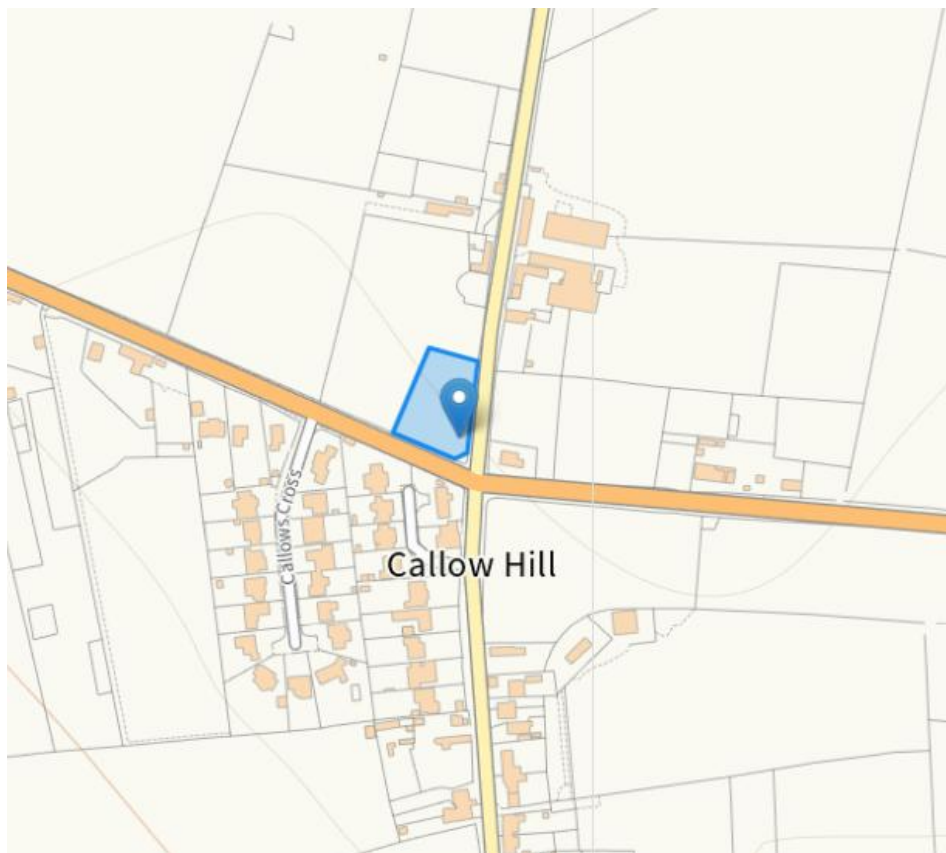


APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE CASE OFFICER REPORT

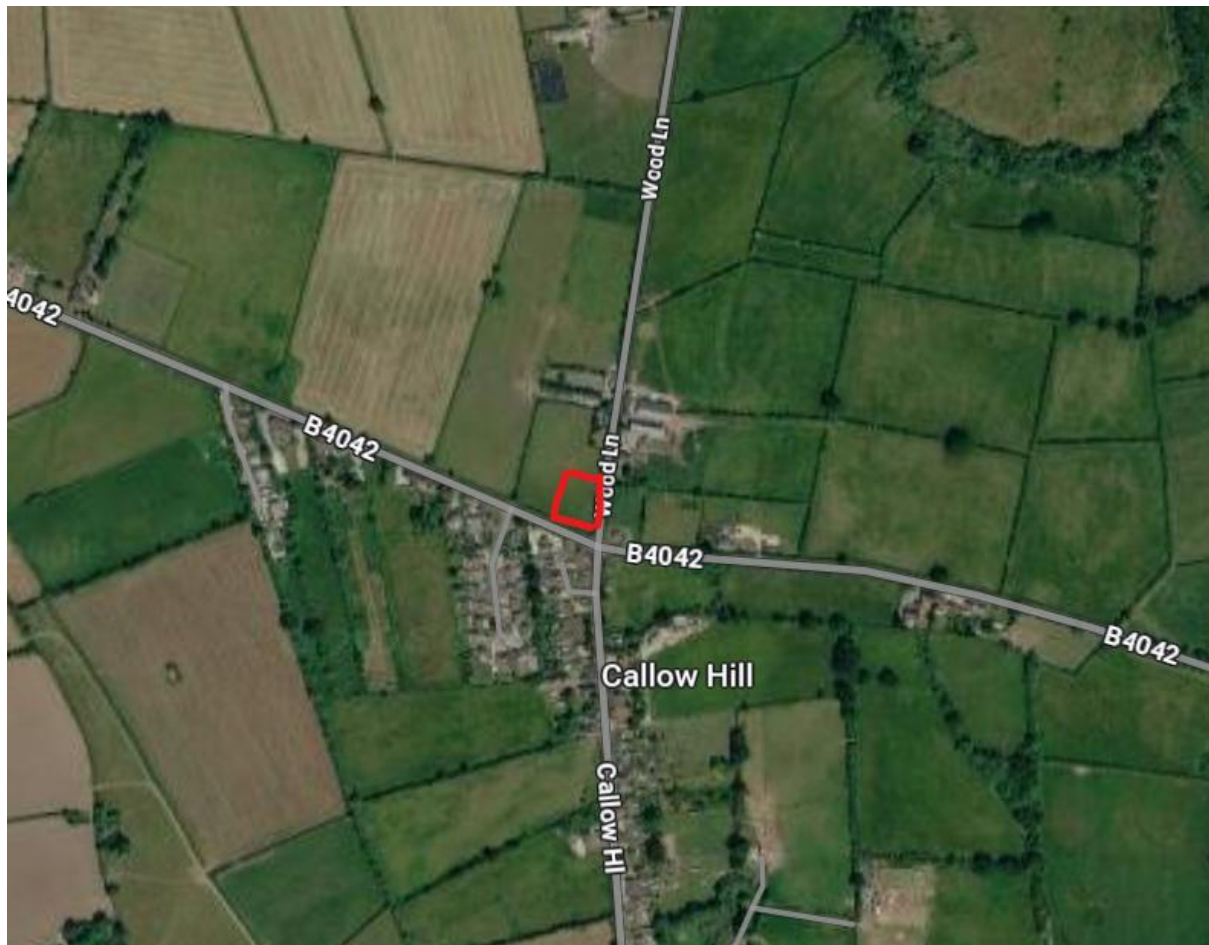
APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/03896
APPLICATION TYPE:	Permission in Principle
SITE ADDRESS:	Land at Wood Lane, Brinkworth, Wiltshire
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Permission in Principle for the erection of up to four dwellings (amendment to PL/2025/08695)
RECOMMENDATION:	That Permission in Principle is REFUSED

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises approximately 0.2 hectares of land located on the western side of Wood Lane, at Callow Hill, approximately 1 kilometre east of the village of Brinkworth. The site lies within the open countryside and outside any defined settlement boundary. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of residential development, agricultural land and rural lanes. The site does not fall within a Conservation Area, National Landscape (formerly AONB), Green Belt, or other nationally designated landscape designation. A public bus service operates from nearby stops at Callows Cross on the B4042, providing connections to Brinkworth, Royal Wootton Bassett, Chippenham, Malmesbury and Swindon. The site is located in Flood Zone 1.



The site is currently undeveloped and has historically been in agricultural use. It occupies a relatively flat parcel of land situated adjacent to the highway junction of Wood Lane. It is bounded by Wood Lane to the east, with the B4042 situated immediately to the south and agricultural land to the west and north. Adjacent to the southern side of the B4042 is a small cluster of residential development at Callow Hill. Residential properties including Crossways Cottage and Philomena House are located to the east of Wood Lane along the B4042. East End Farm is to the northeast of the site, with equestrian grazing and facilities to the west and north of the site. There is a small commercial site to the south of the site with a number of farms sporadically positioned around the hamlet.



