANY NUMBER: 13665608 | VAT: 394065184

LGS “should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts” – excluding, as clarified at Footnote 45, provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land. The Parish Council therefore rejects the erroneous suggestion at Paragraph 5.17 of the Applicant’s Statement that *“It is of course also not intended as a nationally restrictive designation, such as Green Belt policy”* – indeed LGS are arguably in fact given more restrictive policy protection than Green Belt, which is subject to loosening provisions in the case of grey belt and previously developed land.

The Parish Council also rejects the insinuation that the LGS set out in the GSNP are in any way lacking in evidence basis. The sites then designated as LGS were considered in the examination of the GSNP and the Independent Examiner found as follows:

“I have visited all the proposed Local Green Spaces. I have also had regard to the full justification shown in Appendix G... I will be recommending that all sites should be indicated using the same shading. I know the criticisms made by Gleeson as it relates to the methodology of the site selection for local green space. I have reflected on the comments but I have enough information before me to conclude that in this case all the proposed local green spaces, in my opinion, do meet the criteria set by paragraph 77 of the NPPF and the additional online guidance in the PPG. I have received no representations from residents that they disagree with the inclusion of any of the sites. The Planning Practice Guidance states that within the criteria given, designation is a matter for local discretion. The guidance affirms that LGS designation should not be a blanket measure for the protection of open countryside adjacent to settlements. I consider that all the sites identified are considered as important by the villagers of Great Somerford and this warrants protection.”

The designation of the LGS remains “a matter of local discretion”, per the Planning Practice Guidance¹, and the Framework’s selection criteria for LGS are substantially unchanged from the time that the GSNP was made. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the LGS was made properly as part of the making of the GSNP.

The development of this LGS, which clearly occupies a prominent position of importance to the local community, would erode the provision of LGS within Great Somerford and would clearly conflict with the purposes of its designation. The loss of LGS to make way for housing would by its nature harm the LGS and as a result this would represent a *strong reason* for refusal. In any event, the Agent does not advance any compliance with national policy for green belt, nor present any Very Special Circumstances.

Local character and the Historic Environment

The site is located within the Great Somerford Conservation Area. This is a designated heritage asset, and conflict with national policy in respect of heritage assets can represent a strong reason for refusal of planning permission for the purposes of Paragraph 11d)i. of the Framework. As set out at NPPF Paragraph 213, any harm to the significance of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Furthermore, the Council has a duty set out at Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 when performing functions under the planning Acts to pay “special attention... to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

The Conservation Area (CA) is characterised by a number of significant green gaps breaking up development throughout the village. The site represents the first such gap on the entrance to the village from the west. Development at the front of this site would eradicate the value of this small green gap.

This part of the CA also prominently features stone walls fronting boundaries, which contributes to the overall sense of distinctiveness of the village. The northern side of West Street features

¹ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#Local-Green-Space-designation> Paragraph 013

a substantial length of stone wall, interrupted only for short sections to make way for plot access. Due to the kink in the road, and in the knowledge that the development will need to be able to demonstrate a visibility splay of 2.4 x 43 metres in both directions, it appears highly likely that the stone wall at the front of this site would need to be fully or largely removed (it is in any event dubious that the required visibility can in fact be demonstrated as will be considered later).

Both the stone wall frontage and the green gap are important elements of the village making significant positive contributions to the local character and to the significance of the CA. The Parish Council have no reason to conclude otherwise than that the development would have a harmful impact on the local character and on the significance of the Great Somerford Neighbourhood Plan, and would thereby conflict with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

The harm to the significance of the CA is less than substantial. Whilst Core Policy 58 requires that *"Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment"*, the Framework sets out at Paragraph 215 that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this instance the Parish Council proposes that development of this site to form two dwellings would not provide public benefits that outweigh the likely harm to be caused to the significance of the CA.

Consequently, it is concluded that the harmful impact on the designated heritage asset would conflict with the Council's Section 72 duty, and the conflict with policies relating to heritage assets would represent a *strong reason* for refusing planning permission.

Highways

As previously noted, the Applicants will be required to demonstrate a visibility splay of 2.4 x 43 metres in both directions. Due to the curvature of the road it is not clear that visibility can be achieved without passing through neighbouring property, outside of the Applicants' control. There is therefore significant doubt as to whether the necessary visibility splay can be delivered. Development at this site would therefore present a significant hazard to road safety. This is an in-principle issue. Refusal on this basis would be consistent with the recent refusal of Application No. PL/2025/06148. The Parish Council would therefore ask Wiltshire Highways to look again at the proposal and consider whether there is a reasonable prospect of the visibility splay being achieved.

The site contains a public right of way (PRoW), Footpath GSOM27. An image is presented within the Applicant's Planning Statement purporting to be from the definitive map, ostensibly demonstrating that the field access to the site and the footpath crossing it is permissive and not part of the PRoW network. This nevertheless is from the Council's online interactive mapping service, which should not be taken as definitive.

Figure 1 overleaf is taken from the up-to-date Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Explorer map, at a different zoom level. By contrast with the Applicants' image this version shows the PRoW very clearly passing through the site.

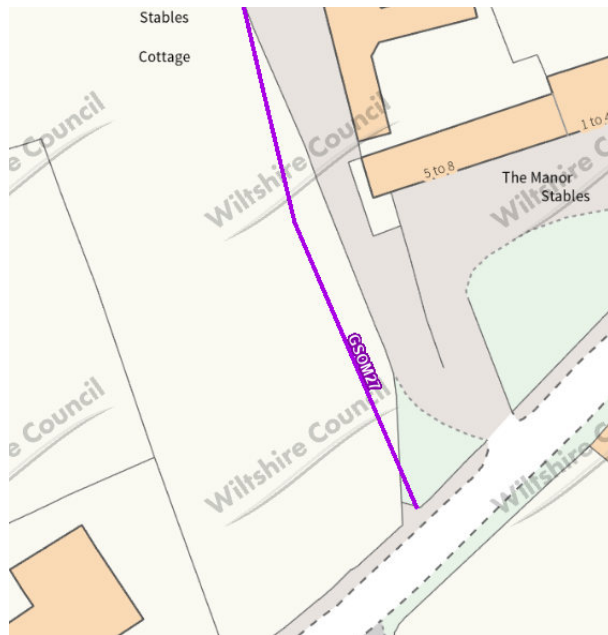


Figure 1: excerpt from Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Explorer²

It is clear that this discrepancy is as a result of unclear publicly available information. The above image is a result of Wiltshire Council rectifying its own erroneously published mapping. While the Applicants cannot be blamed for this, it makes it clear that the site access cannot be as straightforward as they might have imagined. This is particularly true given the curvature of the road and the substantial increase in height a short distance from the roadside. It is very difficult to see how a successful site access can be installed at all, but in particular without infringing on the PRoW.

The PRoW, along with the highway visibility issue, the CA and the LGS represent a significant level of planning constraint, that the very limited information provided within a Permission in Principle application is ill equipped to address. With it being dubious that the tensions involved in these constraints can be adequately resolved, it is the Parish Council's recommendation that the application be refused as these cumulatively raise significant in-principle concerns going beyond simply the planning policy position.

Planning balance

Policies of the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide strong reasons to refuse planning permission for this development; as a result the 'tilted' balance is not operative in this case. Nevertheless a contrasting 'flat' balance is necessary given the provisions of section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

In this case, harm to the application of policies of the development plan, to heritage assets, to LGS, and to highway safety all weigh heavily against permitting the development. It is the Parish Council's submission that the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would profoundly outweigh the benefits. Material considerations do not in this case indicate that the application should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan, and the application should be refused.

