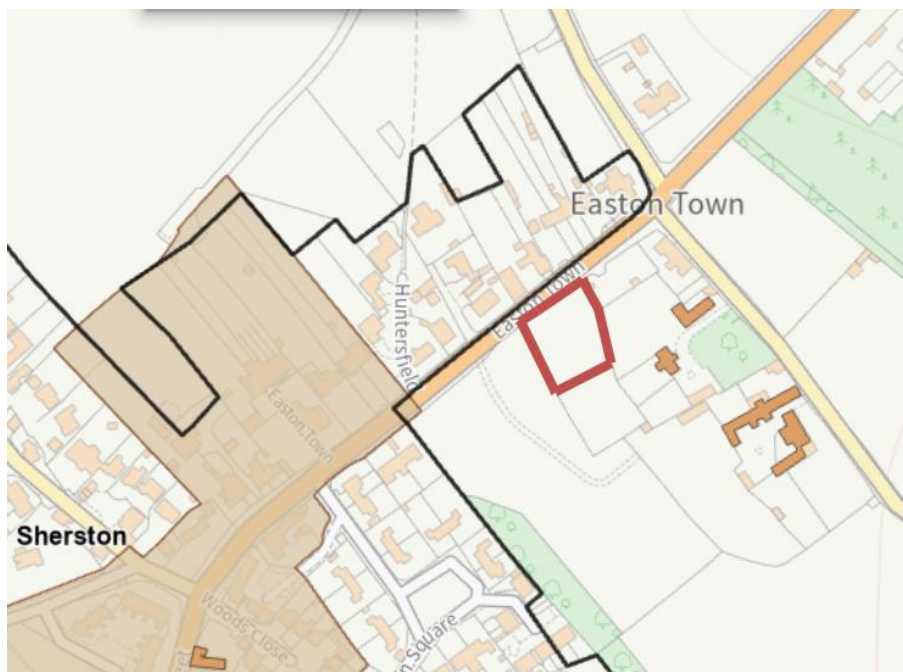


APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/03735
APPLICATION TYPE:	Permission in Principle
SITE ADDRESS:	Land at Praters Farm, Easton Town, Sherston, Malmesbury, SN16 0PS
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Permission in Principle for the erection of up to two dwellings (amendment to PL/2025/08695)
RECOMMENDATION:	That Permission in Principle be GRANTED for residential development comprising a minimum of 1 and maximum of 2 dwellings.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises approximately 0.18 hectares of land associated with Praters Farm, located to the south of Easton Town Road (B4040) on the edge of Sherston, Malmesbury. The site is located outside of the established settlement boundary and is therefore situated within the countryside. Prater's Farm is no longer operational. The site remaining is a complex comprising a Grade II listed early and late 17th century farmhouse [NHLE: 1023233], a Grade II listed 17th century and 20th century reconstructed cruciform barn (now studio) [NHLE: 1023234], and a rectangular outbuilding located along the southern boundary.



The site comprises a level field fronting Easton Town Road (B4040) to the north, where it is enclosed by a traditional dry-stone retaining wall and sits approximately 1 metre above pavement level. The site is well contained by established landscape features, including mature trees and native hedgerows along the northern, western and southern boundaries, together

with sections of dry-stone walling and post-and-rail fencing. The eastern boundary adjoins East Town Cottage and Praters Farm and is defined by a combination of stone walling, mature hedgerow and trees. Existing residential properties are located opposite and adjacent to the site along Easton Town Road.



CONSTRAINTS

- **Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB):** The site is washed over by the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- **Flood Risk:** The site lies within Flood Zone 1.
- **Tree Preservation Order (TPO):** A TPO applies to a tree located in the northern corner of the site.
- **Adjacent Settlement Boundary:** The site lies immediately outside, but adjoining, the defined Limits of Development for Sherston.
- **Agricultural Land Classification:** Grade 3
- **Heritage Assets:** Eastern boundary: Grade II Listed Barn to the West of Prater's Farmhouse, Grade II Listed Prater's Farmhouse. Southeastern: Former Farmyard of Home Farm listing Grade II Listed Out Buildings to the North of Home Farmhouse (Converted). It is within an area recorded as the site of a Medieval Deserted Settlement on the Swindon and Wilts HER (MWI2390)

PROPOSAL

The application as revised seeks Permission in Principle for residential development (Use Class C3) comprising up to two dwellings. The application seeks to establish the principle of

residential development on the site, with all detailed design and technical matters to be considered through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application should Permission in Principle be granted.