CONSTRAINTS

- **Outside Limits of Development:** The site is washed over by the countryside. Located 4.5km from the nearest defined settlement of Royal Wootton Bassett to the west and 2.5km from the nearest defined small village to the east.
- **Flood Risk:** The site lies within Flood Zone 1.
- **No other national or local ecological or heritage designations apply to the site, and there are no known archaeological constraints.**
- **Agricultural Land Classification:** Grade 4

PROPOSAL

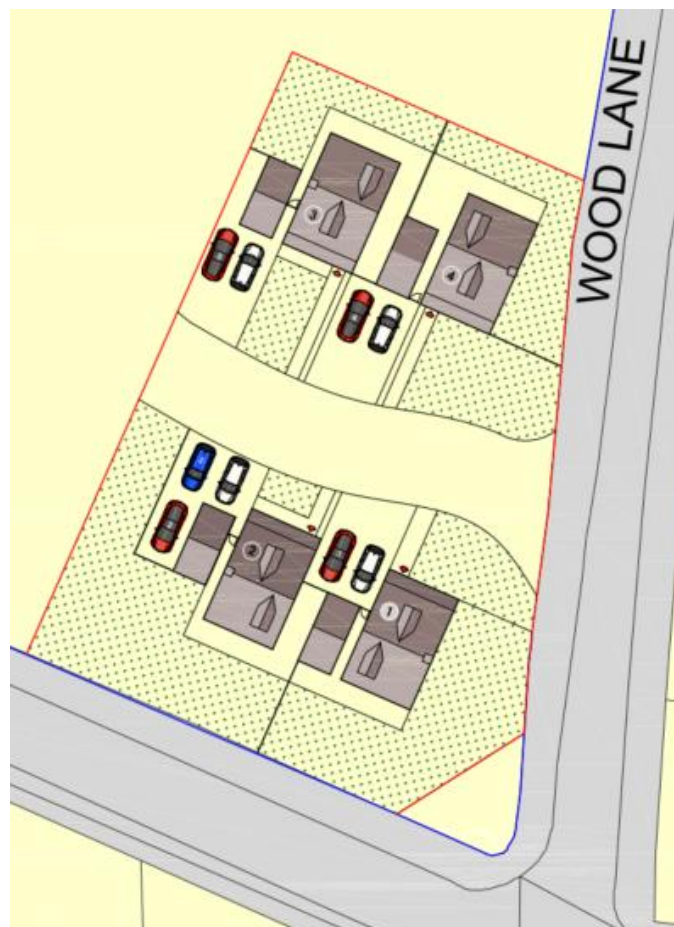
The application seeks Permission in Principle under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

The development proposed is for residential development (Class Use C3) comprising up to four dwellings.

No formal detailed matters of layout, scale, appearance, access, landscaping or drainage are submitted at this stage, as these are not required as part of a Permission in Principle application.

The site comprises land at Wood Lane, Callow Hill, Brinkworth, extending to approximately 0.2 hectares. The application seeks to establish the principle of residential development on this site only, with the detailed design and other technical matters to be considered through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application if Permission in Principle is granted.

Supporting information has been submitted to accompany the application. The supporting information indicates that the proposal relates to residential development of up to four dwellings. Illustrative information has also been provided in relation to potential access arrangements and sustainable transport links together with an illustrative layout plan showing one possible form of development within the application site (see below).



PLANNING HISTORY

No recent relevant planning history

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (*adopted January 2015*) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 13 Spatial Strategy Malmesbury Community Area
- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 43 Providing Affordable Homes
- Core Policy 45 Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs;
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 52 Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;

Saved Policies North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (2006)

H4 Residential Development in the Open Countryside

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, adopted 25 February 2020

The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (2020) supports the delivery of the Wiltshire Core Strategy by allocating land for housing development, revising settlement boundaries where necessary, and ensuring an adequate supply of deliverable housing land across the county. The plan seeks to direct growth to sustainable locations, assist in meeting identified housing requirements, and provide a clear framework for the determination of planning applications.