Conclusion

The development would conflict with the purposes of the site's designation as Local Green Space, eroding the quality and availability of green space within the village of Great Somerford

² Available at <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/cae051befa5649fbb318c836afe901c1/page/Page>

and having a harmful impact on the local character and the Great Somerford Conservation Area. Harmful impacts on the LGS and the CA are *strong reasons* for refusing planning permission, and there is no 'tilted balance' operative in this case.

The development is contrary to the overarching strategic policies of the development plan set out at Core Policies 1, 2 and (for the purposes of this area) 13. Due to this significant policy conflict and as there is no tilted balance necessary, the development should be considered unacceptable in principle.

There are significant tensions between highways visibility, the footpath and the historic environment inherent in developing this site. It is not at all clear that these tensions are capable of being resolved satisfactorily. Given the limitations of the Permission in Principle process it is therefore the Parish Council's view that this application should be refused for these reasons as well.

Yours faithfully,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the Senior Planner.

Callan Powers MPlan
Senior Planner

Great Somerford (incorporating Startley) Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026



Made November 2017

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Scope of the plan.....	4
3. Vision and objectives for the parish	5
4. Overview of Great Somerford/Startley	5
5. Current housing and infrastructure	8
6. Settlement Boundary (Limit of Development)	10
7. Proposed new development	11
8. Site Allocations	15
9. Local Green Spaces	22
10. Consultation.....	24
11. Monitoring and implementation	24
Appendices included in this Plan.....	26
Additional appendices in support of the Submission Plan	26

1. Introduction

1.1 The Localism Act 2011 brought about changes to the planning system. It sought a reduction in the volume, complexity and prescription of the system and to ensure that communities are able to benefit from development they welcome.

1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's priorities for planning. Local planning authorities produce local plans which provide communities with a framework for their own plans, seeking to give communities more control over the future of their areas. In Wiltshire, the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the targets for new development. The Neighbourhood Plan does the same and must be evidence-based and compliant with the NPPF and the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan can propose more development than in the Core Strategy but it cannot propose less growth or place a ban on all future development.

1.3 A Neighbourhood Plan can establish general planning principles for the development and use of land in a defined neighbourhood area. A Neighbourhood Development Order can directly grant planning permission (full or outline) for certain specified kinds of development. Where people have made it clear that they want development of a particular type, it will be easier for that development to proceed. The Neighbourhood Plan will consider many aspects of local life, including vital public facilities. It will also identify the preferred areas for new housing.

1.4 Great Somerford is defined as a large village in Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy. However, it should be noted that Startley is defined as open countryside so no development is planned there. Therefore, as the designation of this parish includes Startley, future references to "parish" should be read as including Startley, and references to "village" should be read as Great Somerford only.

2. Scope of the plan

2.1 The Parish Council's application for neighbourhood area designation was approved by Wiltshire Council on 15 April 2014. A map of the designated area, which relates to the parish can be found at Appendix C.

2.2 A steering group to produce the Neighbourhood Plan was set up in early 2014. It has met regularly to manage the project and the minutes of all its meetings can be viewed on the parish council's website <http://greatsomerford.info/neighbourhood-plan/>, along with the approved terms of reference.

2.3 The primary purposes of the neighbourhood plan are:

- To identify appropriate sites within the village to accommodate additional housing in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- To identify those areas which are currently undeveloped and which the parish wishes to retain as local green spaces.

2.4 The neighbourhood plan process involves (in order):

- Informal consultation within the parish prior to preparation of the plan
- A formal consultation of the plan for six weeks within the parish
- Submission to the Council for a consultation period of six weeks
- Scrutiny by an independent examiner
- If the plan is supported by the examiner, a public referendum will take place in the parish when, if over 50% of those voting agree to the plan, it will be formally made by Wiltshire Council.

2.5 It is considered that this Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and that it has been prepared in line with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). It is further considered that it meets the prescribed five basic conditions for neighbourhood plans.

2.6 Consultation with Wiltshire Council, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency confirmed that neither a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) nor a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) were required.

3. Vision and objectives for the parish

3.1 The parish is currently a thriving community with several public amenities such as the school, pub and shop/post office. However, the average age of its population is steadily increasing and house prices mean that it is not easy for young families to move and/or stay in the parish. Our vision is that the parish will broaden its population to sustain the public amenities by being more accessible through a range of housing and open areas that will allow recreation and social interaction. All this will still be within an environment which does not disturb the rural nature of the parish.

3.2 Accordingly the parish developed the following objectives:

- To seek to provide additional housing which will be a mix of affordable and open-market dwellings. All such housing is to be within walking distance of the centre of the village and to be low-density in order to provide adequate garden and vehicle spaces.
- To protect identified local green spaces by ensuring that no development takes place there and to clarify the settlement boundaries (now termed “limits of development”).

4. Overview of Great Somerford/Startley

4.1 The parish lies seven miles north-east of Chippenham, four miles south-east of Malmesbury and 14 miles west of Swindon. It lies in the broad valley of the River Avon and is surrounded by fairly flat open countryside. The majority of the village is in a designated conservation area.

4.2 The topographical high point is the area around the church and surrounding ground. From here the ridgeline falls gradually past the river bridge with Dauntsey Road running eastwards onto a flood plain. South of the church the land falls gradually down Top Street and out onto the Seagry Road before levelling out onto a flood plain where the Avon meanders back to the West. Heading west from the church along Hollow Street the ground undulates gently and gradually rises in the direction of Startley.

4.3 Though there have been problems with flooding in the past, the parish was largely unaffected by the severe rainfall of the winter 2013/4. Flooding was confined to Frog Lane and, to a lesser extent, West Street. Mitigation measures are planned to reduce the flooding in these areas.

4.4 The 2011 Census shows that the parish has 304 households with a population of 737. The households are predominantly owner-occupied. There are 22 listed buildings of architectural or historical importance, including one Grade 1 building (the church), and a Scheduled Ancient Monument at the Mount. Great Somerford also has a designated Conservation Area. Heritage Assets are displayed at Appendix F3 Annex 4.

4.5 Public amenities include the village shop, the primary school and pre-school, the pub, church, allotments, several public rights of way, the playground and some public green spaces. Apart from these businesses there are a number of others operating from local sites. Manor Stables and until very recently Broadfield Farm housed several business units. In total these were responsible for the employment of approximately 45 people and the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to maintain or enhance employment. There are also several businesses run from home.

4.6 The village's housing is built largely alongside the principal roads, mainly on the south side of the river. Residential development in Great Somerford is predominantly of low density with large gardens. The natural centre is the crossroads where the shop/post office and pub are located, with the school a short walk away.

4.7 Great Somerford is a peaceful village, surrounded by open countryside and pastureland. Footpaths along the River Avon and through the leafy lanes and fields around the village, bring much pleasure to the villagers.

