

**Land West of Semington Road, Melksham**

# Planning Statement

Incorporating Statement of Community Involvement and Affordable Housing  
Statement and Sustainable Energy Statement

Date of report: July 2026

PREPARED FOR

**Bellway**

  
STRATEGIC  
LAND

**savills**

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## Document History

| Issue  | Date      | Issued by | Comment            |
|--------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| R01-00 | 29-Jun-26 | BT        | Issue Draft        |
| R01-01 | 31-Jul-26 | BT        | Formatting Updates |

# 1. Introduction

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been produced by Savills on behalf of Bellway Strategic Land (“the Applicant / Bellway”) to support an outline planning application for a residential development on land west of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire (“the Application Site”). This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings and other supporting documents.

1.1.2 The description of development for the Proposed Development is as follows:

*“Outline application for up to 225 dwellings, with access from Semington Road, along with public open space and landscape buffers to incorporate existing rights of way and to accommodate the route of the proposed Melksham Link Canal (under separate application W/12/01080/FUL). Demolition and clearance of all existing buildings and structures on the site. All matters reserved other than vehicular access from Semington Road.”*

1.1.3 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 3 – The Application Site:** Describes the Application Site, its constraints and any relevant planning history
- **Section 4 – The Proposed Development:** Sets out the outline and detailed elements of the Proposed Development
- **Section 5 – Pre Application Discussions:** Sets out details of the pre-application discussions that have taken place with the Council
- **Section 6 – Statement of Community Involvement:** Sets out how the local community have been engaged throughout the evolution of the Proposed Development
- **Section 7 – Planning Policy Guidance:** Outlines the relevant national and local planning policy guidance
- **Section 8 – Planning Assessment:** Outlines how the Proposed Development complies with the relevant planning policy guidance and provides an overview of the supporting technical studies
- **Section 9 – Summary:** Summarises the assessment of the application

1.1.4 This outline planning application seeks approval of the plans set out in Table 1.1. The full supporting information for the application is detailed in the covering letter.

Table 1.1: Plans submitted for approval.

| Drawing                             | Author              | Drawing Reference/ Revision |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Site Location Plan                  | Brandt Urban Design | P25-0016_SLP-10 Rev B       |
| Land Use and Access Parameter Plan  | Brandt Urban Design | P25-0016_PARP-01 Rev B      |
| Building Heights Parameter Plan     | Brandt Urban Design | P25-0016_PARP-02 Rev A      |
| Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan | Brandt Urban Design | P25-0016_PARP-03 Rev A      |
| Demolition Parameter Plan           | Brandt Urban Design | P25-0016_PARP-04 Rev -      |
| Access                              | i-Transport         | ITB200590-GA-004            |

## 1.2 About Bellway

### Overview

- 1.2.1 Established in 1946, Bellway was recently crowned 'Large housebuilder of the year' at the Housebuilder Awards 2025. Bellway has retained the Home Builders Federation (HBF) five-star status for 10 years running. This award is based on an annual independent survey of customers, and the award is only gained as a result of meeting the HBF's high standards for customer care, satisfaction, and build quality.
- 1.2.2 For over 75 years, Bellway has been constructing high-quality new homes across the UK, creating exceptional properties and communities in sought-after locations. Bellway is committed to operating responsibly and sustainably, while acknowledging the increasing importance of understanding the business' impact. Sustainability is at the heart of Bellway's business, and its strategy 'Better with Bellway' embodies responsible and sustainable business practices.
- 1.2.3 Bellway put long-term commitment to responsible and sustainable practice at the core of its operational strategy. 'Putting people first' means prioritising customers and the communities Bellway serves and creates by building quality homes expected of a five-star rated home builder.
- 1.2.4 Bellway is striving become an employer of choice by focusing on how it can upskill its workforce and nurture a culture of inclusion where everyone is welcome and able to reach their full potential. Putting people first is also about building quality homes, safely, and extending that commitment to safety and sustainability into the supply chain. Bellway will work closely with its partners to achieve this. Fundraising for charities and encouraging colleagues to volunteer also puts people and community at the heart of Bellway's business.
- 1.2.5 Putting planet first means delivering on Bellway's commitment to build low carbon homes, reducing its own carbon footprint and considering its customer's carbon footprint, while reducing and rethinking the use of resources to avoid waste, minimise energy and water usage whilst also sourcing materials responsibly. It also means taking a holistic view of biodiversity so that Bellway's developments can leave a lasting legacy

**Figure 1.1: Integrating Nature and Placemaking Within New Bellway Development**



## 1.3 Placemaking Approach

- 1.3.1 In June 2026, Bellway introduced a new internally-facing Placemaking Policy, with the objective of *“designing and shaping attractive, functional, and inclusive environments that foster a sense of community and belonging.”* These objectives have sought to be embodied within the Proposed Development.
- 1.3.2 Placemaking is a collaborative process which goes beyond aesthetics and compliance to shape the public realm within developments, it is not just about promoting better urban design or simply constructing homes. By thoughtfully integrating green spaces, streetscapes, local amenities, and public areas, development can establish inclusive public places to foster meaningful connections, local identity, and long-term community value.
- 1.3.3 More details on how these principles have been applied are set out in the Design and Access Statement for this application.

## 1.4 Previous successes within Wiltshire

- 1.4.1 Bellway has an established track record within Wiltshire, and particularly the north-western part of the county close to Melksham, with various sites successfully brought forward. These include:
1. **Bowood View, Melksham:** A 150-home development about 150m to the east of the application site, completed about five years ago. This scheme made provision for a new village hall.
  2. **Lock Keeper Gardens, Devizes:** A canal-side development of 200 homes about eight miles away in Devizes (under construction).
  3. **Rowden Chase, Chippenham:** A development of 225 homes as part of a wider 1,000-home development.

Figure 1.2: Part of Bowood View in Berryfield, Showing New Village Hall.



- 1.4.2 Bellway is committed to continuous improvement in the developments its creates and believes the new site at Berryfield, Melksham provides an opportunity for high-quality placemaking.

## 2. The Application Site

### 2.1 Site Description

- 2.1.1 The Application Site, as shown in Figure 2.1 below, is approximately 11.1 hectares (ha) in size and comprises three agricultural fields and agricultural buildings. Several dilapidated WWII-era buildings are located centrally within the Application Site, with chicken sheds located near the southern boundary.

**Figure 2.1: Extract of the Location Plan**

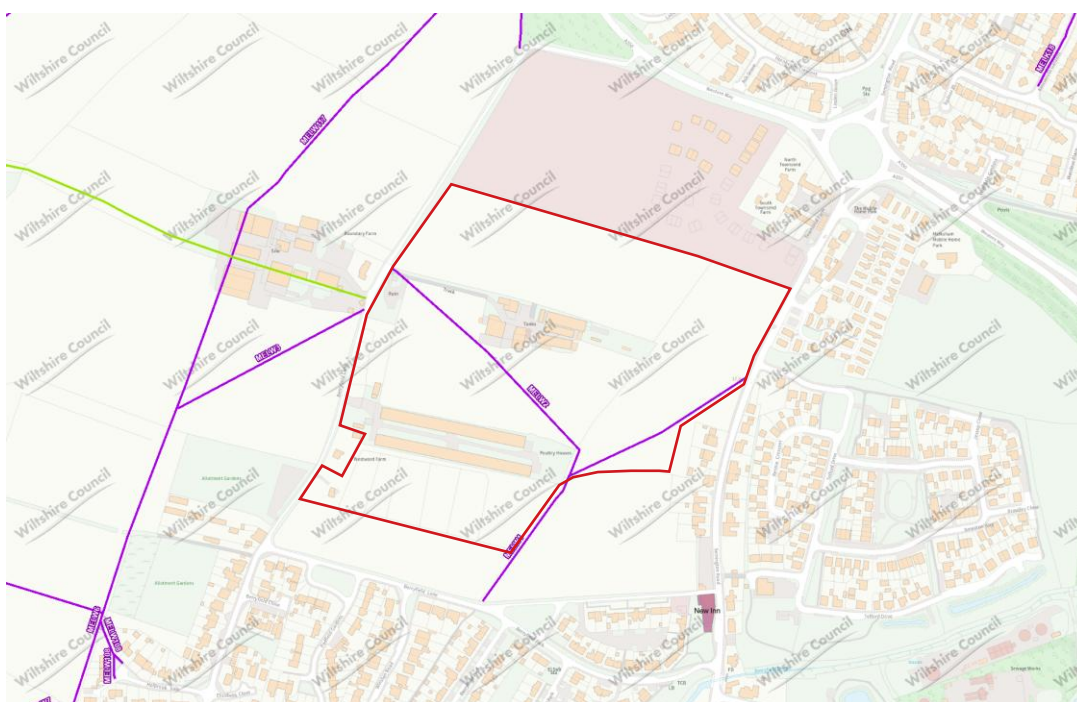


- 2.1.2 A set of site photographs which show the Application Site can be seen within the supporting Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- 2.1.3 The Application Site is bounded by residential development to the east, including the Bowood View development completed by Bellway in the early 2020s, alongside a variety of 20th-century development found along Semington Road. A residential development currently under construction bounds the Application Site to the north whilst agricultural land and buildings bound the Application Site to the south and west. The area of agricultural land immediately south of the Application Site is subject to a residential planning application pending determination and is discussed in more detail below.
- 2.1.4 The Application Site lies approximately 0.2km south of the Melksham settlement boundary, and approximately 0.9km south of Melksham High Street which provides access to a variety of amenities. The Application Site is also located approximately 1.7km south of Melksham Railway Station. The large employment areas of the Bath Road Trading Estate and Bowerhill are 1.5km and 1.1km away

to the southeast, respectively. The A350 arterial route passes to the west of Melksham connecting it to Warminster to the south and Chippenham to the north, beyond which is the M4 motorway.