Supporting information accompanied the application and originally proposed residential development of up to three dwellings. Illustrative information was submitted in support of this proposal, including potential access arrangements, the retention of existing boundary vegetation, landscaping and heritage considerations, together with an illustrative layout.

Following the Council's initial assessment, concerns were raised regarding the scale of development proposed on the basis that three dwellings could not be arranged on the site in a way that provided an appropriate density of development, levels of amenity, avoided pressure on the surrounding trees and could allow for adequate landscape setting. Following discussions with the applicant, the proposal was amended and the maximum number of dwellings reduced to two. The description of development has been revised accordingly.

Process for deciding whether to reconsult on amendment

When considering whether further consultation with neighbouring properties and the Parish Council was necessary, the nature and extent of the proposed amendments were assessed, together with whether they could reasonably give rise to new or different representations. In this case, the amendment reduced the maximum number of dwellings from up to three to up to two. The change did not introduce any new planning impacts or materially worsen those previously identified and commented upon. Accordingly, it was not considered that any interested party would be disadvantaged by the amendment, and no further neighbour or Parish Council consultation was undertaken.

PLANNING HISTORY

Application PL/2025/08695 sought Permission in Principle for the erection of up to five dwellings on approximately 0.28ha of land associated with Praters Farm. The proposal envisaged up to five detached dwellings extending across a substantial proportion of the site. Permission in Principle was refused on 5 December 2025. In reaching its decision, the Council concluded that the site, located outside the defined settlement boundary and not allocated for housing development, conflicted with the adopted spatial strategy and plan-led approach to growth. The Council further found that the proposal would introduce built form into an open rural site within the Cotswolds National Landscape, resulting in harm to landscape character and the transition between the settlement and surrounding countryside. In addition, it was concluded that the development would harm the setting and significance of the Grade II listed Praters Farmhouse and associated Grade II listed barn by eroding their historic farmstead context and rural character. The scale and form of development proposed were also considered likely to result in an urbanising effect, diminishing local distinctiveness and contributing to coalescence between the historic farmstead and the wider settlement.

PL/2025/08695 - PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF UP TO FIVE DWELLINGS- Refused 05/12/2025

PL/2025/02862 - Conversion of existing studio (previously converted from agricultural barn) to studio with accommodation - Withdrawn by Applicant

PL/2025/03154- LBC - Conversion of existing studio (previously converted from agricultural barn) to studio with accommodation - Withdrawn by Applicant
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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 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 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.

Wiltshire Local Plan Review

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:

Sherston Neighbourhood Plan – Made May 2019

Objective 4

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
- Air Quality SPD (July 2023)
- Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, adopted 25 February 2020
- Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030

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 PiP stage, the assessment is deliberately high-level and limited in scope. The purpose is not to approve detailed plans, but to provide certainty at an early stage about whether development of a particular type and scale 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 PiP does not authorise development

to commence. Development can only proceed once Technical Details Consent (TDC) 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 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.

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.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: Objection on the following grounds:

The previous Permission in Principle application was refused on the basis that the site lies outside the established spatial strategy for growth and represents an unsustainable location for new housing development. As the current application relates to the same site, the in-principle concerns regarding the location of development remain unchanged. Consequently, the proposal is considered contrary to Core Policies 1, 2, 10, 60 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Saved Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan, which seek to direct development to sustainable locations and promote sustainable travel patterns.