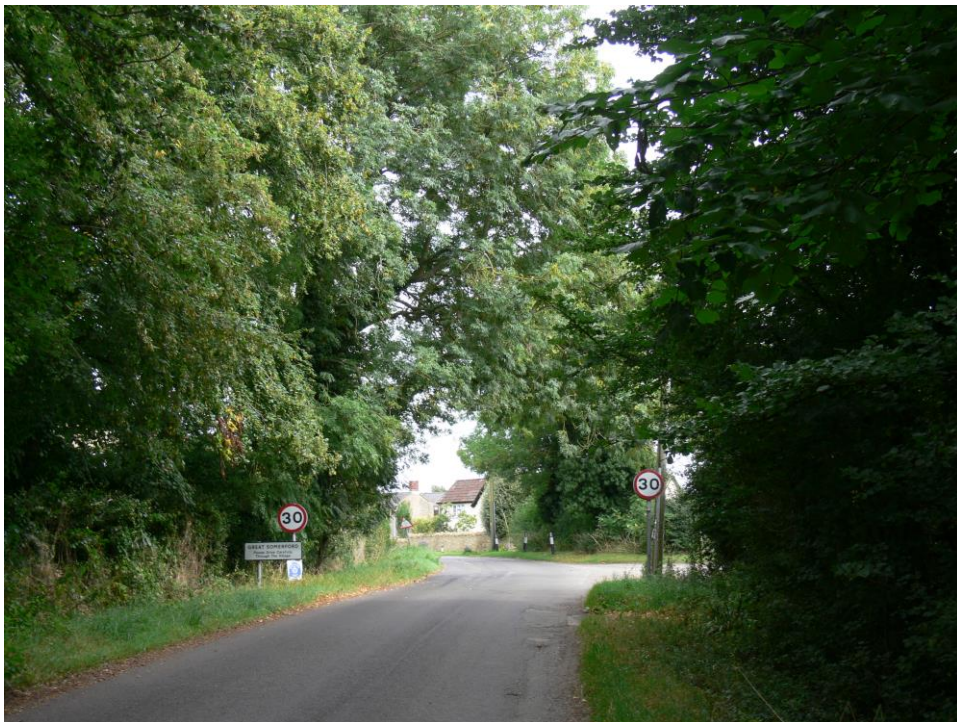
4.8 There are many attractive stone cottages and larger buildings throughout the village. The Church and surrounding fields and houses are particularly beautiful.

4.9 The Free Gardens and other fields and paddocks within the village boundary give an open feel to the village layout and are at the foundation of its character. These areas provide green space in the heart of the village and ensure the village does not appear to be over developed. There are still ancient farmsteads in existence within the village.

4.10 The narrow, winding roads and lanes throughout the village provide a pleasing rural feel. Grass verges, stone walls, hedges, trees and views onto the countryside through gaps in the built settlement all enhance the rural setting.



Winkins Lane



Approach to the Village from the South

5. Current housing and infrastructure

5.1 85% of the dwellings in the parish are privately owned. The remainder is a mix of social and private rented accommodation. It is notable that the average number of bedrooms per dwelling is much higher than the average in the county. Another characteristic is that residents tend to stay in the parish for a considerable number of years.

5.2 According to the Rural Housing Needs Survey 2014¹ only 8.2% of the parish's housing stock is deemed as affordable, compared with the Wiltshire average of 14%. Whilst it is to be expected that such a village location will have a lower proportion than urban areas, there is a requirement for a range of new housing to meet the needs of people in the area.

Affordable Housing Need

5.3 The RHNS demonstrates that in 2014 there was a minimum need for affordable housing for the following 3 years as follows:

Table 1: Great Somerford Rural Housing Needs Survey Recommendations (2014)

Tenure	No. of units
Subsidised rented housing	2x two bedroom homes
Shared/low cost home ownership	1x one bedroom home 1x two bedroom home 1x three bedroom home
Sheltered housing for older people	1x two bedroom subsidised rented home (providing help with personal care, warden)

5.4 Additional evidence from the Wiltshire Housing Register (obtained in August 2016) shows that there are 2 households seeking affordable rented accommodation in Great Somerford and 1 household seeking sheltered accommodation there. This reflects the 2014 Rural Housing Needs Survey recommendations for these housing tenures, as shown in Table 1 above. In the wider Malmesbury Community Area there were 51 households on the register in need of immediate affordable rented accommodation, as of August 2016. Wiltshire Housing Register data further confirms that there were 43 households registered for the shared ownership/low cost home ownership tenure in the Malmesbury Community Area. While the Register does not hold location specific data for the latter it is envisaged

¹ Wiltshire Council 2014: Great Somerford Parish Housing Needs Survey, Survey Report

that there is a need for this tenure in Great Somerford based on the RHNS finding also. This demonstrates that there is an immediate need for more affordable housing in Great Somerford and beyond.

5.5 The disparity between salaries and house prices for the North Wiltshire area remains similar to that reported in the RHNS and is a major barrier to house purchase. The RHNS at Chapter 6 quotes the average annual salary in the area in 2014 to be in the region of £20,000. The RHNS further states that it is unlikely that a household would be able to purchase a property in this parish without a large deposit, some equity in an existing property or a substantial income. First time buyers would generally struggle to meet the criteria necessary for obtaining their own home and in some cases intermediate housing (shared ownership or low cost market housing) would be a suitable option, whilst in other instances affordable rented accommodation would be appropriate.

5.6 The RHNS also advised that Great Somerford had a zero re-let rate. The low levels and turnover of the social stock in Great Somerford suggest that none of the households responding to section 2 of the RHNS and in need of affordable accommodation could meet their needs through accessing the existing social housing of the Parish.

5.7 Planning permissions monitoring data² show that from 2006 to 2015, 12 schemes with a total of 47 homes were permitted at Great Somerford. The majority of permissions was for small-scale developments of 1-5 dwellings and included no affordable housing; except for the Brook Farm scheme (30 homes). The latter scheme was permitted with a requirement to provide 7 affordable homes but is yet to be completed. All other small developments have been completed bar one.

5.8 Great Somerford forms part of the Malmesbury Community Area remainder as per Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 13. In the remainder of the area 30 affordable homes were permitted between 2006 and 2015. Overall it is clear that the number of affordable homes is not sufficient to meet need.

5.9 Based on the evidence above there is a strong case for additional affordable housing provision in Great Somerford.

5.10 More affordable housing would also be attractive to young people with families and others on limited incomes. This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to bring the proportion of affordable housing in the village much nearer to the Wiltshire average and boosting the opportunities to access affordable housing on allocated sites something which was supported by parishioners during public consultation. It is the intention to give preference for such housing to people with a demonstrable link to the parish in line with the adopted Wiltshire Council housing allocations policy.

² Wiltshire Council Planning Permissions Monitoring data, 2006-2015 (unpublished records)

Village Facilities

5.11 The parish is fortunate to have its own shop/post office, pub and primary school/pre-school. These community assets are valued but would be at risk without positive action to maintain them. It is the intention to identify key community facilities and protect them under the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012.

5.12 The village does not have its own village hall, though it does have the use of the community room at the school. In the past there has been consideration given to the construction of a dedicated village hall but the presence of Goss Croft Hall at nearby Seagry (which was a joint project with this parish) now makes this unnecessary.

5.13 There are a few places where the infrastructure could be improved, especially in locations where new housing might be considered. For example, those areas which currently have no footpaths could have this remedied in the case of further housing being built nearby.

5.14 Broadband reception in the village has been poor but has now been updated to high-speed.

6. Settlement Boundary (Limit of Development)

6.1 The Settlement Boundary (also referred to as limits of development) for Great Somerford was first established through the North Wiltshire District Local Plan 2011. The principle of the settlement boundary at Great Somerford is that development should take place only within the defined area, though it should be noted that there is general provision in the Wiltshire Core Strategy for development to take place outside the boundary in the case of small affordable housing schemes.

6.2 The Core Strategy confirms at paragraph 4.15 that neighbourhood plans can relax the boundaries at villages and through this neighbourhood plan the boundary has been reviewed and a map of the proposed new boundary is at Appendix D2.

7. Proposed new development

7.1 The NPPF explicitly states at paragraphs 184 and 185 that neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community; and that neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area.