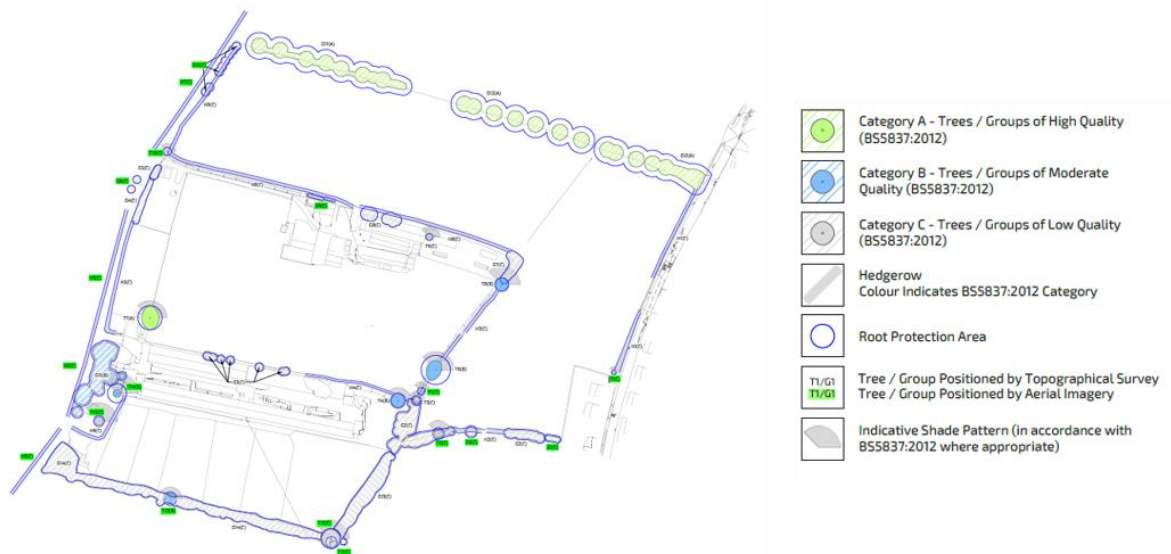
- 2.1.5 Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath MELW2 crosses the Application Site running northwest to southeast. Public Right of Way footpath MELW1 runs close to the Application Site's southeast boundary, connecting Berryfield Lane to Semington Road. Public Rights of Way MELW3 and bridleway MELW5 border the Application Site to the west. The positions of these are shown in Figure 2.2.
- 2.1.6 The Melksham Design Guide identifies Semington Road as an Active Travel Route and National Cycle Route

**Figure 2.2: The Application Site (red) in Relation to PRoWs and Bridleways**



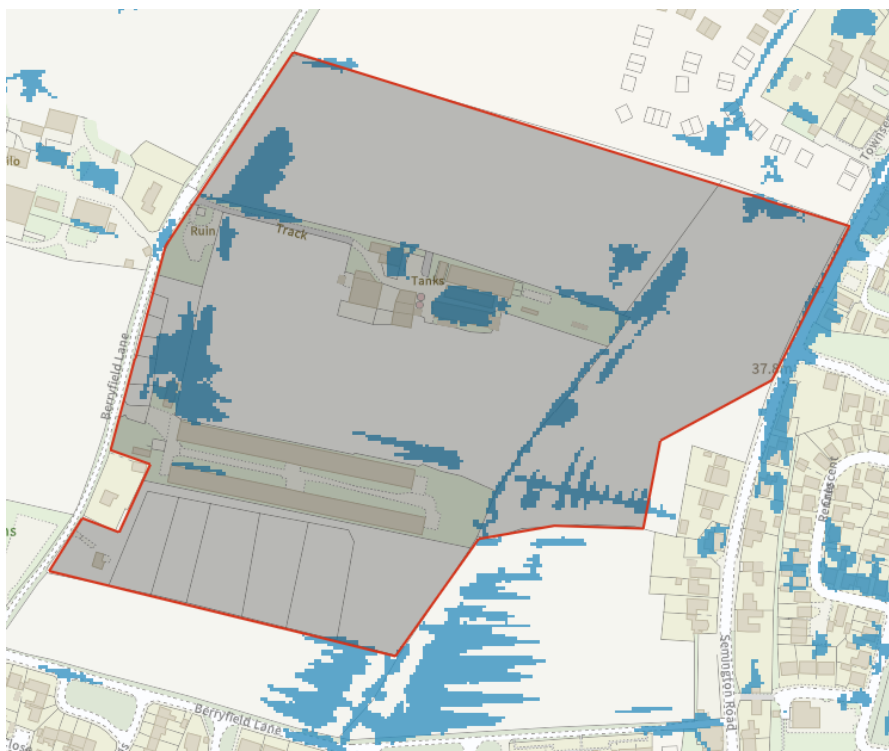
- 2.1.7 A topographic survey of the Application Site was undertaken by MK Surveys in February 2026. The survey reveals that the Application Site is almost wholly flat in nature, with no significant undulations or low/high points to note.
- 2.1.8 A row of category A high quality trees are found along the Application Site's northern boundary. Hedgerows bound the Application Site to the south, east and west. A cluster of category B trees are found in the southwestern corner of the Application Site along Berryfields Lane, alongside a single category A tree. A small number of single category B and C trees are located throughout the centre and along the southern boundaries of the Application Site. An extract of the Tree Survey Plan can be found in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Extract of the Tree Survey Plan



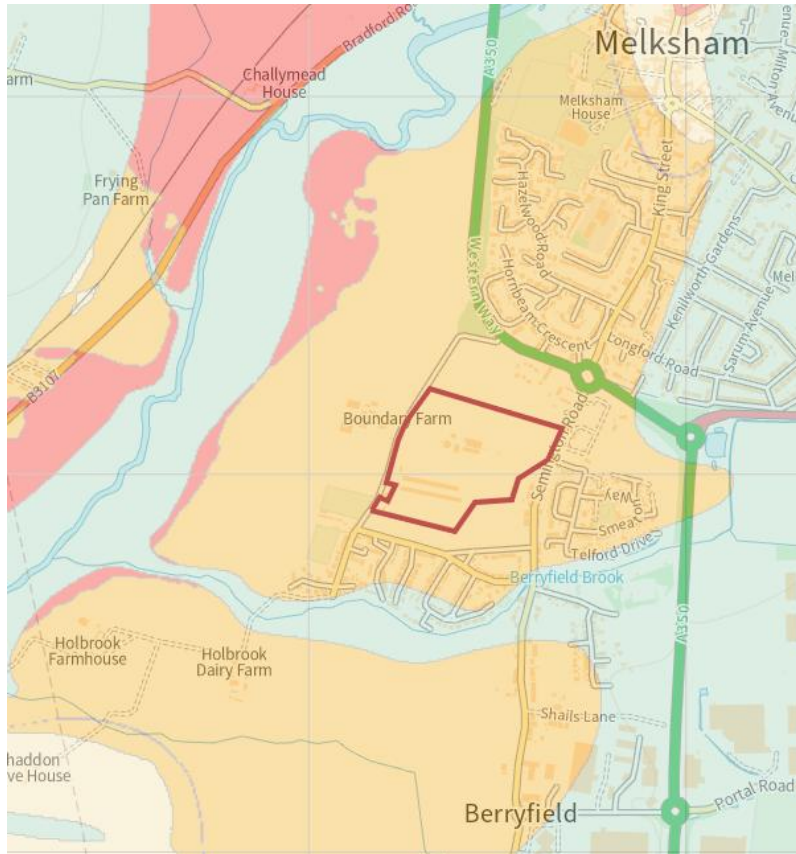
2.1.9 The Environment Agency's (EA) Flood Map for Planning shows that the Application Site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and has a low risk of fluvial or coastal flooding. Some localised areas of surface water flood risk are identified on the Government's Flood Map for Planning. This can be seen in Figure 2.2

Figure 2.2: Site Surface Water Flood Risk (site boundary approximate)



- 2.1.10 The Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (JBA Consulting, November 2024) identifies that the south west part of Melksham and Berryfield is within an area where there is the possibility of groundwater emerging at the surface locally. This can be seen in Figure 2.3.