Emerging Wiltshire Local Plan:

At Full Council on 19 May 2026, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan. It will now be subject to a legal process to finalise its withdrawal - which is likely to happen in July or August (2026). The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

Neighbourhood Plan:

Brinkworth with Grittenham Neighbourhood Plan – Made July 2025
Policy BG11 Local Development

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015
- Wiltshire Council's Waste Core Strategy, adopted July 2009
- Wiltshire Council's Waste Storage and Collection: Guidance for Developers Supplementary Planning Document, January 2017
- Air Quality SPD (July 2023)
- Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, adopted 25 February 2020

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE – PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT

Permission in Principle (PiP) is an alternative route to obtaining planning permission, introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016. It is intended to provide an early and proportionate decision on whether a site is suitable for development, before detailed design work is undertaken.

The PiP process operates as a two-stage planning permission route for housing-led development:

- *Stage 1 – Permission in Principle:*
Establishes whether the principle of development on a site is acceptable.
- *Stage 2 – Technical Details Consent:*
If PiP is granted, a subsequent application is required to consider the detailed proposals, including layout, scale, appearance, access, landscaping, drainage and infrastructure.

At the Permission in Principle stage, the assessment is deliberately high-level and limited in scope. The purpose of a PiP is not to approve detailed plans, but to provide certainty at an early stage about whether development of a particular type is acceptable in principle at a given location. This approach is intended to help streamline the planning process by allowing developers and communities to understand development potential before significant time and expense is committed to detailed designs.

Importantly, the grant of Permission in Principle does not authorise development to commence. Development can only proceed once Technical Details Consent has been granted.

Planning conditions cannot be imposed on the grant of PiP however conditions can be applied in the usual way at the technical details consent stage. Any PiP approved for residential development must be expressed indicating the minimum and maximum net number of dwellings which are, in principle, permitted. For a valid PiP application only a plan to identify the land to which the application relates is required.

Matters that Can Be Considered at the PiP Stage

Legislation restricts the assessment of a PiP application to the following matters only:

- The location of the development
- The proposed land use(s)
- The amount of development proposed

These are the only issues that can lawfully be taken into account when determining whether Permission in Principle should be granted or refused.

Matters Excluded from Consideration at the PiP Stage

Detailed matters, including (but not limited to) the following, are not considered as part of a PiP application:

- Detailed design and appearance
- Site layout and internal arrangements
- Access arrangements and parking
- Landscaping and boundary treatments
- Drainage and flood mitigation measures
- Utilities and other technical infrastructure

Such matters are reserved entirely for consideration at the Technical Details Consent stage, should Permission in Principle be granted.

KEY ISSUES FOR ASSESSMENT

In determining this application for Permission in Principle, the Local Planning Authority must consider the following key issues:

1. **Whether the location of the site is suitable** for the proposed form of development, having regard to the spatial strategy set out in the development plan and relevant national policy.
2. **Whether the proposed land use is acceptable in principle** at this location, taking into account the character and role of the settlement and surrounding area.
3. **Whether the amount of development proposed is appropriate**, assessed at a high-level and in broad terms only.
4. **Whether there are any overriding constraints** which would clearly and demonstrably prevent the site from being developed in principle, even allowing for detailed matters to be addressed at the Technical Details Consent stage.

A Permission in Principle application should therefore only be refused where it is clearly demonstrated that the principle of the proposed development is unacceptable, and that such concerns could not reasonably be addressed through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: Objection on the following grounds:

The Local Highway Authority objects to the proposal, advising that the site is not in a suitable location for residential development. The proposed access from Wood Lane would increase use of a junction with the B4042 where visibility to the east is below standard, and it has not been demonstrated that adequate visibility can be achieved. The Highway Officer also considers the site to be poorly related to services and facilities, with future occupiers likely to be reliant on private car travel and limited opportunities for sustainable transport. As such, the proposal is considered to conflict with Core Policies 1, 2, 60 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Parish/Town Council: Objection on the following grounds

Brinkworth Parish Council objects to the proposal on the grounds that the site is in an unsustainable location reliant on private car travel, the proposed access near the B4042 crossroads would raise highway safety concerns, and the development would result in the loss of agricultural land and harm the rural character of the countryside

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;
- A site notice displayed near the site;

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

Objections

- Highway safety concerns relating to the proposed access and proximity to the Wood Lane/B4042 crossroads.
- Unsustainable location with limited access to services, facilities and public transport, resulting in reliance on the private car.
- Conflict with the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Brinkworth with Grittenham Neighbourhood Plan.