7.2 The parish is a desirable place in which to live. As the village wishes to remain a vibrant and active community, it is essential that it does not stagnate and that its existing public amenities are retained and improved. In Great Somerford new development should be welcomed, provided that it is properly planned and built in accordance with the policies of this neighbourhood plan and considers the rural and open character of the village and the settings of its heritage assets. The proposed new development will deliver the mix of homes required to meet the vision and objectives in this plan expressed in Section 3. Proposals reflect the wishes of the local community and essential character of the village.

7.3 The Wiltshire Core Strategy at paragraph 4.15 expresses a preference for no major development at large villages (i.e. fewer than 10 homes). In this context parishioners expressed a clear preference against large sites during public consultation. 84 per cent of all respondents to the local survey preferred small groups of houses rather than a large estate. Consequently sites that would deliver against this consultation outcome were assessed by the Steering Group.

7.4 In planning for the future of the village this plan strikes an appropriate balance between meeting the clear and demonstrable affordable housing need; the locally specific constraints in terms of the character of the village and its heritage assets; and the expressed wishes of parishioners in terms of what kind of development they prefer. The plan does this by allocating a mix of sites capable of delivering between approximately 2 and approximately 18 homes in keeping with the village.

7.5 It is possible that additional housing, as proposed, in the village might pose problems of traffic or access. This must be considered at the planning stage of each proposed development and appropriate measures taken as detailed in the site allocations chapter.

7.6 At the start of the plan preparation process the total of approximately 35 dwellings was determined by reference to the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (February 2015), which requires 151 new homes in the five designated large villages of the Malmesbury Community Area.

7.7 There were already several locations in the village for which the owners had made a submission to Wiltshire Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). During the neighbourhood plan process the Steering Group assessed these sites and discussed them with the owners, taking into account the results of the local questionnaire.

7.8 As a result of the development of the plan, Policy GSNP 1 allocates 4 sites in the village for residential development of approximately 35 dwellings in total. A map showing the neighbourhood plan site allocations is provided at Appendix D2. Policies GNSP3-GNSP6 deal with the site allocations in detail.

Policy GSNP1 Proposed new development

Land for approximately 35 new dwellings will be allocated within Great Somerford on the following sites:

Site Allocation	Approximate number of dwellings
NP1 Broadfield Farm	18 dwellings
NP2 Dauntsey Road	7 dwellings
NP3 Frog Lane	2 dwellings
NP4 Land adjacent to Brook Farm	8 dwellings

There will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development on non-allocated sites that fall within the revised Limit of Development boundaries shown on Appendix D2 subject to compliance with other relevant policies in the development plan.

7.9 In respect of affordable housing, the criterion in effect at the start of the neighbourhood plan exercise was for all developments of five or more dwellings to include 40% affordable housing based on Core Policy 43 in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy; however national policy now requires that only developments of more than 10 residential units or over 1,000 square meters of (gross external) residential floor space should be subject to affordable housing requirements. Based on the Rural Housing Needs Survey there is a minimum need for 6 affordable homes up to 2017. This Plan aims to deliver 10 affordable homes in the period covered by the neighbourhood plan (up to 2026) in order to bring the number of affordable housing units closer to the Wiltshire average.

7.10 In addition, the existing planning permission and Section 106 agreement provides for 7 affordable dwellings on the original Brook Farm site. Site allocation NP4 will form part of the wider Brook Farm development so it will be subject to the 40 per cent affordable housing requirements in Core Policy 43. This will bring the total number of affordable dwellings on the extended Brook Farm development to 10.

7.11 Consequently, the total number of affordable dwellings would be approximately 42, made up as follows:

Existing Stock	25
Sites NP1 and NP4	10
Brook Farm	7

Considering the village of Great Somerford alone (i.e. excluding Startley), which will have approximately 323 houses, there would be approximately 13 per cent affordable homes which is much closer to the Wiltshire average of 14.7%, especially when the rural nature of the Parish is considered.

7.12 Policy GSNP2 reflects national policy on affordable housing provision thresholds, and where otherwise required, the 40 per cent requirement for Great Somerford in connection with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 43 and its supporting evidence. Affordable units will be allocated based on Wiltshire Council's adopted allocations policy³. Local connection is given priority subject to applicants fulfilling the required criteria of the Council's allocations policy. That policy also allows for cascading out in order to account for the affordable housing need in the wider community area if there are insufficient number of local applicants who fulfil the criteria of the policy, and where units would otherwise remain unlet or vacant.

Policy GSNP2**Affordable Housing**

Proposals for developments that result in a net gain of 11 dwellings, or more than a gross residential floor space of 1,000m², or as required by Policy GSNP6 in respect of Site NP4 Land adjacent to Brook Farm, will be expected to provide at least the percentage of affordable housing on the site in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 43. Affordable housing development will be supported if proposals contribute to meeting the affordable housing needs of people with local connections in terms of types and sizes of dwelling, affordability, and mix of tenures. Affordable housing units will be allocated in line with Wiltshire Council's adopted allocation policy.

³ <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/new-allocation-2015-policy.pdf>

References

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy

Core Policy 13: Malmesbury Community Area Strategy

Core Policy 43: Affordable Housing

Core Policy 45: Housing Needs

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 6: Delivering a wide choice of quality homes

Section 8: Promoting Healthy Communities

Paragraph 183: Neighbourhood Plan Making

Paragraph 173: Ensuring viability and deliverability

Paragraph 159: Housing

Other

Great Somerford Parish Housing Needs Survey Report (May 2014)

New Homes 4 Wiltshire Allocation Policy

Written Ministerial Statement: Support for small scale developers, custom and self-builders (dated 28 November 2014)

National Planning Policy Guidance: Planning Obligations: Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 23b-031-20161116

8. Site Allocations

8.1 Policy GSNP1 lists the sites allocated for housing development which are also displayed at Appendix D2. The plan sections below describe the detailed considerations for each site allocation. In general, applications for new housing development on sites allocated in this Neighbourhood Plan will have to accord with adopted development plan policies and national planning policy. Specifically, proposals will have to comply with transport policies in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Local Transport Plan 3. Transport links and access will be reviewed as part of the planning application process, and where necessary appropriate recommendations or mitigation measures will be made to the overall transport network.

Broadfield Farm (NP1) – Allocated for approximately 18 dwellings

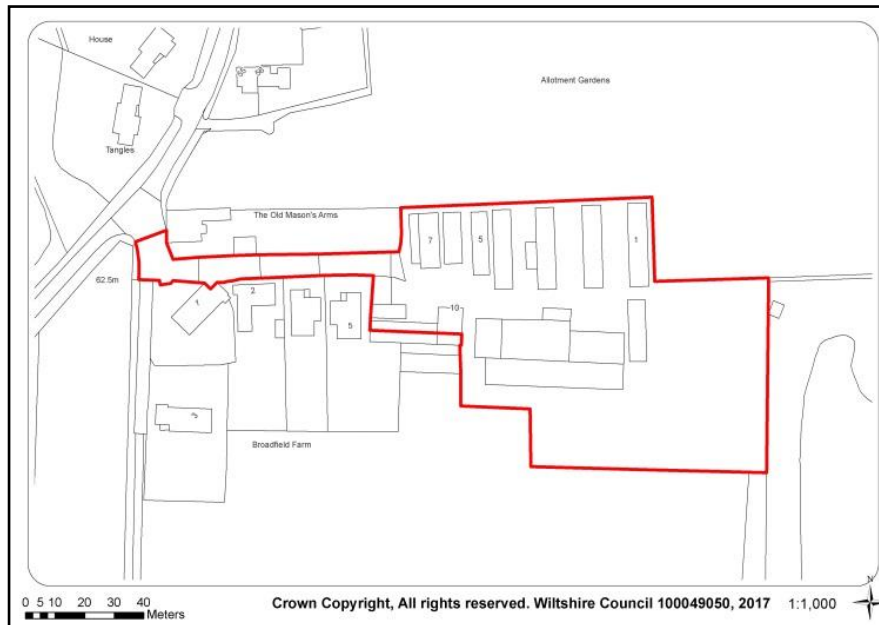
8.2 Broadfield Farm is located to the south of the village east of Seagry Road and to the south of the Free Gardens outside of but adjacent to the Conservation Area. The land to the south of Broadfield Farm is open countryside. The wider site constitutes a mix of development including housing, employment, and agricultural use. The site has access from Seagry Road.