Cotswold National Landscape Board: Comments

The Cotswolds National Landscape Board has not raised any specific objections to the proposed development and has advised that it will not be providing a detailed assessment of the application. The Board neither supports nor opposes the proposal but emphasises that, as the site lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape, the Council must demonstrate how it has fulfilled its statutory duty to seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty. The Board also recommends that the decision-maker has regard to relevant National Landscape policies, guidance and management documents in reaching a decision.

WC Conservation: Comment

The Conservation Officer advises that the reduction from the previously refused scheme to a maximum of two dwellings has significantly reduced the level of harm to the setting of the Grade II listed Praters Farmhouse and associated listed barn. The revised proposal, focused towards the road frontage, is considered capable of progressing to the Technical Details Consent stage, where matters of design, layout, landscaping and access can be assessed in detail. Subject to careful design and the retention of the site's key landscape features, no overriding heritage objection is raised to the principle of development.

WC Archaeology: Comments

The Council's Archaeology Officer advises that the site has archaeological potential due to the presence of earthworks associated with a medieval settlement approximately 250 metres to the south-east. While no objection is raised at this stage, archaeological mitigation is likely to be required and considered at the Technical Details stage if Permission in Principle is granted.

Parish/Town Council: Objection on the following grounds

Sherston Parish Council strongly objects to the application, reiterating its previous concerns regarding residential development on an unallocated greenfield site outside the settlement boundary and within the Cotswolds National Landscape. The Parish Council notes that the earlier Permission in Principle application for up to five dwellings was refused due to conflict with the spatial strategy, harm to the National Landscape, adverse impacts on the setting of nearby listed buildings, and concerns regarding design and local distinctiveness. The Parish Council considers that the reduction in the number of dwellings does not overcome these fundamental objections and therefore maintains its objection to the current proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017 the application was publicised by way of a site notice displayed near the site. The legislation requires the local planning authority to publicise the application and invite representations within a period of not less than 14 days.

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

Objections & Concerns

- Site is outside the settlement boundary.
- Site is not allocated in the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan.
- Conflict with the spatial strategy and plan-led approach to development.

- Potential harm to the Cotswolds National Landscape and rural character.
- Loss of open countryside/greenfield land and rural gap.
- Potential harm to the setting of Grade II listed Praters Farmhouse and associated barn.
- Potential harm to the setting of Grade II listed Home Farm.
- Potential harm to the setting and significance of Sherston Conservation Area.
- Highway safety concerns due to proximity to the B4040 crossroads and proposed access arrangements
- Potential impact on a TPO-protected tree.
- Concerns regarding impacts on wildlife and biodiversity.
- Surface water drainage and foul drainage concerns.
- Archaeological potential requiring further investigation/mitigation.
- Unaffordable Housing proposed
- Development would benefit the applicant financially.
- Concerns about who may purchase or occupy the dwellings
- Lack of consultation or engagement by the applicant.
- Speculation regarding future development of adjoining land.
- Complaints regarding the applicant's management of land or previous works

Comments in support

- Contributes towards housing delivery and housing land supply.
- Provides up to 3 additional dwellings
- Site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and existing development.
- Within walking distance of village services and public transport.
- No objection from the Cotswolds National Landscape Board.
- No archaeological objection in principle.

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

Decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the policies contained in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and government guidance. Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy identifies a hierarchy of settlements where sustainable development will take place.

The site is located adjacent to the settlement boundary of Sherston which is defined within the Core Strategy as a Large Village. The strategy recognises that development at Large Villages should be modest in scale and limited to that required to help meet local housing needs and improve employment opportunities, services and facilities. Other than in circumstances as permitted by other policies within this plan, identified in paragraph 4.25 of the Strategy (the exception policies), development should not be permitted outside the limits of development.

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 Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (2020) did not allocate the site for residential development or amend the settlement boundary to include it.

This application relates to the construction of up to two dwellings on a parcel of agricultural land located just outside the defined settlement boundary. Consequently, the proposal does not accord with the spatial strategy set out in Core Policies 1, 2 and 13 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Saved Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan, which seek to direct housing within settlement boundaries.