- Loss of agricultural/greenfield land and harm to the rural character and appearance of the countryside.
- Impact on landscape character, important views and visual amenity.
- Potential impacts on biodiversity, habitats and ecological corridors.
- Housing proposed does not meet identified local housing needs for smaller and affordable homes.
- Potential light pollution in a rural area.
- Speculation regarding future expansion of the development site.
- Concerns that approval would set a precedent for future applications on other sites.
- References to previous accidents causing damage to neighbouring properties.
- Errors or inconsistencies within the applicant's submitted documents.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

Principle of Development – Location

As set out in paragraph 012 of the PPG, the matters to be considered when determining a permission in principle application are limited to location, land use and the amount of development. The current proposal seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of four dwellings on approximately 0.2ha of agricultural land at Wood Lane, Callow Hill, Brinkworth.

Policy Context

The development plan establishes a spatial strategy which seeks to direct new development towards defined settlements where residents have reasonable access to services, facilities and sustainable transport options. Development beyond these locations is generally more restricted in order to protect the countryside and promote sustainable patterns of growth.

The National Planning Policy Framework supports the delivery of new homes in appropriate locations, whilst seeking to ensure development is well related to existing settlements and does not result in unsustainable patterns of development.

The application site lies within the Parish of Brinkworth and is located outside any defined Limits of Development. Under the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Brinkworth is identified as a Small Village where development is limited to that needed to help meet local housing needs and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities. Development outside the built-up area is treated as countryside, where restraint is exercised in order to protect the rural

character of the area and promote sustainable patterns of growth. Relevant policies include Core Policies 1, 2 and 13 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

The Brinkworth with Grittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024-2038 forms part of the Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for residential development and instead seeks to manage growth through Policy BG11 (Local Development). The policy supports limited infill development within existing built-up areas, rural conversions and affordable housing exception sites. The supporting text identifies Callow Hill as one of the parish's clusters of development but confirms the intention to carefully manage growth in a way that protects the parish's rural character and settlement pattern.

No housing allocation affecting the site is identified within the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan 2020 or the Neighbourhood Plan

Assessment

The application site is located within the open countryside at Callow Hill, approximately 2.5 kilometres east of Brinkworth and outside any defined built-up area or settlement boundary, with the closest being 4.5km west. Although there is a small residential cluster opposite and sporadic dwellings in the vicinity, the site itself comprises an undeveloped greenfield parcel of agricultural land that forms part of the wider rural landscape. The site does not represent infill development within an existing built-up area and cannot reasonably be regarded as a small gap within a continuous frontage of development. As such, the proposal is inconsistent with the settlement strategy set out within Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Policy BG11 of the Brinkworth with Grittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan, both of which seek to restrict new housing development in the countryside and direct growth towards sustainable locations.

The proposal would result in the introduction of four dwellings on an unallocated greenfield site, extending the domestic form and influence of development into the countryside. In doing so, it would erode the existing transition between the built form at Callow Hill and the surrounding agricultural landscape.

The suitability of the location must also be considered in accessibility terms. Whilst the applicant highlights the presence of nearby bus stops at Callows Cross providing connections to Royal Wootton Bassett, Brinkworth and surrounding settlements, the available public transport provision is limited. The submitted timetable indicates that services operate only Monday to Saturday, with no Sunday service, and that the first departure from Callows Cross to Royal Wootton Bassett is at approximately 06:59 with the final return service arriving at approximately 19:34. Whilst the service may accommodate some commuter and daytime journeys, its limited frequency and hours of operation would significantly restrict opportunities for travel by sustainable modes, particularly during evenings and on Sundays. Consequently, future occupiers would remain heavily reliant on the private motor car to access employment, education, healthcare, shopping, leisure and other day-to-day services. The availability of the bus service therefore does not outweigh the Highway Authority's concerns nor alter the conclusion that the site occupies a relatively unsustainable location for new residential development.