8.3 Parts of the site benefit from consent granted in 2004 for employment uses and constitute previously developed land. This takes up approximately 0.91 hectares of the site. The employment units are vacant and considered to be in poor condition.

8.4 The previously developed land falls within the revised settlement boundary proposed in this neighbourhood plan.

8.5 Core Policy 2 in the Wiltshire Core Strategy expresses a presumption in favour of sustainable development within settlement boundaries. The Policy also includes a target of 35 per cent of all developments to take place on previously developed land.

Policy GSNP3 – Broadfield Farm



Site NP1 (Land at Broadfield Farm) is allocated for the development of approximately 18 dwellings in accordance with Policy GSNP1. When applying for planning permission, applicants will have to demonstrate compliance with the policies in the adopted development plan. Applicants should pay particular attention to:

1. Utilising, and improving the existing access from Seagry Road
2. Minimising the impact on the conservation area and its setting, in terms of the scale, bulk, siting, design and materials of the new units in order that they respect the local vernacular built form.
3. Establishing a safe pedestrian access to the village core.
4. The relationship to and impact on local biodiversity within and adjacent to the site particularly the County Wildlife Site

Dauntsey Road (NP2) – Allocated for approximately 7 dwellings

8.6 This site is of 0.5 hectare located to the south side Dauntsey Road on the eastern boundary of the village opposite the Guinness Trust development. The site lies outside the Conservation Area and well away from listed buildings.

8.7 The allocation of this site for approximately 7 dwellings will be in keeping with the existing low-density development at the south of Dauntsey Road. The site has good connection to footpaths into the village centre with key facilities. The existing access to the site for both vehicles and pedestrians would be from Dauntsey Road and improved splays would minimize the need for hedge removal. Retention of the hedge has been identified as important in preserving the setting of the Conservation Area.

8.8 Some localized flooding has been recorded for this site in the north east corner of the paddock caused by lack of ditch maintenance and the culvert in the roadside ditch with incorrect invert level. However a ditch level survey undertaken in March 2015 shows a good fall available to the main water carrier alongside Downfield Farm drive.

8.9 For this reason developers will be required to incorporate the resetting of the culvert invert level into their proposals and to maintain the roadside ditch following grant of permission.

18

Frog Lane (NP3) – Allocated for approximately 2 dwellings

8.10 This site of 0.18 hectare is located at the bottom of Frog Lane, adjoining the open space behind the school. Access for vehicles and pedestrians would be from the junction of Frog Lane and Park Lane.

8.11 This site is previously developed land having been used for storage in connection with vehicle dismantling business carried out near to the entrance from Frog Lane. The site was subject to a withdrawn planning application for 3 dwellings in 2006. Within the Orchards there has been development on the remainder of the area of six dwellings, five of which have access off the central un-adopted road. Development of this site with approximately two dwellings would be in keeping with the low development density in the area.

8.12 This location has suffered from some localised flooding in the past so a drainage scheme must inform planning applications for this site.

8.13 The development should enable connection to the footpath network running in north-south direction along the eastern boundary. Proposals must maintain the ancient hedgerow on the southern boundary which enhances the conservation area.



Site NP3 (Frog Lane) is allocated for the development of approximately 2 dwellings in accordance with Policy GSNP1. When applying for planning permission applicants will have to demonstrate compliance with the policies in the adopted development plan. The hedge to the south of the site must be retained. Planning applications must demonstrate that drainage requirements can be addressed satisfactorily and that measures are taken to reduce the risk of flooding to Frog Lane.

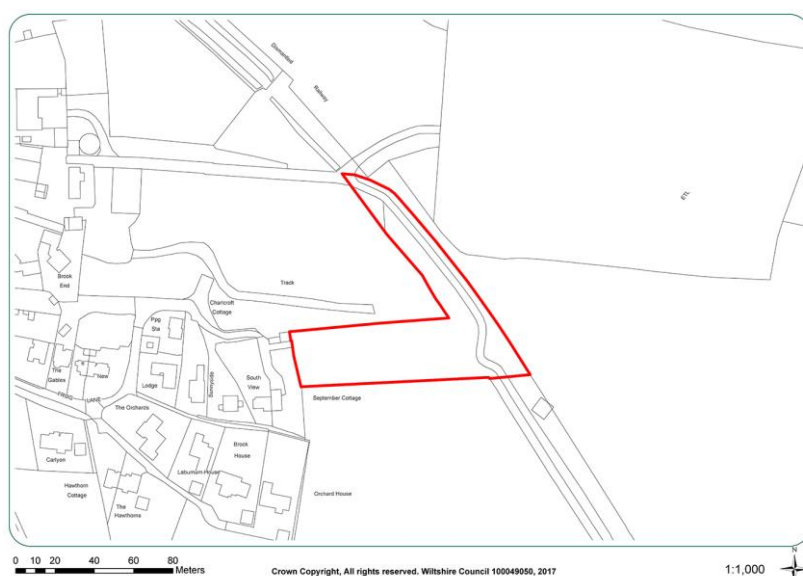
Land Adjacent to Brook Farm (NP4) – Allocated for approximately 8 dwellings

8.14 This site of 0.5 hectare lies adjacent to the permitted Brook Farm development for 30 dwellings that has not yet been completed. Access would be from Park Street for vehicles and pedestrians.

8.15 The site lies outside the Conservation Area and is separated from the listed barn at the entrance of the permitted Brook Farm development. The removal of buildings and silage bunkers from the southern and eastern boundaries and replacement by residential development reflecting the local vernacular will be a positive change. It is expected that the new development will be aligned with the main Brook Farm development in terms of design and materials.

8.16 The site straddles Flood Zone 2. The Flood Risk Assessment for the approved Brook Farm scheme incorporates Site NP4 and floor levels should be conditioned at 61.0m in accordance with that assessment.

Policy GSNP6 – Land Adjacent Brook Farm



Site NP4 (Land adjacent Brook Farm) is allocated for the development of approximately 8 dwellings in accordance with Policy GSNP1. When applying for planning permission applicants will have to demonstrate compliance with the policies in the adopted development plan. Development will provide affordable housing in accordance with Core Policy 43 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The development should be integrated with the remainder of the Brook Farm site and should be landscaped appropriately. The existing footpath to the east of September Cottage should be retained. Planning applications must demonstrate that drainage requirements can be addressed satisfactorily.

References

Wiltshire Core Strategy

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 13: Malmesbury Community Area Strategy
Core Policy 43: Affordable Housing
Core Policy 45: Housing Needs
Core Policy 46: Vulnerable and Older People
Core Policy 61: Transport and New Development
Core Policy 58: Conserving the Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 6: Delivering a wide choice of quality homes
Section 8: Promoting Healthy Communities
Section 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding
Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
Paragraph 183: Neighbourhood Plan Making
Paragraph 173: Ensuring viability and deliverability
Paragraph 159: Housing

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 3

9. Local Green Spaces

9.1 Great Somerford is a pleasant rural community. It includes a number of locations that have become established as open, green spaces and are recognised as such.