Sherston Parish Council objects to the proposal on the basis that the site lies outside the defined settlement boundary, is not allocated for housing development within the development plan or Sherston Neighbourhood Plan, and would conflict with the plan-led approach to growth. These concerns are acknowledged and are afforded weight in the assessment.

In this case, the settlement boundary for Sherston runs parallel with the opposite side of the road immediately fronting the site. Whilst the site is therefore located within the countryside for planning policy purposes, it is evidently closely related to the existing built form and defined settlement boundary of the village. The site is directly connected to Sherston via an established footway and lies approximately 180 metres from a public bus stop on Easton Town, providing convenient access to public transport services connecting the village to larger settlements including Malmesbury, Yate, Chipping Sodbury and Bath. The site is also within easy walking distance of a range of day-to-day services and facilities commensurate with Sherston's designation as a Large Village, including a primary school, village shop and post office, public house and restaurant, places of worship, sports and recreation facilities, and other services located within the village centre. The site benefits from access to an extensive network of public rights of way and bridleways which connect the village with the surrounding countryside and neighbouring settlements, providing opportunities for recreation and active travel.

The Highways Officer has objected on the basis that the site lies outside the established spatial strategy and therefore remains an unsustainable location in principle. That objection is noted and has been given weight. However, the case officer assessment differs to the extent that the site is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, fronts an existing road with footway connection, lies within walking distance of village services, and would accommodate no more than two dwellings. It does remain the case that there will be some reliance on the private car, particularly for journeys beyond the village, however the proposal has been

reduced to a maximum of two dwellings and would therefore generate only a limited number of additional vehicle movements. The accessibility evidence has been assessed on the ground and for the limited scale of development now proposed, it is considered to be sufficiently close both physically and functionally to the existing settlement and provides future occupiers with realistic opportunities to access a range of services and facilities by foot, public transport and other non-car modes of travel. These factors weigh in favour of the suitability of the site for the modest amount of development proposed. While the proposal therefore conflicts with the settlement strategy, the site is not considered isolated or so poorly related to services that sustainable transport considerations justify refusal of PIP.

Principle of Development – Land Use

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 relationship with the wider area.

The application proposes residential development (Use Class C3) comprising up to two dwellings. Residential development is a well-established and characteristic land use within Sherston and Easton Town, where a mix of historic dwellings, converted farm buildings and more modern residential development exists. The proposed use is therefore considered compatible with surrounding land uses and would not introduce an incongruous or inappropriate form of development. Any dwellings would be seen in the context of existing domestic development rather than in isolation, so any additional domestic character would not appear unduly out of place.

Concern has been raised regarding the potential loss of countryside and the perceived erosion of the gap within the village. In this case, it is acknowledged that the open land immediately to the west, extending towards Sherston, provides an attractive and noticeable open aspect along the road. However, the application site is distinctly different in character. It is a contained and well-enclosed parcel of land that does not itself function as part of an open gap within the settlement. Consequently, there is scope for development of an appropriate scale to be accommodated within this enclosed area without resulting in a prominent or harmful impact on the character, appearance or form of the settlement.

BMV land includes Grades 1, 2, and 3a under the Agricultural Land Classification system. It is considered the most productive and sustainable for food production. Paragraph 187(b) of the NPPF emphasizes the need to protect BMV land from unnecessary development and recognises the economic and environmental value of BMV land. Natural England Guidance recommends consultation for developments involving 20 hectares or more of agricultural land but that smaller developments still require assessment if BMV land is involved. The development would result in the loss of up to 0.18ha of Grade 3 agricultural land, which has agricultural value due to its soil quality and could be utilised for small-scale livestock grazing or feed production in the future. The site is however, limited in size and forms part of a parcel of land that is closely associated with the built form at the settlement edge. The loss of this land in productivity terms is therefore afforded limited weight.

Amount of Development

The key question is 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 role of the settlement.

The proposal seeks Permission in Principle for residential development comprising up to two dwellings. This represents a modest scale of development which is proportionate to the size of the site and pattern of development in the immediate area. Sherston is identified as a Large Village and provides a range of services and facilities capable of supporting a limited amount of additional housing growth. The site is located immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary of the settlement.