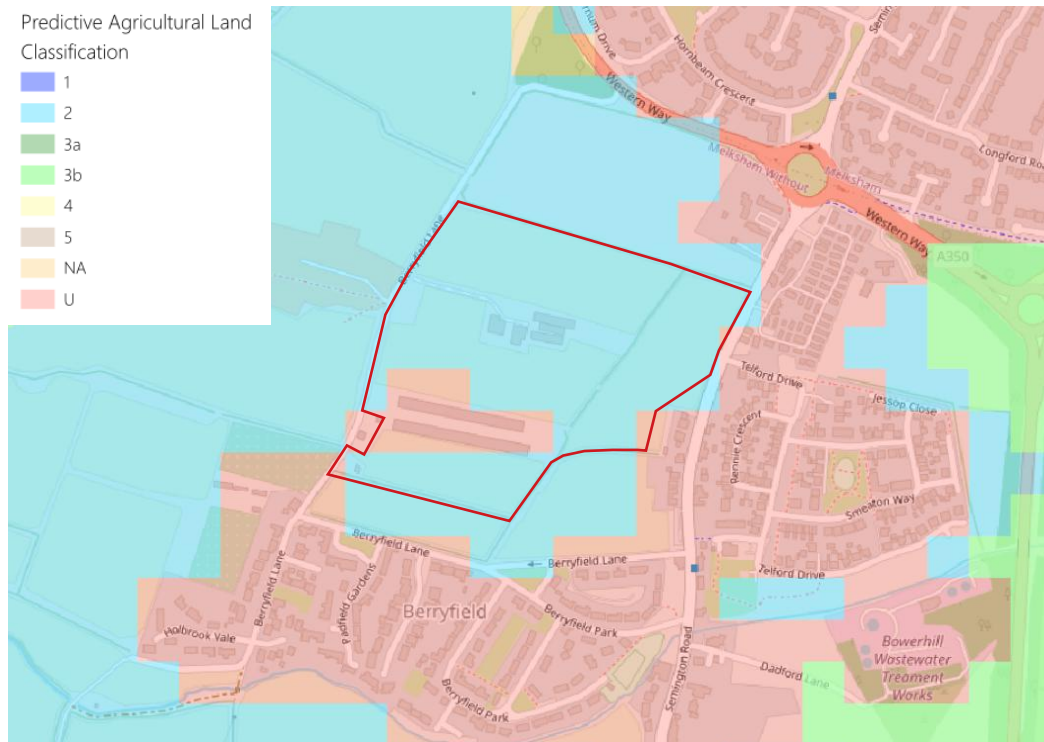
**Figure 2.3: Groundwater Emergence (site boundary approximate)**



- 2.1.11 According to Defra's Predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Map<sup>1</sup>, the Application Site comprises a mixture of Grade 2 agricultural land and unclassified land. This is in common with much of the Application Site's surroundings, including the land immediately to the north which is under development. The unclassified land comprises the land situated around the chicken shed in the south of the Application Site (one of the structures proposed to be demolished). The ALC Map in relation to the Application Site can be seen in Figure 2.4.
- 2.1.12 It should be noted that the ALC mapping is 'coarse' in its level of detail, for example it identifies the other (larger) cluster of existing buildings on the site as agricultural land.

<sup>1</sup> <https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/a817d96f-271d-487b-89ad-48d271f931aa>

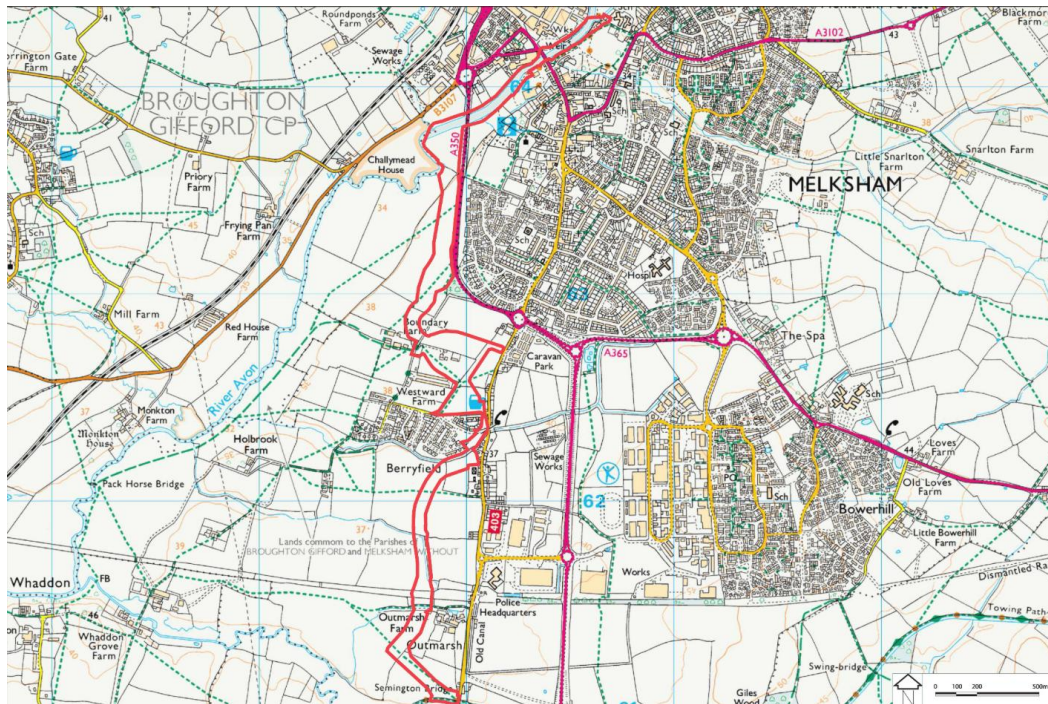
**Figure 2.4: Predictive Agricultural Land Classification in relation to the Application Site (Defra, 2026)**



## 2.2 Canal Application

- 2.2.1 The Application Site is bisected by a proposal to connect the River Avon (to the west of Melksham) to the Kennet and Avon Canal (to the south of Melksham / Bowerhill) with a new canal. This is subject of Core Policy 16, from the 2015 Wiltshire Core Strategy, and a live planning application by the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal Trust (WBCT), submitted in 2012 (ref: [\(W/12/01080/FUL\)](#)). The route of the proposed canal can be seen in Figure 2.5.
- 2.2.2 The canal application has been a live planning application for a significant period of time (14 years). We understand that a number of technical, financial and land-related issues are still outstanding that need to be resolved in order for the project to be brought forward. However, we also understand that there remains strong commitment on the part of Wiltshire Council to facilitate this application if possible. Equally, WBCT is continuing to progress with works to develop the proposals and to respond to technical issues.

Figure 2.5: Route of the Proposed Canal



2.2.3 The intersection of the proposed canal route with the Application Site can be seen in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6: The Intersection of the Proposed Canal Route with the Application Site (red line)



## 2.3 Planning History

### The Application Site

- 2.3.1 The Application Site was subject to a number of planning applications for agricultural buildings in the 1970s. Several of the buildings remain standing and form part of Berryfields Farm within the centre of the Application Site. Other than the canal application, the Application Site has not been subject to any other notable planning applications. The Application Site's planning history can be seen in Table 2.2.1.

**Table 2.2.1: Planning History for Site**

| Application Reference | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Decision and Date                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| W/12/01080/FUL        | <i>Creation of a new waterway and towpath for the Wilts and Berks Canal between the Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Avon and associated footpath, cycleway and provision of ten bridges along with new access roads to Berryfield</i> | Awaiting decision                     |
| W/91/01254/FUL        | <i>Erection of farmhouse</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Approve with Conditions<br>07/01/1992 |
| W/80/00054/HIS        | <i>Erection of Pork rearing house</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Approve<br>04/03/1980                 |
| W/78/00826/HIS        | <i>Pony stable</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Approve<br>13/12/1978                 |
| W/78/00825/HIS        | <i>Cattle Cubicle House</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Approve<br>13/12/1978                 |
| W/76/00241/HIS        | <i>Erection of agricultural buildings and Outline for agricultural dwelling</i>                                                                                                                                                           | Refused<br>06/09/1976                 |

### Surrounding Area

- 2.3.2 We recognise that Melksham has been subject to a notable amount of planning activity and development in recent years. A number of planning applications have been granted or are pending determination, whilst other applications have been allowed by the Planning Inspectorate following an appeal. Notable recent planning applications within the wider area can be seen in Appendix A **Error! Reference source not found.**
- 2.3.3 Three of the planning applications in Appendix A adjoin the Application Site. They are set out in more detail below.