9.2 The older parts of the village are situated on high ground, a ridge running from the ancient ford (in the showground crossing into the Old Rectory paddock). The old road network from the ford linked Great Somerford and Startley via Hollow Street and Green Lane and other roads linked the farms to the ford. It was along these sunken routes where properties built prior to 1900 are found. Many of them feature ancient stone retaining walls and many of the paddocks in this area have the same feature.

9.3 The Great Somerford Conservation area was first designated in 1975, covering the heart of the village including the 11 listed buildings around Top Street and a further three on West Street. The extension to the conservation area in 2006 included the former railway station complex, junction of the World War 2 defences at Pillbox in the Showground, the Free Gardens and part of Dauntsey Road defined by historic allotment boundaries.

9.4 There are also a number of ancient farmsteads divided by ancient hedgerows within the village. These are heritage assets that define the early established farming community. As recorded in the Domesday Book (1080) the land was divided between two nobles whose representatives lived at The Mount and Manor Farm.

9.5 Other heritage assets are the chestnut avenue to the Manor House from Seagry Road, and the connection to the footpath through Quack Quacks to Top Street. The Listed Buildings map and schedule are displayed at Appendix F3 annex 4.

9.6 Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework makes provision for certain open spaces to be designated as Local Green Spaces and states:

“The designation should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds particular significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”

9.7 Policy GSNP7 designates eight sites within the village as local green spaces. These sites were identified by the community as of special importance to the village and were assessed against the criteria in NPPF paragraph 77.

Policy GSNP7 – Local Green Spaces

The areas listed below and mapped in Appendix G to the Neighbourhood Plan are designated as Local Green Spaces in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reference	Local Green Space
LSG1	The Land adjacent to the Church
LSG2	The field behind The Close
LSG3	The Playing Field in Winkins Lane
LSG4	The Field in Park Lane Opposite the Church
LSG5	Quack Quacks in West Street
LSG6	The Land next to the School between Frog Lane and Dauntsey Road
LSG7	The Old School Field between West Street and Hollow Street
LSG8	The Free Gardens/Allotments in Dauntsey Road

References

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 77: Local Green Spaces

10. Consultation

10.1 A full Consultation Document was prepared to support the submitted version of the Neighbourhood Plan. This gives full details of all informal consultation undertaken by the Steering Group, including the consultation under Regulation 14. It also includes consultation within the parish and with Wiltshire Council. A brief summary is given below.

10.2 Two questionnaires were issued to all households. One from Wiltshire Council (and common to all towns and parishes in the county) was the Rural Housing Needs Survey. The second was issued by the parish's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee.

10.3 An initial public meeting was held in the school hall on 22 April 2014; a second public meeting was held on 17 July 2014 and two further public meetings were held on 21 and 23 September 2014.

10.4 Subsequently a paper was delivered to every household showing the recommendations of the Steering Group and gave every parishioner on the electoral roll an opportunity to say whether or not they agreed with the recommendations.

10.5 Two final public meetings were held on 8 and 15 March 2015 to give another opportunity for parishioners to comment before preparation of the neighbourhood plan document.

10.6 At all stages parishioners have been informed of the progress of the plan by way of notices in the local monthly Signpost publication, letter drops, public notices of forthcoming open meetings and results of informal consultation exercises. There have also been regular reports of the Parish Council and updating of the web site.

11. Monitoring and implementation

11.1 Assuming formal adoption of this plan, the Parish Council will be responsible for monitoring progress.

11.2 The minutes of each annual general meeting of the Parish Council will include a report on progress of plan implementation.

11.3 This annual review of the delivery of the housing sites will provide the basis for a decision to review the plan. A short annual report on housing delivery will be provided each financial year.

11.4 Housing developments permitted within the parish will pay Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to Wiltshire Council upon commencement of development. Following adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council receives 25 per cent of receipts from Wiltshire Council. With the help of CIL monies the parish will consider as a priority the provision of a new recreation ground.