At the reduced scale, it is considered that the development can be accommodated with the plot whilst allowing for the vegetated tree lined boundaries to be retained and enhanced. The Council's Conservation Officer has advised that the reduction to two dwellings has reduced the level of harm to the setting of nearby heritage assets to an acceptable level and considers that a scheme of this scale is capable of progressing to the Technical Details Consent stage, where detailed matters can be fully assessed (heritage matters are discussed further below).

Constraints and Infrastructure Considerations (PiP Context)

The assessment of an application for Permission in Principle is limited to whether the location, land use and amount of development are acceptable in principle. Detailed matters, including layout, scale, appearance, access, landscaping, drainage, ecology, arboriculture and detailed heritage mitigation, fall to be considered at Technical Details Consent stage. However, where an identified constraint is so significant that it would make the location, land use or amount unacceptable in principle, that matter must be taken into account at this stage.

Consideration has been given to the presence of any known constraints affecting the application site that are capable of undermining the principle of development. These include:

- The site's location within the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- The proximity of designated heritage assets, including Praters Farmhouse and the associated Grade II listed threshing barn, together with the potential relationship with Sherston Conservation Area.
- Archaeological potential associated with the site.
- Existing trees and hedgerows, including a nearby TPO protected tree.
- Highway and access considerations.
- Ecology and drainage considerations.

The existence of a constraint alone does not justify the refusal of a PiP application. The key consideration is whether any identified constraint is so significant that it would prevent development from being accommodated on the site, even allowing for detailed matters to be addressed through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, and flood mapping indicates the site at low risk of surface and ground water flooding. Given the low level of flood risk identified it is considered that drainage and flood risk matters are capable of resolution at TDC stage.

Detailed ecological matters, habitat retention and enhancement measures, biodiversity metric calculations and the means of securing any required biodiversity net gain would fall to be considered through any subsequent Technical Details Consent application and associated Biodiversity Gain Plan process. On the basis of the information before the Local Planning Authority, there is no evidence that biodiversity considerations represent an overriding constraint which would prevent residential development of the scale proposed from coming forward in principle

The site lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape and, as such, the Local Planning Authority must seek to further statutory purpose of protected landscapes. Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character and requires particular regard to be given to nationally designated landscapes. Similarly, paragraph 189 of the NPPF affords great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within National Landscapes. The proposal has been reduced from three dwellings to a maximum of two dwellings, resulting in a more limited form of development that is considered capable of responding sensitively to its surroundings without significantly affecting wider views or the quality of the landscape.

The Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030 seeks to ensure that development and infrastructure proposals within the Cotswold National Landscape (CNL) and its setting conserve and, where possible, enhance the area's natural beauty and special qualities. The Plan reflects national planning policy, which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes when determining planning applications. Relevant policies also seek to safeguard tranquillity, support nature recovery, protect the historic environment and maintain dark skies. These considerations are therefore important material considerations and must be weighed in the overall planning balance alongside other relevant planning matters.

The site benefits from strong existing boundary treatments, including mature vegetation and stone walls, which are capable of being retained and incorporated into any future scheme, assisting with its integration into the surrounding landscape. Having regard to the contained nature of the site, its relationship with existing residential development and the modest scale of development proposed, it is considered that there is scope for residential development to be accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable harm to the natural beauty, landscape character or scenic qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape. Detailed matters, including layout, scale, appearance including lighting, landscaping and the retention of existing landscape features, would be fully assessed through any subsequent Technical Details Consent application.

The Local Planning Authority is therefore required to seek to further the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. This is an active duty and has been considered proportionately having regard to the nature of this PiP application, the modest quantum of development proposed, the site's physical containment, its edge-of-

settlement context, and the ability for detailed siting, scale, landscaping, boundary retention and lighting to be assessed at Technical Details Consent stage.