#### **20/07334/OUT & PL/2022/08155 – Land to the West of Semington Road**

- 2.3.4 These consents are being brought forward by Living Space Housing and adjoin the Application Site to the north.
- 2.3.5 Planning application ref: 20/07334/OUT gained permission for up to 50 dwellings off Semington Road with Reserved Matters Approval (ref: PL/2023/00808) subsequently gained in August 2023. Development has since commenced on the site and the development is still under construction at the time of this application being submitted.

2.3.6 Planning application ref: PL/2022/08155 was allowed at appeal for up to 53 dwellings to the west of the site area of 20/07334/OUT. Reserved Matters Approval (ref: PL/2024/11665) was gained in October 2025. We understand this permission is to be progressed soon.

2.3.7 Extracts of the site layout plans for both planning applications can be seen in **Figure 2.7**.

**Figure 2.7: Extracts of the approved site layout plans following reserved matters applications PL/2023/00808 (right) and PL/2024/11665 (left)**



#### **PL/2025/00626 – Land North of Berryfield Lane**

2.3.8 The land immediately to the south of the Application Site is subject to a live outline planning application for up to 58 dwellings by Martin Grant Homes. The application was validated by Wiltshire Council in January 2025.

2.3.9 The application was originally proposed for up to 68 dwellings to be built on the site. However, following discussions between the applicant, the Council and consultees, a potential conflict between the Canal Link application and the proposal was identified. The scheme's layout was subsequently amended so that the Canal Link could be accommodated within the eastern part of the site, whilst ensuring that a viable residential development could be brought forward across the remainder of the site. As a result, the number of dwellings was reduced from up to 68 to up to 58.

2.3.10 An extract of the illustrative masterplan can be seen in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8: An extract of the illustrative masterplan for planning application ref: PL/2025/00626



- 2.3.11 There are a number of parallels between this application and Bellway's, including (in particular) its position in relation to the canal corridor. Following consultation, Martin Grant adjusted its layout in order to facilitate the implementation of the canal. Bellway's proposals echo this and would enable a continuous through-link of the canal as part of a wider public open space and drainage strategy.
- 2.3.12 Bellway has also taken note of other elements of the Martin Grant Homes application, including:
- Requirement and mix for 17 homes (30% affordable) confirmed by the WC Housing Enabling Team
  - Resolution of objections/concerns from the Local Lead Flood Authority following additional technical submissions
  - Comments of a technical nature relating to matters including highways, landscape, ecology and rights of way
- 2.3.13 Overall, should both Martin Grant Homes and Bellway's applications proceed, there is a good level of consistency of approach, enabling the projects to integrate positively.

#### Appeals Within and Around Melksham

- 2.3.14 Across Melksham more generally, there have been two recent appeal inquiries for residential development. These are discussed in turn below.

##### The Woodrow Appeal

- 2.3.15 The first is the *Woodrow* appeal for 70 dwellings<sup>2</sup>, which was allowed in April 2026.
- 2.3.16 *Woodrow* set out that the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which both parties agreed was out of date, sought to meet Wiltshire's housing needs between 2006 and 2026 and acknowledged that the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) allocated a number of sites for housing development within Melksham. However, even if all the allocations came forward, a housing land supply deficit

<sup>2</sup> (app ref: [PL/2024/10674](#); appeal ref: APP/Y3940/W/25/3374421)

would remain. As such, in this instance the appeal scheme was considered to provide a meaningful contribution to Wiltshire's housing land supply, which was calculated to be 2.42 years.

2.3.17 As Wiltshire Council does not have a five-year housing land supply or an up to date local plan, the presumption in favour of sustainable development was engaged under paragraph 11d) of the NPPF. The Inspector found that the weight of the social, economic and landscape benefits of the appeal scheme against the limited weight to the harm would usually tilt the planning balance in favour of the appeal scheme. However, as the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 had only recently been made, paragraph 14 of the NPPF would apply.

2.3.18 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states:

*"In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:*

- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and*
- b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 69-70)"*

2.3.19 In the case of the *Woodrow* appeal, both parties agreed that the JMNP2 met the first test. However, there was disagreement as to whether the appeal scheme met the second test. Upon consideration of the evidence, the Inspector determined that Melksham's housing figure of 270 homes set out within the JMNP2 derived from the emerging (and now withdrawn) Local Plan, further noting that the Inspector for the examination recommended a review of the housing requirement for the neighbourhood plan area should occur following the examination of the Local Plan. As such, the appeal Inspector concluded that the validity of the housing figure within the JMNP2 could not now be relied upon because that requirement was derived from a plan that was extremely unlikely to go forward. They also noted that whilst development is coming forward within Melksham, Wiltshire Council's housing land supply shortfall was acute and county-wide, with actions needed to be taken to address the shortfall through the provision of housing on suitable sites. The Inspector therefore allowed the appeal, stating that the appeal scheme would provide much-needed housing now and result in a number of important benefits, tilting the planning balance in its favour.

2.3.20 Overall, the *Woodrow* appeal demonstrated that paragraph 14 of the NPPF can be overridden in Wiltshire, and that the 'tilted balance' continues to apply in Melksham specifically, notwithstanding the recent date of JMNP2. It further demonstrated that there is an ongoing need for sites to meet the housing land supply deficit within Wiltshire, and that future housing development will be determined on its own merits under the NPPF.

#### The Snarlton Farm Appeal

2.3.21 A second appeal inquiry for 300 dwellings at *Snarlton Farm*<sup>3</sup> was recovered by the Secretary of State in January 2026. Following a public local inquiry, the appeal was allowed by the Secretary of State in July 2026.

2.3.22 In the Decision Letter, the Inspector set out that the appeal site was located outside of the Melksham settlement boundary and was therefore not located in an appropriate location. The development was therefore contrary to Core Policies CP2 and CP15 of the WCS, and Policy 6 of the JMNP2. However, no conflict with Core Policy CP1 of the WCS was found.

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<sup>3</sup> (app ref: [PL/2024/07097](#); appeal ref: APP/Y3940/W/25/3373278)

- 2.3.23 The Inspector went on to consider whether there were any material considerations which indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in line with the development plan. They found that Wiltshire Council did not have a five-year housing land supply (2.16 years) and attached significant weight to the provision of open market housing and affordable housing provided by the development.
- 2.3.24 The appeal was also found to have limited harm on the landscape, and moderate harm with regard to the loss of BMV agricultural land, with moderate weight attached to other social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 2.3.25 The Inspector further noted that the housing requirement within the JMNP2 is not a sound basis upon which to assess housing proposals in Melksham, and they remained unconvinced that its allocations are likely to provide enough housing need to meet the needs of the neighbourhood plan area. They further note that, under these circumstances, it could be argued that paragraph 14 is no longer engaged, however due to the substantial housing land supply and affordable housing shortfall, and the withdrawal of the emerging local plan, conflict with the JMNP2 was non-determinative.
- 2.3.26 Overall, the Inspector found that the impacts of granting planning permission for the proposal would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, including paragraph 14, and the appeal was allowed.

## 3. The Proposed Development

3.1.1 The Proposed Development will bring forward:

- Up to 225 new high-quality dwellings
- Thirty percent (30%) affordable homes
- Public open space measuring 2.72 hectares
- Space for the implementation of the Melksham link canal measuring 1.94 hectares
- Two play areas
- Retained and enhanced key trees and vegetation
- Retained and enhanced public rights of way
- Financial contributions towards community and infrastructure facilities via Section 106 and CIL

3.1.2 It is intended for the proposals to deliver a policy-compliant housing mix at Reserved Matters stage, incorporating a range of dwellings and house types. It is envisaged that the built form on Site will comprise a range of house typologies to provide homes for people at different stages of their lives, with an average density of 35 dwellings per hectare.

3.1.3 A copy of the Illustrative Masterplan can be seen in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1: Extract of the Illustrative Masterplan (P25-0016\_CMP-02 Rev E)**



## 3.2 Parameter Plans

- 3.2.1 A set of parameter plans is submitted for approval to provide the framework for detailed proposals for the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the Proposed Development. These details would come forward as part of future applications for Reserved Matters Approval following outline consent.
- 3.2.2 Approximately 42% of the Application Site will remain free from built development. A significant amount of public open space will be incorporated into the Proposed Development to create a well-designed and healthy place. The space for the implementation of the proposed Melksham Link Canal has also been allowed across the central regions of the Application Site. The proposals have been designed to respond to the context of the Application Site and its opportunities and constraints as set out in the provided DAS.