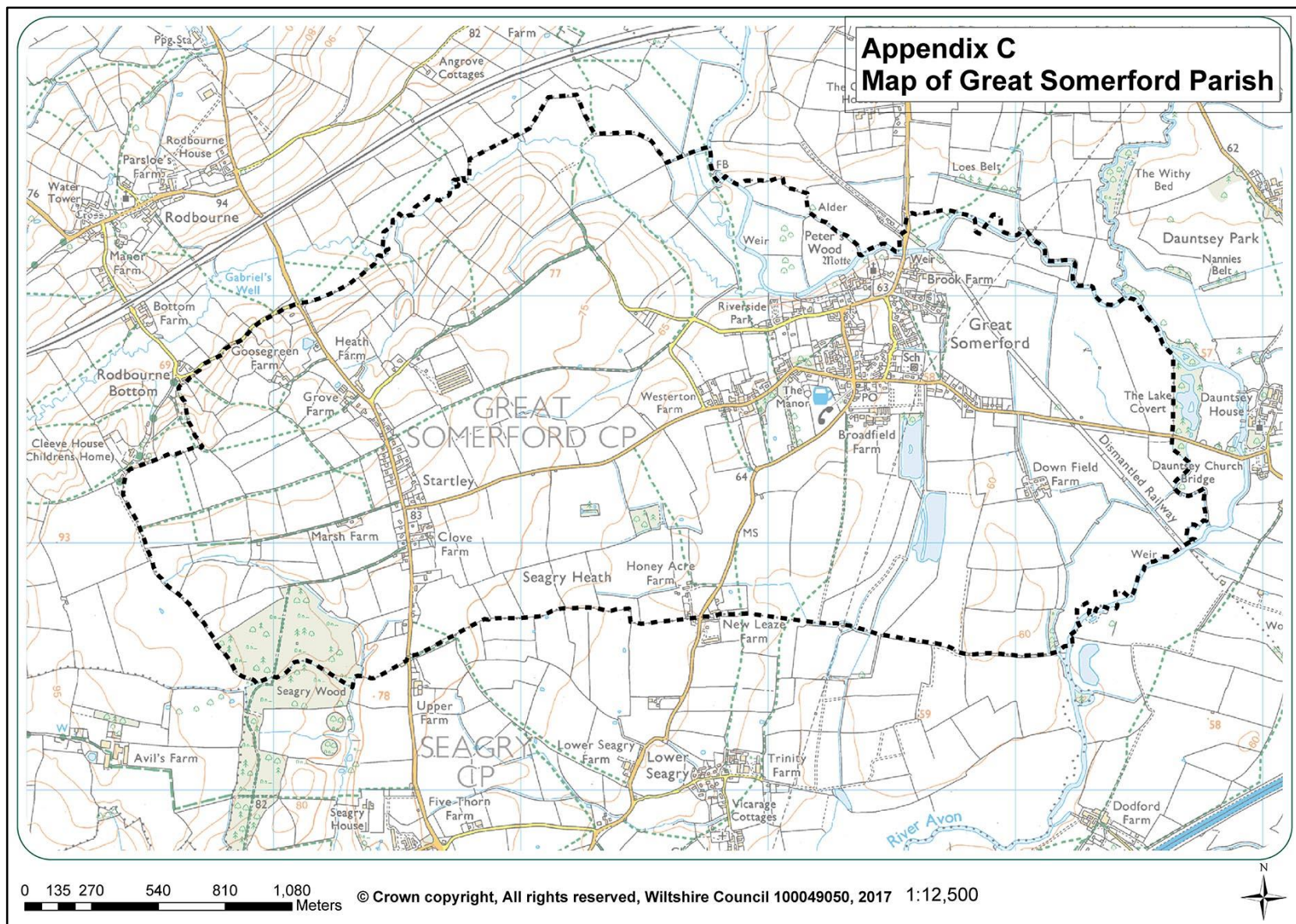
Appendices included in this Plan

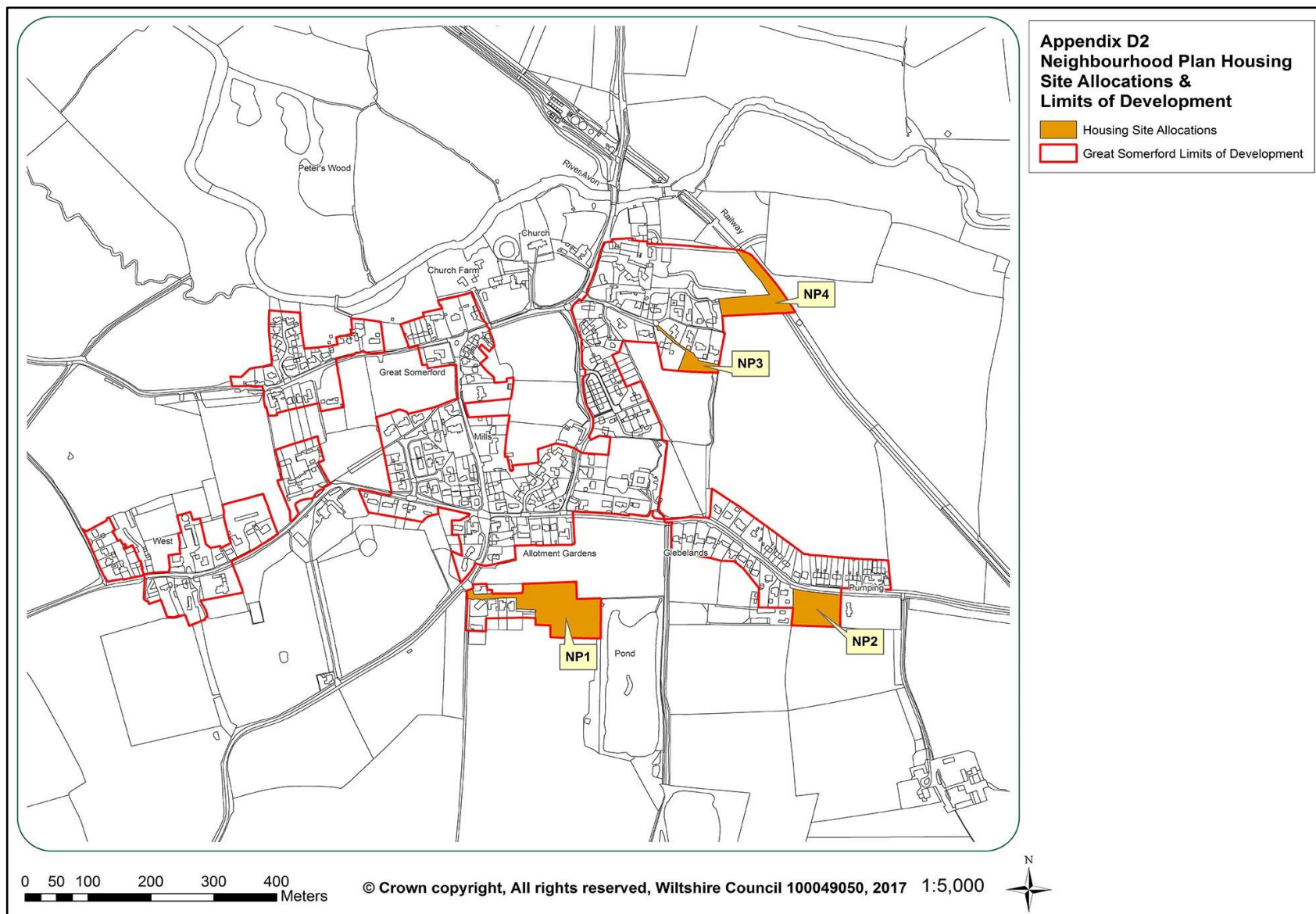
Appendix	Content
C	Map of Great Somerford Parish
D2	Settlement Boundary (limits of development) and Housing Site Allocations
Appendix F3 Annex 4	Heritage Assets
G	Local Green Spaces

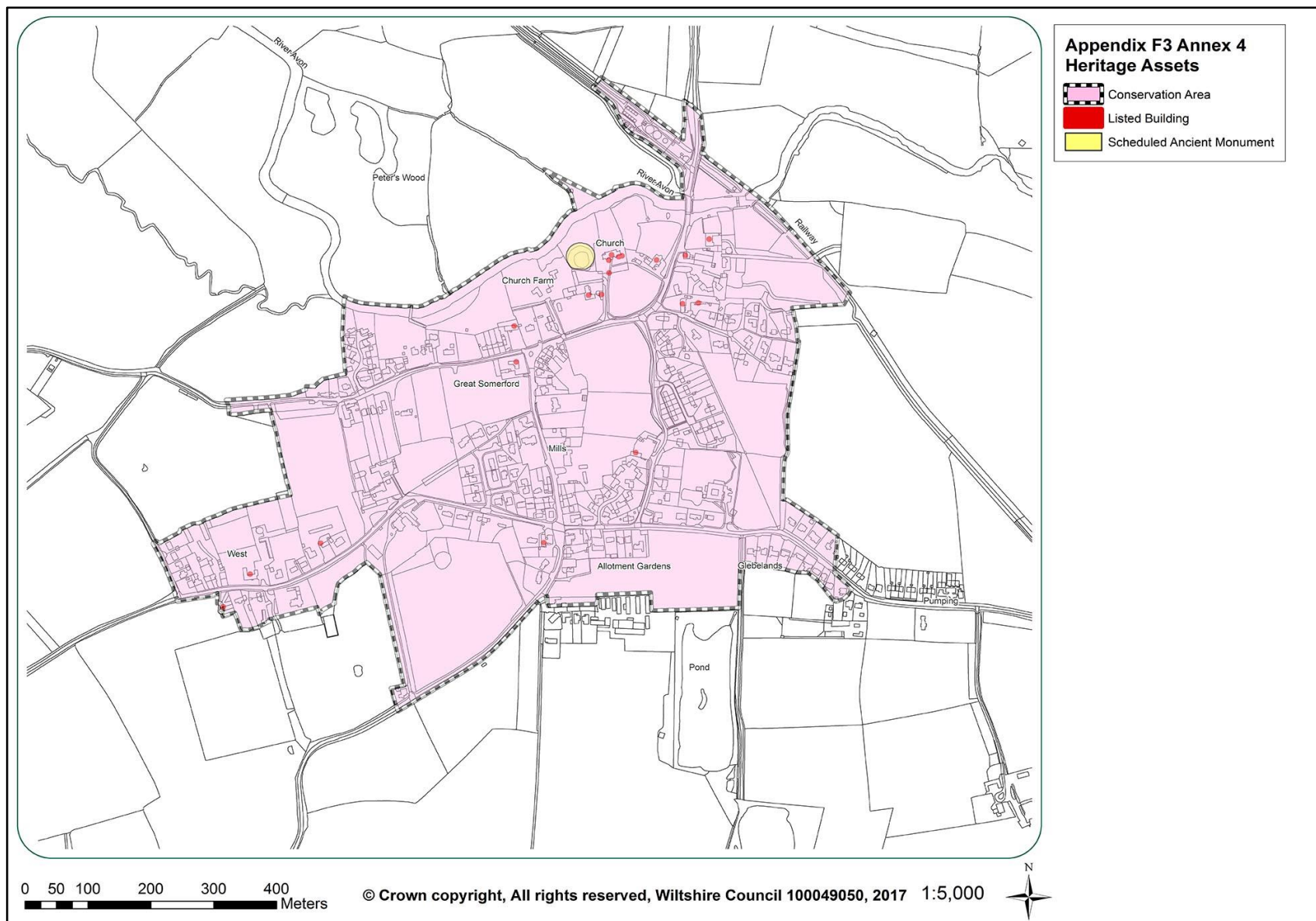
Additional appendices in support of the Submission Plan