In this case, having regard to the very modest quantum of development, the site's physical containment, its relationship with existing built form and the ability for detailed siting, scale, lighting and landscaping to be controlled at TDC stage, the application of National Landscape policies is not considered to provide a strong reason for refusing Permission in Principle.

The application site boundary as per the submitted plans is located in close proximity to several listed buildings, including Prater's Farm House, Grade II Listed, approx. 41 m to the northeast, and Barn to the South West of Prater Farms House, also Grade II Listed, 25 m southwest from the closest boundary point. Additional Listed Buildings, including Outbuildings to the North of Home Farm, and Home Farmhouse are circa 75m east from the closest boundary point. As such, the LPA must have regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). These provisions place a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses where development may affect a listed building or its setting. This includes proposals relating to permission in principle.

The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. 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. Praters Farmhouse is significant, and the Barn was listed for its contribution to the group with the Farmhouse. The significance of these heritage assets is derived not only from their architectural and historic interest, but also from their rural setting and historic relationship with the former farmstead. The setting of both Praters Farm and Home Farm is characterised in part by the surrounding rural landscape. The key question is therefore whether development of the scale proposed could, in principle, be accommodated without causing unacceptable harm to the significance of nearby listed buildings through impacts on their setting.

The Council's Conservation Officer has reviewed the revised proposal and advises that the reduction to a maximum of two dwellings has reduced the potential harm to the setting of the Grade II listed Praters Farmhouse and associated listed barn. The previously refused proposal for up to five dwellings extended across a substantially larger area of land and would have introduced a more expansive and urbanising form of development into the countryside. By contrast, the current proposal has been reduced to a maximum of two dwellings on a smaller site area of approximately 0.18ha. This significantly limits the extent of built form, allows greater retention of the site's open character and established boundary features, and materially lessens potential impacts on the setting of nearby listed buildings. Consequently, the scale of development now proposed is considered capable of being accommodated without giving rise to the level of harm identified in the previous refusal.

The Conservation Officer considers that the revised proposal, focused towards the road frontage, could appropriately progress to the Technical Details Consent stage, where matters of design, layout, landscaping, access and the treatment of the existing dry-stone wall boundary can be fully assessed. It is also noted that opportunities exist through detailed design and landscaping to conserve the setting of nearby heritage assets. Whilst there would be a change to the setting of the nearby listed buildings, given the level of separation, the reduced quantum of development and ability to retain and enhance the boundaries of the site, any residual harm as a result of the changed setting could be minimised to a very lower end of less than substantial. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, this harm has been given considerable importance and weight and is balanced against the public benefits of the proposal. These benefits include the delivery of up to two additional dwellings. As such this matter would not give rise to an overriding heritage reason for refusal at PiP stage.

Concern has also been raised regarding the effect of the proposal on the setting of the Sherston Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is focused on the historic core of the village and extends predominantly to the west of the village. The nearest point of the Conservation Area lies approximately 74 metres from the application site, with parts extending to approximately 175 metres away. The site does not form part of the Conservation Area and is physically and visually separated from it by intervening development, land and established boundary treatments, including mature trees, hedgerows and stone walls. The site is further distinguished from the neighbouring field and wider village landscape to the south-west by its contained and enclosed character.

Having regard to the separation from the Conservation Area, the enclosed nature of the site and the extent of existing screening which should be retained, there is no evidence before the Local Planning Authority to indicate that the proposed development in principle would give rise to unacceptable change affecting the character, appearance or setting of the Sherston Conservation Area. Any subsequent application for Technical Details Consent would be accompanied by an appropriate heritage assessment and would need to demonstrate that the detailed design responds positively to its historic context.

The Local Planning Authority has had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed buildings and their settings, as required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The significance of the nearby listed Praters farmhouse and barn is partly derived from their historic farmstead context and rural setting. The setting of Home Farm is influenced by its rural setting. The previous proposal for up to five dwellings was found to cause harm to the setting of listed buildings. The present proposal is materially reduced in site area and quantum and is limited to a maximum of two dwellings.