Significant weight is afforded to the conflict with the spatial strategy of the Development Plan and the recently made Brinkworth with Grittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan. Whilst the Council's housing land supply position is a material consideration that reduces the weight afforded to certain restrictive housing policies, it does not negate the identified policy conflict or automatically render the location suitable for residential development where there is inherent dependence on the private car.

Conclusion

The proposal would result in four dwellings on an unallocated greenfield site in the open countryside, where new housing is restricted by the Development Plan. The site is located in a rural area outside the defined limits of development and is poorly served by day-to-day facilities. Future occupiers would be required to rely heavily on private motor vehicles to access essential services, education, employment opportunities and retail provision. Having regard to the site's location, limited accessibility and the Highway Authority's objection, the development is not considered to represent a sustainable form of development. The proposal is therefore unacceptable in principle and contrary to Core Policies 1, 2, 13, 60 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Policy BG11 of the Brinkworth with Grittenham Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Principle of Development – Land Use

Policy Context

The development plan supports the provision of appropriate land uses in locations identified as suitable by the spatial strategy. In particular, policies seek to ensure that proposed uses are compatible with their surroundings and contribute positively to the function and character of settlements.

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development and supports the delivery of housing in principle, subject to it being located in suitable areas and not giving rise to conflicts that would fundamentally undermine the objectives of the development plan.

Assessment

At the Permission in Principle stage, the key consideration is whether the proposed use of the land for residential purposes is acceptable in principle, having regard to the characteristics and function of the site and its role within the wider area.

The application proposes residential development of up to four dwellings. Whilst there is a small cluster of modern residential development opposite the site on the southern side of the B4042, together with limited ribbon development along the road frontage, a further grouping of dwellings around the south-eastern part of Callow Hill and an isolated dwelling to the north of the B4042, the surrounding pattern of development remains dispersed and rural in character. Residential use is therefore not inherently incompatible with neighbouring land uses but would be uncharacteristic in visual terms.

The site is currently agricultural in use and forms part of a wider agricultural parcel of land. The Agricultural Land Classification mapping identifies the land as Grade 4 agricultural land, which is considered poorer quality agricultural land and does not constitute Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Whilst the loss of approximately 0.2 hectares of Grade 4

land would not, in isolation, give rise to significant agricultural land use concerns, the site nonetheless remains part of a larger undeveloped agricultural parcel that contributes to the rural character and open countryside setting of Callow Hill.

Consequently, whilst residential use is not objectionable in itself, the proposed use of this site for housing does not accord with the planned pattern of development established through the Development Plan and weighs against the proposal.

Conclusion

Residential development is not inherently incompatible with neighbouring land uses. The introduction of a residential use in the open countryside is contrary to the development plan spatial strategy and would not represent an appropriate form of development and land use in this location.

Amount of Development

Policy Context

The development plan seeks to ensure that the scale of new development is appropriate to its location, having regard to the size, role and character of the settlement, and the capacity of the area to accommodate change in principle.

While the detailed design, layout, appearance and landscaping are matters for the later Technical Details Consent stage, the impact on countryside character can still be a relevant consideration at PiP stage where it relates to the suitability of the location in principle rather than detailed design.

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character, whilst Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to local distinctiveness and the character of its surroundings.

The National Planning Policy Framework supports a proportionate approach to the assessment of scale at an early stage in the planning process, recognising that detailed matters of layout, design and appearance are to be addressed through subsequent stages of decision-making where appropriate.

Assessment

The application seeks Permission in Principle for residential development comprising up to four dwellings on a site extending to approximately 0.2 hectares. The amount of development proposed is modest and there is no evidence before the Local Planning Authority to indicate that up to four dwellings could not, in principle, be physically accommodated within the site.

Nevertheless, the proposed quantum of development must be considered in the context of the site's countryside location and the prevailing character of the area. Whilst four dwellings would not constitute a large-scale scheme, they would introduce a notable amount of new residential development onto an unallocated greenfield site which currently forms part of the wider rural landscape. As such, the proposal would reinforce the concerns identified under the assessment of location, namely the encroachment of residential development into the open countryside

Conclusion

The proposed quantum of development could be physically accommodated within the site it does result in an urbanised encroachment into the countryside which is unacceptable. This harm arises from the location of the development itself rather than matters of detailed layout, appearance or landscaping. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to conflict with the objectives of Core Policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the site is not considered suitable for the amount of development proposed.