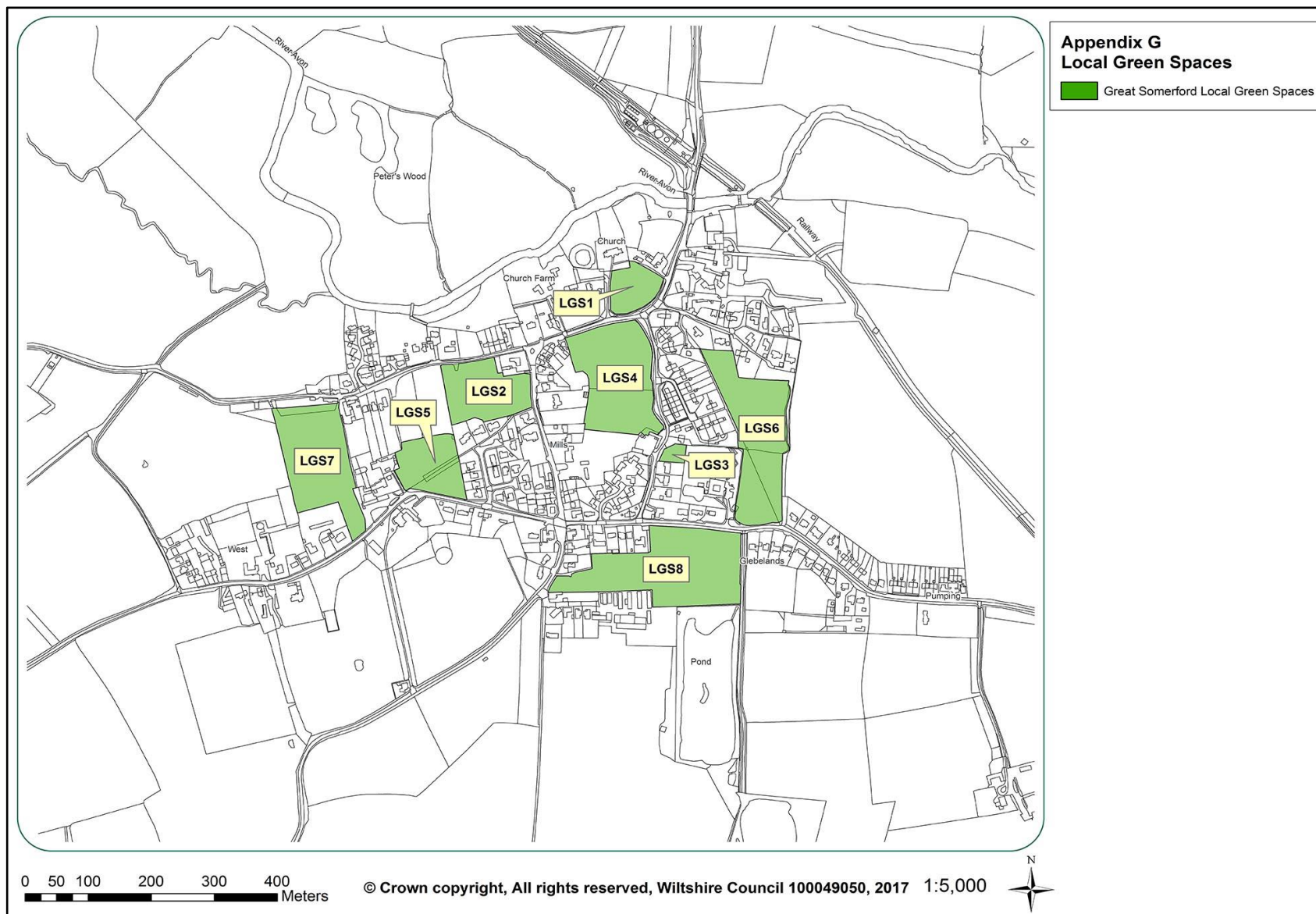
See separate files for reference on the Wiltshire Council Neighbourhood Planning website at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood-latest-news>

Appendix	Content
A	Minutes of Steering Group meetings
B	Terms of reference of the Steering Group
D1	Existing settlement boundary
E	Map - Proposed housing allocations
F1	Site Selection Methodology
	Annexes: Neighbourhood Plan survey results & scoring sheets
F2	Great Somerford SHLAA Sites
F3	Housing Site Profiles
	Annex 2: Map: Suggested development sites Annex 3: Flood Zones Annex 4: Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Annex 5.1-5.8: Housing sites assessments NP1-NP8 Annex 6: Score Sheet
H	Consultation report
	Annexes: Mail-drops, Parish Signpost, Survey questionnaires
I	Great Somerford Parish Housing Need Survey 2014 (Rural Housing Needs Survey)
J	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Decision
K	Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Decision
L	Five Basic Conditions Statement
M	Neighbourhood Area Designation









THIS PAGE IS LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY

The appeal statement misses the impact on the setting of the listed boundary garden wall which forms the physical boundary to the west side of the site and RFR 1

Along with the lack of consideration of the harm to the Conservation Area RfR 2 as previously referred to in my consultation comments - the applicant has not even identified the boundary wall in the appeal statement to the appeal.

The garden wall has significance for its architectural and historic interest as a part of the listed Manor Farmhouse and any development of this open field site would have an immediate and substantial impact on the established setting of Manor Farmhouse as perceived by uses of the public footpath and the field with open views across the application field up to the boundary wall an integral element of definition of the garden curtilage and the site itself. The Local Planning Authority must give 'Great Weight' to the Conservation of the Heritage Asset and its setting.

They comment 4.12

There is no intervisibility between the appeal site and Manor Farmhouse when on the ground and it is believed that the appeal site does not contribute towards the significance of the listed building.

There is no necessity for the appeal site to be intervisible with Manor Farmhouse for the development to effect /harm its setting.

In addition they neglect to recognize the setting of the formal garden wall to the Manor Farmhouse that from an important part of its built interest and in respect the appeal site as being a significant part of its perceived setting when viewed from the open field/public footpath around the site .

4.13 The significance of the Grade II Listed Manor Farmhouse is derived from its historic and architectural interest as detailed within the official list entry. It is recognised that the significance of a heritage assets derives not only from its physical presence but also from its setting, but as noted above, the appeal site is not within the immediate setting of the listed building.

The appeal site is within the immediate setting of the listed building that includes its historic boundary wall as an integral part of the significance of the Manor Farmhouse.

I confirm my objection that a PiP is not considered an appropriate mechanism for assessing the proposal as there is a substantial Historic constraint as identified in my comments and again in these comments.

Any proposal on this site needs a thorough assessment (Heritage Impact Assessment) of impact on setting of the listed Manor Farmhouse including its garden boundary wall that forms a physical boundary with the site and this proposal is better suited to a formal planning application in Full or Outline.

I hope these comments are sufficient for you to respond or to add as an appendix to appeal statement.

Thanks,

Alex Marsh

Senior Conservation Officer

North

Planning

Wiltshire Council

Tel: 01225 770232

Email: alex.marsh@wiltshire.gov.uk

Web: www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Follow Wiltshire Council