

Meeting with representatives of Gleesons regarding land East of Blackmore Farm held on Thursday 5th March 2026 at 4:00pm at Melksham Without Parish Council Offices at Melksham Community Campus

Present: Councillor Richard Wood (Chair of Planning)
Councillor Alan Baines (Vice Chair of Planning)
Councillor John Glover (Chair of Council)
Councillor David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council)
Councillor Mark Harris

Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder, Bowerhill
Councillor Saffi Rabey, Mayor of Melksham

Teresa Strange, Parish Clerk
Fiona Dey, Parish Officer

Ellen Timmins, Gleeson
Emily Pearson, I Transport
Clare Danks, Origin3
Emily Bell, Turley

Developer Presentation – Land at Sandridge Common (Proposed Phase 2 of Blackmore Farm Development)

As Chair of Planning, Councillor Wood chaired the meeting. He welcomed Emily, Emily, Ellen and Clare to the meeting and introduced those present.

The developers delivered a presentation using a series of slides summarising the site, the development proposals, layout and height parameters plan, illustrative masterplan, landscape proposals, access arrangements, connectivity, consultation undertaken and next steps.

It was noted that Gleeson Homes are considering this development as Phase 2 of the consented Blackmore Farm site to the east (PL/2023/11188). Members also noted, however, that the site is not included in Policy 18 (Land East of Melksham) within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan.

The developers explained that the layout of the site is constrained by overhead power lines and proximity to the Grade II listed Blackmore House. Members also noted that the proposal only includes 30% affordable housing and that no bungalows have currently been specified within the development.

Members raised a number of concerns and discussed several aspects of the proposal:

Access

Vehicular access to the site is proposed via a new T-junction from Sandridge Common, located between Blackmore House and Lopes Close. The developers advised that the proposed access meets the required design standards.

Members expressed significant concern regarding the proximity of this access to the entrance serving Phase 1 of the development, which would result in two new junctions connecting to the already busy and potentially dangerous A3102. Members also noted that the proposed junction does not include a separate right-turn lane for vehicles entering the site.

Members reiterated their preference for a roundabout at this location. Wiltshire Councillor Holder commented that the proposed access arrangement is not acceptable and indicated that he may need to call-in the application due to these concerns.

Melksham By-Pass Route

Members noted that the proposed Melksham by-pass route passes through the site.

The developers responded that the by-pass is currently considered an aspiration, and that there is no defined route set out within current planning policy that would require safeguarding within the site layout.

Members expressed concern that it would be cavalier to disregard the potential route, particularly given that the A350 has been identified by National Highways as the preferred strategic route for traffic travelling between the M4 and Poole.

The Clerk will share available information regarding the Melksham by-pass.

Bus Plan

Plans indicate a bus gate within the development, although this could potentially evolve into a vehicle access point in the future.

The developers advised that a transport assessment and travel plan will be undertaken. Wiltshire Councillor Holder questioned whether the proposed bus services would realistically materialise.

Members noted that the Section 106 agreement for Phase 1 includes contributions towards an East of Melksham bus strategy. Members also requested that any new bus stops include shelters, seating and Real Time Information displays.

Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2

Members noted that the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan is referenced within the proposal.

Councillor Pafford explained that the site is not allocated within either the Neighbourhood Plan or the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan and is therefore considered speculative development.

The developers acknowledged that the site sits outside current allocations but stated that they are promoting it as a sustainable extension to the consented development. They also advised that the proposals have been developed with regard to the policies and themes within the relevant plans, and that further detail would be provided as part of the planning application.

Wiltshire Councillor Holder commented that it was disappointing that the site had not been brought forward earlier, allowing it to be incorporated into a single comprehensive masterplan alongside the consented site.

Connectivity

The plans include pedestrian, cycle and vehicle connections between the consented Phase 1 site and the proposed Phase 2 development.

There will also be pedestrian access to Praters Lane Bridleway (MELW40). However, there will be no public access to the existing Eight Acre Plantation.

Members also noted that the footpath along the A3102 will be widened.

Lopes Close

Members queried the cluster of housing proposed adjacent to Lopes Close, expressing concern that this group of properties could become isolated from the remainder of the development.

The developers explained that the orientation of the new dwellings has been designed to align with the existing properties on Lopes Close.

BESS Safety

The Parish Officer raised concerns regarding the distance between the proposed dwellings and the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) located at Sandridge Solar Farm. She reiterated the Parish Council's concerns regarding BESS safety.

Public Consultation

Members requested that the developers undertake further consultation once the issues raised at the meeting have been addressed.

They advised that the developers should hold an in-person consultation event and ensure that residents along Sandridge Common are fully included in the consultation process.

The Clerk will provide details of suitable venues for such an event. It was also noted that the developers intend to meet with residents of Lopes Close.

Members considered the existing two-week consultation period to be too short.

Noise Impact Report

The Clerk questioned whether the noise impact report would consider noise and vibration from the nearby BESS, as well as the cumulative impact of air source heat pumps within the development.

Further Information

The Clerk will provide the developers with a list of items routinely requested by Melksham Without Parish Council when reviewing development proposals.

The meeting closed at 5:30pm