### Land Use and Access Parameter Plan (P25-0016\_PARP-01 Rev B)

- 3.2.3 The land use and access parameter plan identifies the areas of the Application Site that would be suitable for residential development and open space, whilst also setting out the Application Site's access arrangements. The plan sets out two parcels of residential development, a northern and southern parcel, which are divided by an area of public open space. The plan also sets out space for the implementation of the Melksham Link Canal within the Application Site. The main site access is set out to the northeast off Semington Road, in addition to setting out emergency, cycle and pedestrian connections. The proposed land use and access parameter plan has been directly informed by the contextual analysis of the Application Site and its opportunities and constraints.

### Building Heights Parameter Plan (P25-0016\_PARP-02 Rev A)

- 3.2.4 The building heights parameter plan sets out that the Proposed Development will consist of up to two- and three-storey dwellings. The taller three-storey dwellings will be located centrally within the Application Site, whilst the smaller two-storey dwellings will be located around the Application Site's boundaries.

### Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan (P25-0016\_PARP-03 Rev B)

- 3.2.5 The incorporation of a comprehensive new public open space in addition to the retention of space for the implementation of the Melksham Link Canal is central to the Proposed Development. The green infrastructure parameter plan sets out the areas of the Application Site to be retained for these uses in addition to the existing trees to be retained and removed, the PRoWs that are to be retained, and the indicative locations of the proposed SuDS features and play areas.

### Demolition Parameter Plan (P25-0016\_PARP-04 Rev -)

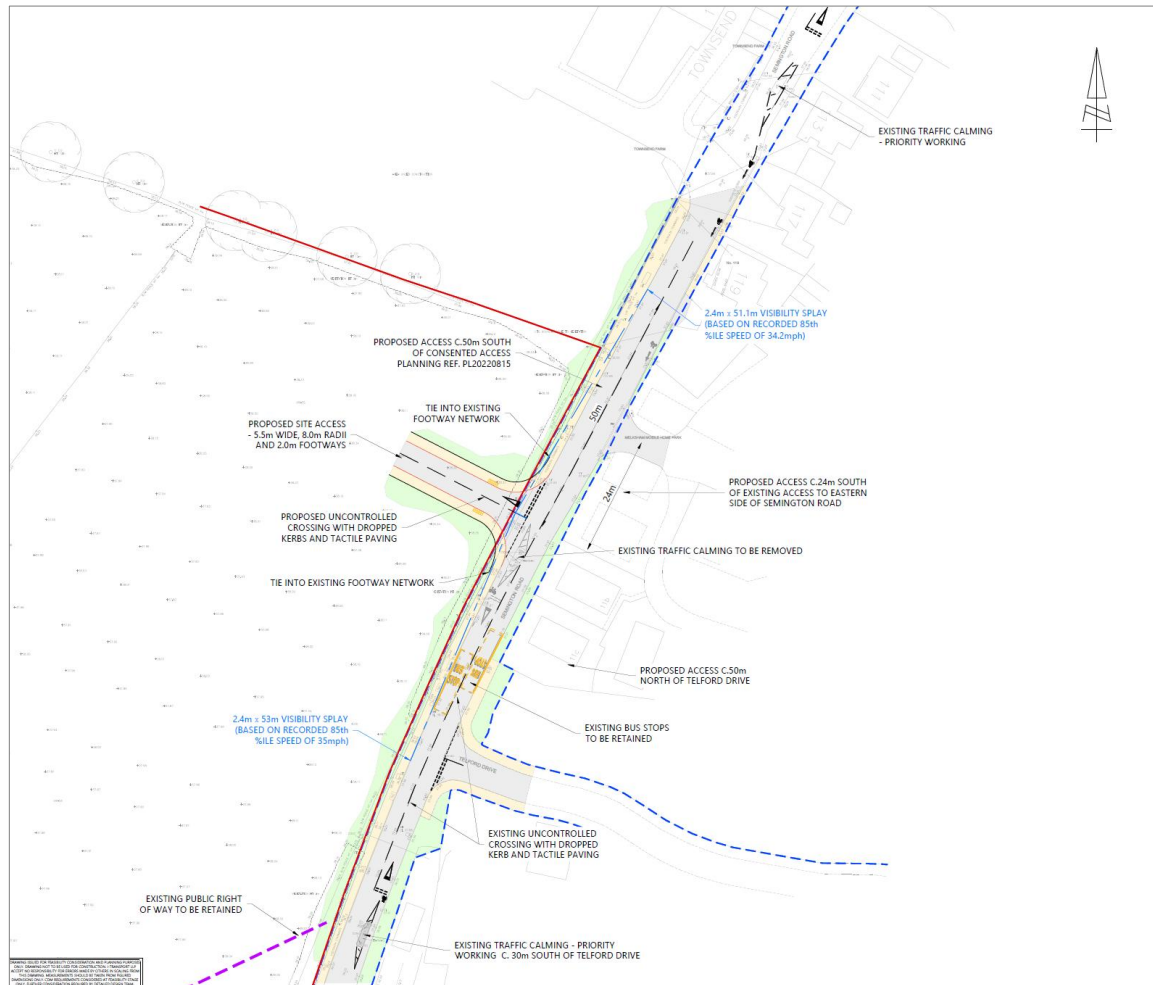
- 3.2.6 The demolition parameter plan sets out that the Proposed Development will result in the demolition of two clusters of buildings, the first of which is a cluster of dilapidated WWII buildings in the north of the Application Site. The second cluster of buildings is a group of chicken sheds in the south of the Application Site.

## 3.3 Detailed Elements

### Detailed Site Access Drawing (ITB200590-GA-004)

- 3.3.1 The Proposed Development seeks to provide full details of the Application Site's proposed access from Semington Road at the northeastern corner of the Application Site. The proposed access would be located approximately 50 metres south of the contented access for planning application ref: PL/2022/0815, and 50 metres north of Telford Drive, which provide access to the Bowood View development. The proposed access can be seen in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Extract of the detailed site access drawing from the Transport Assessment.



## 4. Pre-application Discussions

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Bellway aims to build beautiful, expertly designed homes, which meet the needs of customers and consider the demands of the future. Bellway recognises that it is important to engage with local stakeholders to inform development proposals in accordance with NPPF paragraph 40, which encourages applicants to carry out early pre-application engagement with the LPA and local community.

### 4.2 EIA Screening Request

- 4.2.1 Following submission of an EIA Screening Request to Wiltshire Council in May 2026, Wiltshire Council adopted a formal EIA Screening Opinion on 22 May 2026 confirming that it is the opinion of the Council that the proposed development of up to 195 dwellings is not classed as EIA development. Having regard to the characteristics of the development, its location and the nature of potential impacts, significant effects on the environment are not likely and an ES is not required. Although this application is for a slightly higher number of dwellings overall we believe any revised EIA screening opinion is likely to draw the same conclusion.

### 4.3 Pre-Application Enquiry

- 4.3.1 A request for pre-application advice was submitted to Wiltshire Council in May 2026 seeking feedback on outline proposals for approximately 195 new homes and associated development on the Application Site. The following details were submitted to Wiltshire Council for their comments:

- Pre-application letter
- Appendix 1 – Advice form
- Appendix 2 – Site Location Plan
- Appendix 3 – Land Use Parameter Plan
- Appendix 4 – Concept Masterplan
- Appendix 5 – Landscape baseline
- Appendix 6 – EIA Screening Opinion
- Appendix 7 – Topographical survey
- Appendix 8 – Wessex Water utilities map
- Appendix 9 – Tree Survey plan
- Appendix 9a – Tree schedule
- Appendix 10 – Flood constraints
- Appendix 11 – Existing services plan
- Appendix 12 – Ecological plan
- Appendix 13 – Review of existing buildings on site
- Appendix 14 – TA Scoping Note
- Appendix 15 – WC Highway response

#### Wiltshire Drainage

- 4.3.2 The response from Wiltshire Drainage identified that the Application Site is within Flood Zone 1 and the surface and groundwater flood risk on the site. It advised that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required to demonstrate that the site is not adversely affected by flood risk from different sources, and how the flood risk from all sources will be managed without increasing flood risk to the development itself or elsewhere.

- 4.3.3 In respect of drainage design the response identified that blue-green SuDS should be used to provide multi-faceted benefits in terms of water quantity, quality, amenity and biodiversity without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The response also identified the documentation and information that should support an outline planning application.
- 4.3.4 The response also identified the application on land south of the Application Site and advised safeguarding land for the proposed Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal and for consideration of how surface water drainage will be managed both before and after the construction of the canal.
- 4.3.5 The advice from Wiltshire Drainage has informed the FRA and supporting drainage information. It is also noted that the LLFA has no objections to the planning application for 58 homes submitted by Martin Grant Homes directly south of the Application Site which shares similar drainage issues and physical ground conditions with the Proposed Development.

#### **Wiltshire Archaeology**

- 4.3.6 The response from Wiltshire Archaeology identified that the Application Site is in an area populated by the remains of later prehistoric and Romano-British field systems and settlements along with some scattered evidence for later medieval and post medieval activity. The response identified that further work needs to be carried out to ascertain the true archaeological potential of the Application Site and advised the submission of a Heritage Statement including a geophysical survey of the Application Site. This has informed the Heritage Statement that accompanies this application.