Constraints and Infrastructure Considerations (PiP Context)

Policy Context

The development plan and national planning policy recognise that sites may be subject to environmental, physical or policy constraints. At the Permission in Principle stage, the key consideration is whether any such constraints are of a nature or severity that they would clearly and demonstrably prevent development from coming forward in principle, even allowing for detailed matters to be addressed at the Technical Details Consent stage.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that planning decisions should be proportionate, and that early-stage permissions should not seek to resolve detailed technical matters prematurely.

Assessment

The site is not subject to any national landscape, heritage, ecological or flood risk designations that would, in themselves, clearly prevent residential development from taking place in principle. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and there is no substantive evidence before the Local Planning Authority that flooding, ecology, archaeology, contamination or the provision of utilities would represent an overriding constraint incapable of being addressed through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application.

The Highway Authority has objected to the proposal on the grounds of accessibility and the suitability of the location for residential development. These concerns attract significant weight and have been considered under the assessment of location. However, they do not represent the type of overriding environmental or physical constraint that would, in itself, prevent development from coming forward in principle.

Accordingly, whilst a number of matters would require detailed assessment at a later stage, no overriding environmental, physical or infrastructure constraint has been identified that would independently prevent development of the site in principle.

Conclusion

No overriding environmental, infrastructure or physical constraints have been identified that would independently justify refusal of the application at the Permission in Principle stage.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application seeks Permission in Principle for the change of use of land and erection of up-to four dwellings on the site. In determining a Permission in Principle application, the Local

Planning Authority is required to assess impacts relevant to the location of the development, the proposed land use, the amount of development, and whether there are any overriding constraints which would clearly and demonstrably prevent development from coming forward in principle.

Having considered the application against the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, it is concluded that the proposed development is not acceptable in principle. The concerns identified go to the fundamental suitability of the site for development, rather than to matters that could reasonably be resolved through the submission of detailed proposals at a later stage.

Five-Year Housing Land Supply

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a deliverable five-year housing land supply and can presently demonstrate only approximately 2.8 years of deliverable housing land.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that in such circumstances, the delivery of new housing attracts significant weight as a material consideration in decision-making. Para. 11d states the following:

where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance(7) 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(9)

This matter has been given careful consideration in the determination of this application.

The harms, including the conflict with the settlement strategies (moderate weight), lack of connectivity and dependence on private vehicles (significant weight) and harm to landscape character through urbanisation and a loss of countryside (significant weight).

The acknowledged benefits include the provision of up to four houses (modest weight), the economic benefits during construction and future occupation (limited weight).

In this case it is considered that the combined harms would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposal conflicts with the development plan when assessed against the statutory framework for Permission in Principle. There are no material considerations, including housing land supply, that indicate a decision other than refusal should be made.

The harm identified relates to the principle of development and could not reasonably be addressed or overcome through the submission of a subsequent application for Technical Details Consent. Permission in Principle is therefore refused.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Permission in Principle be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1 The application site is located outside the defined settlement boundary, in an unsustainable location, that would fail to provide a genuine choice of transport modes conflicting with the spatial strategy and relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015, namely Core Policies 1, 2, 13, 60 and 61 the National Planning Policy Framework having particular regard to the key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, including paragraph 110.

2 The change of use of the land from an agricultural use into a residential development will fundamentally change the character of the site. As a result of the proposed use and amount of development, the proposal would introduce significant levels of suburban built form into a site which presently has a distinctively rural character and is located within open countryside. Coupled with associated lighting, boundary treatments, parked vehicles, domestic activities and paraphernalia, it would dramatically and unacceptably change the character of the land, eroding its rural qualities conflicting with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015, namely Core Policies 51 and 57 and the planning policy advice of the National Planning Policy Framework having particular regard to the key policies for making effective use of land and securing well-designed places including paragraphs 124 & 187