Based on the information currently available, it is considered that development of up to two dwellings could be accommodated within the site whilst retaining the strong vegetated boundaries and established landscape features that contribute to its containment. Appropriate tree protection measures, suitable building heights and additional landscaping could be secured at the Technical Details Consent stage, and there is scope for any future development to be carefully integrated within the plot, limiting visual impacts and retaining existing features wherever practicable. Consequently, there is no overriding heritage or landscape reason for refusal at PiP stage

Other matters

A number of representations raise matters that are not material planning considerations and, as such, cannot be taken into account in determining this application. These include concerns that the proposal would provide a financial benefit to the applicant, comments regarding the identity or personal circumstances of any future purchasers or occupiers, and criticisms of the extent of community engagement undertaken by the applicant prior to submission. Representations have also referred to the applicant's management of land and previous activities, together with speculation regarding the possible future development of neighbouring land.

Such matters do not relate to the planning merits of the proposal before the Local Planning Authority and cannot therefore be afforded weight in the determination of this application. Planning decisions must be based on the development plan and other material planning considerations relevant to the proposal.

Furthermore, a number of comments relate to matters of detailed design, layout and technical implementation. This includes points raised by internal consultees in respect of ecology, drainage, TPO impacts which would be assessed as TDC matters. As this is an application for Permission in Principle, consideration is limited to the location, land use and amount of development proposed. Detailed matters would only fall to be assessed through any subsequent Technical Details Consent application and cannot therefore influence the determination of the current application.

A number of representations were also received during the course of the application when the description of development was amended from "Permission in Principle for the erection of up to three dwellings" to "Permission in Principle for the erection of up to two dwellings". No revised plans, layouts or supporting technical documents were submitted in connection with this amendment. The only change related to the reduction in the maximum number of dwellings being sought.

As this application is made under the Permission in Principle process, consideration is limited to the location, land use and amount of development proposed. The illustrative layout submitted with the application was not submitted for approval and was provided solely as an example of how development might potentially be accommodated on the site. The amendment does not alter the site boundary, the proposed land use, or introduce any new development areas or planning considerations beyond those already subject to consultation.

The Local Planning Authority has considered whether further consultation was necessary and has concluded that it is not required in this instance. The amendment represents a reduction in the amount of development proposed and did not introduce any new planning impacts or materially worsen those previously identified and commented upon. All representations submitted in respect of the original proposal have been reviewed and taken into account in the assessment of the application. The issues raised remain relevant to the determination of the application and have been addressed within this report, including consideration of the reduction from up to three dwellings to up to two dwellings.

Five-Year Housing Land Supply and Tilted Balance

The Local Planning Authority is currently unable to demonstrate a deliverable five-year supply of housing land. The NPPF 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⁾.

There are no issues identified which form strong reason for refusal when considering the policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance, including heritage assets and the National Landscape in this case. As such, the provisions of 11d(ii) are considered to be engaged.

The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan was made in May 2019 and is now more than five years old. Consequently, paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework does not apply in this case and the additional protection afforded to neighbourhood plans under that paragraph is not engaged

Conditions

The PPG indicates that it is not possible to impose conditions for a permission in principle. The default duration of permission in principle is 3 years where granted on direct application, with the technical details consent to be determined during this period. If it is not, then the permission in principle would lapse

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application seeks Permission in Principle for residential development comprising up to two dwellings on land at Praters Farm, Easton Town, Sherston. In determining a Permission in Principle application, the Local Planning Authority is required to consider the location of the development, the proposed land use, the amount of development and whether there are any overriding constraints that would prevent development from coming forward in principle.

The site lies immediately adjacent to the defined Limits of Development for Sherston and is well related to the existing built form of Easton Town. While the site is not allocated for housing and the proposal does not fully accord with the settlement strategy, it does benefit from convenient walking access to the village services, facilities and public transport opportunities.

The proposal has also been reduced during the course of the application from three dwellings to a maximum of two dwellings, resulting in a modest form of development that is proportionate to the site's edge-of-settlement location.