#### **Wiltshire Ecology**

- 4.3.7 The response from Wiltshire Ecology identified the Bristol Avon County Wildlife Site (CWS) 600m to the west of the Application Site, which policy requires to be protected from the effects of development. In the local area, off-site records have been made of birds including barn owls, bats, badgers, reptiles, GCN, and invertebrates (some listed as being of national importance). On-site habitats and species identified comprised hedgerows and a bat roost. The response identified that comprehensive surveys and appropriate and sufficient mitigation would be required. This has informed the Ecological Appraisal that accompanies this application.

#### **Education**

- 4.3.8 The response from School Places and Early Years Planning team, part of Wiltshire Council's Education department, identified contributions relating to early years, primary school places and secondary school places in the context of available places within safe walking distance. It identified that a development of 177 dwellings would generate the need for 55 primary school places and 39 secondary school places. Although the response identifies a number of primary schools and a secondary school within a safe walking distance of two miles, it identifies that due to housing coming forward there is no space capacity and contributions would be necessary. The response was based on current policy, which is expected to change. We anticipate discussing contributions, or whether school infrastructure funding would be covered by CIL, as part of the determination of this application.

#### **Wiltshire Highways**

- 4.3.9 The response from Wiltshire Highways to pre-application reference HW/2026/002 considered whether EIA might be necessary on highways grounds. Along with finding that it would not, the response identified that highways impacts are likely to be acceptable and that an access option north of Telford Drive is favoured. The response also identified that the existing traffic calming measures on Semington Road could be removed due to the changing nature of this road with development in the area. These matters have informed the Transport Assessment and access drawings that support the application.

## **Urban Design**

- 4.3.10 The response from Urban Design was based on the information shown on the Concept Masterplan submitted with the request for pre-application advice. It identified matters for a planning application to consider in respect of local and national guidance within the Wiltshire Design Guide, the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 and the National Design Guide amongst others. Advice included responding to the local character and urban grain of Melksham, integrating SuDS within the streets and open spaces, the provision of street trees, creating a sense of arrival to the Application Site, considering how buildings would address the open space in the centre of the site, creating key nodes at junctions within the Application Site and ensuring that the layout supports social interaction through play areas and informal gathering points. While some of these matters are for detailed design at Reserved Matters Approval stage following any outline consent, advice was also provided on the content of parameter plans. This has informed the parameter plans and illustrative masterplan submitted with the application.

## **Public Protection**

- 4.3.11 The response from Public Protection identified key environmental topics for a planning application to consider without providing any assessment of the pre-application proposals.

## 5. Statement of Community Involvement

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Bellway is committed to engaging actively with the communities it works in, as this helps to develop a better understanding of the context and issues that affect an area, build productive relationships with key stakeholders, and ultimately bring forward a better-quality planning application that will leave a positive legacy.
- 5.1.2 In working toward this planning application, Bellway has had regard to guidance set out in both national and local policy. Paragraph 40 of the 2024 NPPF, which was extant at the time of preparing this application, states this:
- “40. Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”*
- 5.1.3 Bellway fully agrees with this. In a similar way, Paragraph 8.11 of Wiltshire Council’s *Statement of Community Involvement* states the following (emphasis added):
- “We also encourage developers and applicants to engage with **local people and communities including Town and Parish Councils and with neighbours**, when appropriate, before submission of a planning application. This might be in the form of a **public meeting or display of materials (online and/or at a public exhibition)** when local people can make the developer aware of any views they have prior to the submission of an application. A reasonable time frame should be allowed by the developer for feedback. This will enable the developer to consider amending the plans in response to such suggestions before submission. The government have stated that such engagement is **discretionary**, but it is strongly encouraged by the Council prior to the submission of applications for ten or more houses, or other large development on sites of 1 hectare or more.”*
- 5.1.4 Bellway has also taken into account the expectations for community engagement set out in Appendix 1 to the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (Community Engagement Protocol).

### 5.2 Engagement with Parish and Town Councils

- 5.2.1 In May 2026, Bellway contacted both Melksham Town Council (MTC) and Melksham Without Parish Council (MWPC), to provide an initial overview and briefing on the proposed concept for development on the Application Site, and offering to provide an in-person briefing and Q&A session.
- 5.2.2 Both MTC and MWPC responded promptly and positively, and arrangements were made for these meetings to take place with the planning sub-committees of each Council. These took place as follows:
- MTC: Tuesday 23 June 2026, in Melksham Town Hall
  - MWPC: Wednesday 24 June 2026, in Melksham Community Campus.
- 5.2.3 Both sessions were well attended by members of each Parish Council, with substantial and detailed discussions taking place, on a ‘without prejudice’ basis.

- 5.2.4 During each presentation, representatives of Bellway and Savills outlined a draft development framework for the Application Site, and the guiding principles of the development which were explained as being:
- Maximise the opportunity created by the canal project
  - Permanent space between Berryfield and Melksham
  - Unique, waterside character that 'raises the bar' on design
  - Inclusive placemaking with a mix of housing
  - Bring nature to people's doorsteps
- 5.2.5 Key queries arising from the MTC discussion included:
- The principle of development, in relation to the withdrawn Wiltshire Local Plan but also the relatively recent Neighbourhood Plan
  - Provision of affordable housing, including that 2015 Wiltshire Core Strategy has a policy of 30% whereas the NP seeks up to 40%
  - Concern as to the cumulative impact of the development on the area, particularly from a traffic point of view
  - Queries around the drainage and flooding characteristics of the Application Site, conscious of a particularly wet winter 2025/2026 during which there had been waterlogging on the Application Site
  - Questions around the potential future transition from the proposals delivered by Bellway, towards implementation of the Canal in the event that it is permitted and funded
  - Interest in the potential provision of bungalows
- 5.2.6 The meeting with MWPC covered similar topics, but as the Application Site is formally located within the MWPC itself, there was also a greater depth of discussion as to the relationships/impacts of the development on the area, as well as practical aspects of implementation.
- 5.2.7 A key topic was sustainable transport, with MWPC explaining that a study was being undertaken (by the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust) into how improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity could be delivered within the area. This has become of increasing concern and priority in the area, due to various new developments being applied for and built out. MWPC indicated that updates from this review would be available during summer 2026. Bellway looks forward to engaging further on that matter as it may be appropriate for this application to make off-site financial contributions through a Section 106 agreement, to assist in the delivery of new connections that are recommended through the review.
- 5.2.8 MWPC also helpfully provided Bellway and Savills with a detailed schedule of requirements for future residential development, emerging both from the Neighbourhood Plan, and from the PC's own experience. These requirements are set out in the figure below.
- 5.2.9 Bellway has no objection to any of the measures set out, and will seek to incorporate them wherever possible. As many of these measures are detailed and operational, it is likely that they would be addressed at the Reserved Matters and condition discharge stage, rather than in the present Outline, but the submitted Design and Access Statement and landscape strategies seek to demonstrate how they have been anticipated in the illustrative design.
- 5.2.10 A written note of the meeting with MWPC was provided by the Parish Officer; this is provided as Appendix B to this Planning Statement.
- 5.2.11 Supplementary comments from Melksham Without Parish Council following the meeting held with Bellway and Savills on 24 June 2026 were received on 27 July 2026. Bellway acknowledges and has reviewed the Parish Council's comments, and has sought to incorporate the recommendations and requests where possible.

Figure 5.1: detailed proposals/ requirements provided by MWPC

| The Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 requires the following provided:                                                                                                                                               | The Parish Council would like to see the following provided                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adherence to adopted Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 1 policies and emerging Neighbourhood Plan 2 and evidence documents.                                                                                                  | Circular pedestrian routes around the site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Contribution towards improved bus services, which serve the area.                                                                                                                                                      | The Parish Council seek the provision of play equipment above that required by the West Wiltshire District Council saved Policy in the Core Strategy and wish to enter into discussions being the nominated party for any proposed LEAPs (Local Equipped Area of Play)/Play area and seek the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A maintenance sum in the s106 agreement</li> <li>• Safety Surfacing extended beyond the play area fence line (by at least 30 cm) and for the whole area to be surfaced as such, with no joins to prevent future expansion gaps, and no grass that will require maintenance</li> <li>• Tarmac paths provided not hoggins.</li> <li>• No wooden equipment provided.</li> <li>• Dark Green Metal bow top fencing provided.</li> <li>• Clean margins around the edges, no planting.</li> <li>• Bins provided outside the play area.</li> <li>• Easy access provided for maintenance vehicles.</li> <li>• Public access gates painted red.</li> <li>• No inset symbols provided in the safety surfacing, which should be one solid surface.</li> </ul> |
| Contribution to educational and medical facilities within the Melksham area.                                                                                                                                           | Equipment installed for teenagers such as a teen shelter/MUGA and somewhere to kick a ball around                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| The provision of bird, bat and bee bricks, reptile refugia and hibernacula within the development, in order to increase biodiversity.                                                                                  | The provision of benches and bins where there are circular pedestrian routes and public open space and the regular emptying of bins to be reflected in any future maintenance contribution.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Improvements to Rights of Way.                                                                                                                                                                                         | Contribution towards playing fields.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Provision of allotments with access to parking and water supply in line with National Allotment Society guidance.                                                                                                      | Connectivity with existing housing development so not isolated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Heat pumps and provision of solar panels and storage batteries for every house or group of houses/block of flats to be included in proposals. To include capacity for hydrogen heating in the future within proposals. | There are practical art contributions Parish Council are involved in public art discussions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Any bus shelters provided should include seats rather than perches, as well as sides and are suitable in providing Real Time Information (RTI) ie access to an electricity supply, WiFi connectivity and are an appropriate height.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Speed limit within the site is 20mph and self-enforcing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Proposed trees are not planted on boundaries of new/existing housing, but further into public open spaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | The development is tenant blind.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | If adjacent to existing dwellings the design is such that the layout is garden to existing garden.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | The road layout is such that there are no dead ends in order that residents and refuse lorries do not need to reverse out of roads.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | There is visible delineation between pavement and roads so they are easily identifiable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Provision of convenience store with free access cash point.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Inclusion of lifebuoys, noticeboards, and defibrillators. The maintenance of these items to be undertaken by the management company, unless the council decides that they would like to take on the asset.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

5.2.12 Bellway looks forward to meeting further with the Parish Council at the application stage and discussing these measures in more detail as matters progress.

## 5.3 Engagement with Canal Trust

5.3.1 From the outset of this project, Bellway has recognised the significance and importance of the canal project, including the 2015 Core Strategy policy and live planning application (outlined in more detail

elsewhere in this statement). Although this project does not yet have planning permission, and we understand that it is, to date, only partially funded, the commitment to it on the part of Wiltshire Council and the Parish and Town Councils is abundantly clear.

5.3.2 For these reasons, Bellway has been in touch with the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal Trust (WBCT), who is leading the project since mid-2025, and have met twice to discuss emerging proposals. Through these discussions Bellway has explained its agreement that if housing development is to take place on this site, it should accommodate a sufficient clear corridor so that the canal can remain deliverable. Beyond this, there is agreement of taking some steps to aid the canal's eventual construction, including the provision of accesses, and configuring the public open space and drainage strategy so as to be closely compatible with the canal.

5.3.3 An indication of this approach is set out in the figure below, shared with the WBCT.

**Figure 5.2: Overlay of Canal Route and Illustrative Masterplan**



5.3.4 Bellway looks forward to engaging further with the WBCT at the application stage and will continue to exchange technical and environmental information to assist its ongoing efforts to secure planning permission.

## 5.4 Public Consultation Event

### Format of the Event

5.4.1 The main element of pre-application engagement has been a community consultation event, held at Berryfields Village Hall on Friday 10 July 2026 between 1pm-5pm, and 7:45pm-9pm.

- 5.4.2 Berryfield Village Hall was selected as a central, modern venue within about 150m of the application site, and which has parking, and level accessible access. It should be noted that this hall is located within Bellway's previous *Bowood View* development, and was delivered as a result of the Section 106 agreement for that site.
- 5.4.3 The early evening break in the event was necessary in order to accommodate a prior booking by a local club: the village hall is very well used by various societies throughout the week, meaning that it is relatively difficult to find a very long uninterrupted booking slot.

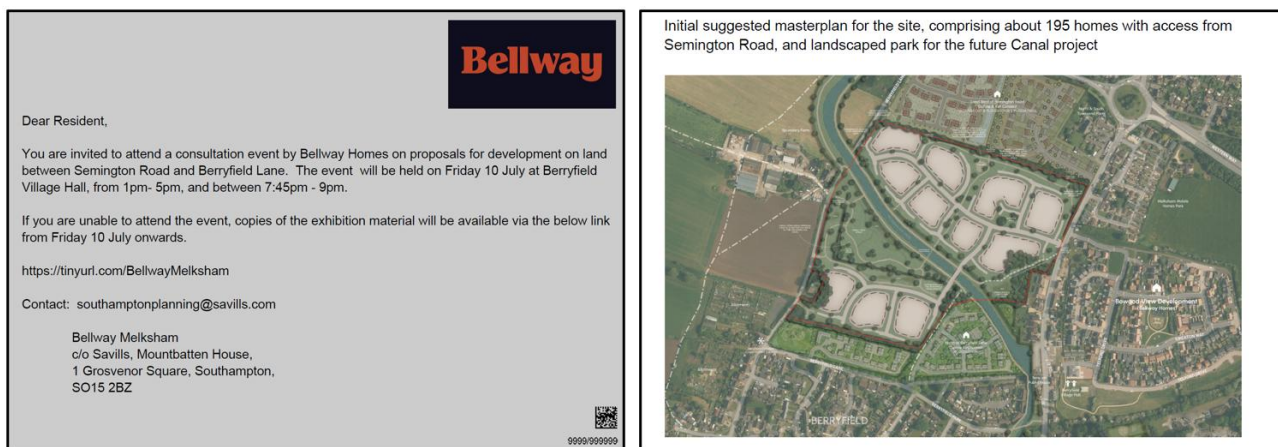
#### Promotion and Notification of the Event

- 5.4.4 The primary means of publicising this was through the issuing of notification letters to 690 addresses within the Berryfields area. This area encompassed the residential developments on either side of Semington Road, Berryfield Park, and Bowood View, up to the A350, former railway line and River Avon. This area is indicated in the figure below.

Figure 5.3: Area Covered by Consultation Mailshot

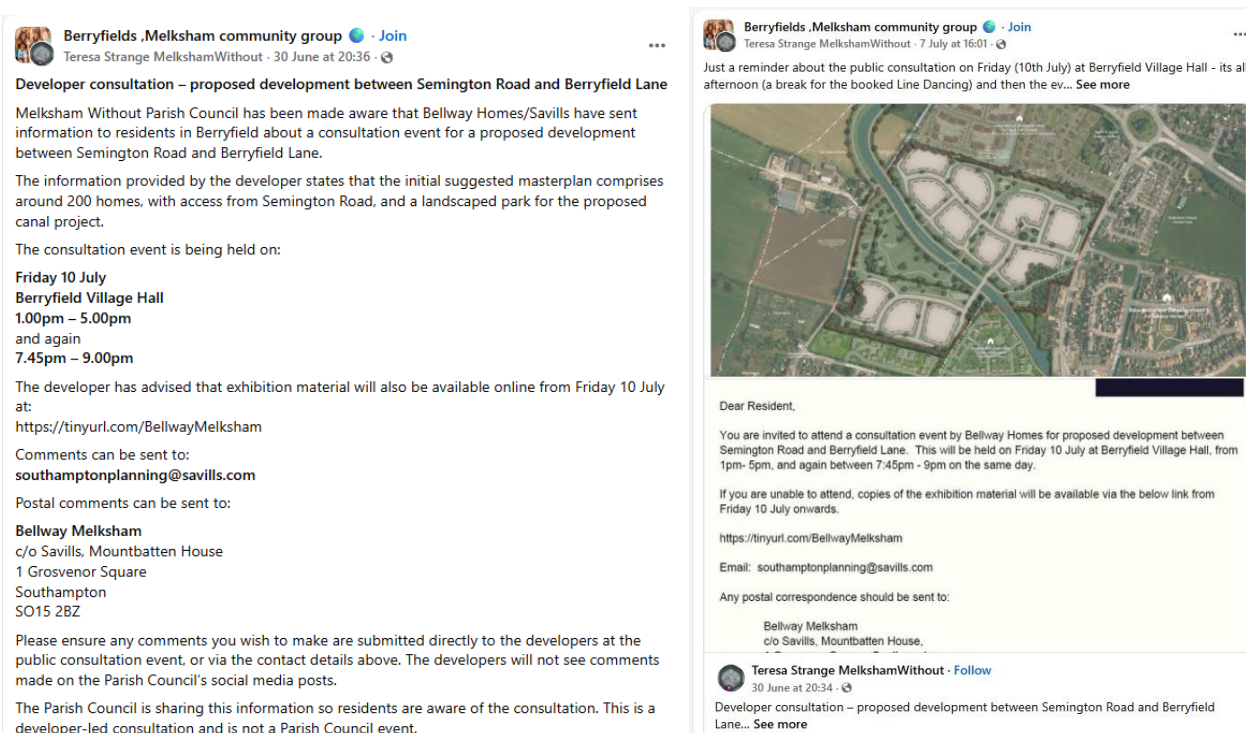


Figure 5.4: Content of Card Issued to Residents



5.4.5 With the encouragement of Bellway, Melksham Parish Council also kindly circulated details of the exhibition, including on social media. This assisted in raising awareness about the event.