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land with a figure of 2.8 years being a substantial shortfall. The weight afforded to the settlement strategy policies and any conflict with them is therefore reduced. Given the relatively accessible position of the site in very close proximity to the settlement boundary, and the HLS shortfall position, the weight afforded to the conflict with policies CP1 & 2 is considered to be limited.

The proposal would make a modest but positive contribution towards addressing this shortfall. The scheme will bring economic benefits including employment in the short term during its construction and in the longer term through the increased spend resulting from up to two additional households in the local area.

Whilst the site is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape and lies in proximity to designated heritage assets, the evidence before the Council does not demonstrate that residential development of up to two dwellings could not be accommodated in an acceptable manner. In particular, the Council's Conservation Officer has advised that the reduction in scale from the previously refused scheme has significantly reduced heritage impacts and that the proposal is capable of progressing to the Technical Details Consent stage, where detailed matters relating to layout, design, landscaping and access can be comprehensively assessed and mitigated as necessary. In this specific PiP context, the public benefits identified are considered sufficient to outweigh the very low level of less-than-substantial heritage harm. The identified landscape, heritage, highway, drainage, ecological and arboricultural considerations are therefore not considered to represent constraints to development in principle. Subject to the technical matters being appropriately considered at the next stage, the proposed modest scale residential use is considered to be compatible with the character and function of the surrounding area. National Landscape and heritage policies do not provide a strong reason for refusing this particular PiP. There is sufficient scope within the site and the reduced quantum to allow an acceptable TDC scheme to come forward.

The proposal does not fully accord with the spatial strategy of the development plan and this attracts adverse weight, however the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and the policies most important for determining the application are considered out-of-date. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework is engaged.

In applying the tilted balance, the Local Planning Authority has concluded that the proposal would deliver additional housing, contributing towards the supply of homes and providing associated social and economic benefits. While some harm has been identified through the conflict with the development plan, the adverse impacts of granting permission in principle would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal when assessed against the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole.

The proposal is therefore considered to represent sustainable development and permission in principle should be granted.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Permission in Principle be GRANTED for residential development comprising a minimum of 1 and maximum of 2 dwellings.

Informative/s

1. This Permission in Principle (PiP) will cease to have effect three years after the date of this Decision Notice. The Technical Details Consent (TDC) relating to the proposed development must be granted prior to the expiration of this PiP.
2. The TDC shall be accompanied with, but not be limited to, the following
 - Application Form
 - Application plans, including: Location Plan, Existing and Proposed Site/Block Plan (including landscaping proposals, visibility splays, vehicle tracking, car and bicycle parking arrangements, electric vehicle parking infrastructure and waste collection arrangements), Proposed Floor and Roof Plans, Proposed Elevations
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Ecology reporting, including: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and, Subject to the findings of the PEA, Protected Species Surveys and/or an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) as necessary
 - Biodiversity Net Gain information (as necessary), including: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool
 - Arboricultural reporting, including: Tree Survey, Tree Constraints Plan, Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Tree Protection Plan.
 - SuDs and Surface Water Drainage Strategy
 - Heritage Impact Assessment
3. The applicant is advised that the development hereby approved, if progressed to the TDC stage, may represent chargeable development under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and Wiltshire Council's CIL Charging Schedule. The applicant should submit all relevant CIL forms, including those relating to any claim of exemption or relief. The CIL Commencement Notice and Assumption of Liability must be submitted to Wiltshire Council prior to commencement of development. Should development commence prior to the CIL Liability Notice being issued by the local planning authority, any CIL exemption or relief will not apply, and full payment will be required in full and with immediate effect. Should you require further information or to download the CIL forms, please refer to the Council's website:
<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/dmcommunityinfrastructurelevy>

4. For the avoidance of doubt, the PiP hereby approved relates solely to the site identified in the Location Plan received 12 June 2026. Further, it is advised that the determination of this application has been made in consideration of that specific site, and that a separate assessment would be carried out by the local planning authority in determining any application for a different proposed site including one that wholly or partially incorporates the site relating to this permission in principle.