Figure 5.5: Screenshots of Facebook posts by MWPC about the event



5.4.6 Information about the exhibition, along with links to materials presented, were made available online via the simple address <http://tinyurl.com/BellwayMelksham>.

## Content of the Exhibition

- 5.4.7 At the exhibition, substantial information was presented on the form and content of the proposals, with 11 large exhibition banners outlining:
- The location of the Application Site and key characteristics
  - The proposed overarching vision
  - Transport considerations
  - Outline drainage proposals
  - Landscape proposals
  - Ecological factors
  - Planning policy factors
  - Relationship with the canal project
  - Bellway's Placemaking Policy
  - Delivery and next steps.
- 5.4.8 The exhibition banners are included as Appendix C to this Planning Statement. In order to be able to engage in detail on matters arising, the event was staffed by various key members of the project team, including:
- Bellway – Strategic Projects Director
  - Savills – Planning Director, Associate Landscape Director, and Senior Planner
  - iTransport – Partner/director
  - Brandt Urban Design – design director
  - PFA consulting – Engineering director

**Figure 5.6: Exhibition Shortly After Opening**



- 5.4.9 Attendees were encouraged to complete a consultation form either in person or online, or to post a response to the Savills Southampton office. A total of about 60 people attended the event, with particular waves of people attending shortly after the lunchtime opening and also at circa 4pm-5pm, and with a particularly busy period from about 7.45pm-8.30pm. Providing availability at these

different times appears to have been successful, enabling residents to come at stages in the day that are most convenient.

## Feedback

5.4.10 A total of [10] responses have been received to the consultation, the comments from which are set out in **Table 5.1**.

**Table 5.1: Feedback received**

| Question                                                                                                            | Feedback Received (verbatim)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What do you think are the main features of the site and surrounding area that should shape this development?</b> | <i>The canal, the town and the wider landscape</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>This site is contained within the proposed Wilts and Berks Canal development plan and identified in the wiltshire core policy 16 as the proposed route into the existing Berryfield Park estate once the existing entrance is obstructed by the new canal. This new route should be sufficiently adequate in size and structure to cater for the two way movement of all existing traffic including farm vehicles, buses and large HGVs.</i> |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>There doesn't appear to be any sign of this need in you plans or any sign of this development working with the other adjacent proposed development to provide that crucial need.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>This development must be shaped by the capacity of the existing infrastructure and the need to protect the character of the local community. Melksham has seen significant housing growth, but roads and local services have not kept pace.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>Although residents fought successfully for the bypass over 30 years ago, the old A350 and Semington Road are still used as a rat run, causing traffic, speeding, noise and safety concerns. A further 200 homes, on top of two existing developments, together with the canal redesign, will only increase traffic and visitor numbers.</i>                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>I accept that new housing is needed, but it must be supported by the right infrastructure. Bellway should fund meaningful traffic mitigation, including a 20 mph speed limit, traffic-calming measures, and restrictions on through traffic on the old A350. Without these improvements, the development will place an unacceptable burden on local roads and further erode what was once a peaceful residential area</i>                    |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>This will potentially be the 4th development on Semington Rd + the proposed re-direction of the canal. With this amount of disruption over the next few years this will affect the value of existing properties.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>The natural environment – this is a green belt site</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>Shouldn't – don't want it to go ahead</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>Breath of fresh air – just what Melksham needs. A great start for young people who want to get on the property ladder.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>What types of homes do you believe are most needed in the local area?</b>                                        | <i>all types of home are needed</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>One and two bedroom houses and bungalows with adequate parking spaces "on site" for at least two cars plus a garage.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                     | <i>The local area needs a mix of genuinely affordable homes, smaller properties for first-time buyers, and bungalows or accessible homes for older residents wishing to</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| Question                                                                                                                                                | Feedback Received (verbatim)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>downsize. Housing should meet local needs rather than simply increase the number of large developments.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>However, any new homes must be supported by the necessary infrastructure. Melksham has already seen significant housing growth, but roads and local services have not kept pace. Further development should only proceed alongside investment in the infrastructure needed to support it.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>NONE. There is already too much construction in the immediate area causing a massive increase in traffic on an already busy and sometimes dangerous road. Semington Rd is currently used as a "rat run" for the A350.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>2+3 beds</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Given that there are three new build sites either underway or going through planning, there are sufficient homes available</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>None</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Affordable housing &amp; shared ownership</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>How do you think the development could best fit with the character and appearance of the local area?</b>                                             | <i>traditional housing with appropriate parking and gardens</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>The area is deprived of any shops except for one small public house so I would hesitate to suggest that you extend that brief.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>The development should respect the area's residential character by retaining green spaces, protecting the canal, and avoiding overdevelopment. Housing should be in keeping with the surrounding area, with sufficient landscaping and open space. Just as importantly, the development must include measures to reduce traffic impacts, including traffic calming on the old A350, so that the character of what was once a peaceful community is not further eroded</i>                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>With the increase of a further 200 houses all using one access (right next to the neighbouring development's only access), this is going to cause a bottleneck at the roundabout and A350 which is already challenging at peak times.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Open space + lots of room for parking</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Leave the fields as they are</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>It won't</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>With a village approach &amp; the canal will be a fabulous addition &amp; resolve flooding issues</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>How important are public open spaces, landscaping, and biodiversity enhancements within the development, and what features would you like to see</b> | <i>very important</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Definitely natural and unmanaged country style walks designed for adults to enjoy.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Public open spaces and biodiversity are extremely important. Too much local wildlife habitat and green space is already being lost to development. Existing trees, hedgerows and natural habitats should be protected wherever possible, with new native planting, wildlife corridors and green spaces included. As Melksham continues to expand, it is essential that development protects nature and preserves the character of the area, rather than replacing valuable open spaces with more housing.</i> |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <i>It's all very well having landscaping and biodiversity enhancements, but the green</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

| Question                                                                                                                                        | Feedback Received (verbatim)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| included?                                                                                                                                       | <i>belt is disappearing rapidly and whilst a park or pond does accommodate some wildlife, we are fast losing natural habitat. These areas proposed are surrounded by houses and roads</i>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Incredibly important – this development will damage local biodiversity.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Very</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Energy efficient homes</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| What do you think about our proposals to include a protected landscape corridor for the future canal?                                           | <i>very good</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Insufficient information contained within remit with regard to future access to existing estate as previously mentioned.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>I support a protected landscape corridor for the canal, provided it genuinely protects wildlife, habitats, and the natural character of the area. However, it should not become an attraction that brings significantly more traffic and parking pressure to an already overstretched road network. Protecting the canal should benefit both nature and local residents.</i>        |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>This is all very well, it could look pretty, but overall the disruption to the green belt and noise pollution during the lengthy construction is a huge sacrifice to the area.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>I don't think the canal will ever happen but I like the ponds</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>The canal is highly unlikely to happen so this is probably a tick-box exercise &amp; feature.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Would just like canal without this development</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Absolutely imperative</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Are there any local facilities, services, or community amenities that you feel are currently lacking and could be supported by the development? | <i>a new launch area into the canal</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>See sarcasm in previous answers</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>The priority is investment in infrastructure. Local roads, GP surgeries, schools, and other services are already under pressure. This development should contribute to improving transport infrastructure, including traffic-calming measures on the old A350, as well as providing additional healthcare, education and community facilities to support the growing population</i> |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>With the proposed addition of over 400 houses on Semington Road, this impacts the roads, local amenities and facilities hugely. The doctors' surgery already struggles to keep up with the number of people living locally. Schools have massive classes.</i>                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>No – apart from doctors. There is just two surgeries in Melksham</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>A shop</i></li> <li><i>A school</i></li> <li><i>Lots of open space</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Shouldn't be here</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Shop + dental surgery + the village hall which is hardly used for the good of all Berryfield residents.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Do you have any                                                                                                                                 | <i>With the amount of re-sale and new builds currently on the market in Melksham</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

| Question                                                                                                                 | Feedback Received (verbatim)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| other comments, suggestions, or local knowledge that Bellway should consider before a planning application is submitted? | <i>alone, why take yet more of the fast-shrinking green belt?<br/>The land currently floods, and forcing more water away from the site means it will only be forced out somewhere else.<br/>The main concern overall is the amount of traffic generated and directed onto an existing struggling road. Will it take an accident or death as a consequence for this to be taken seriously?<br/>Recently a cyclist was almost taken out trying to navigate around the bus which was blocked due to road works by traffic calming. Road works instigated by the current development at the top of Semington Road.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                          | <i>I don't want the field to be developed but if they are then prefer a good quality builder such as Bellway to do it</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                          | <i>The fields flood – why are you building on an area that is regularly under water? And what impact will this have on existing properties? We are against this proposal.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                                                          | <i>Go somewhere else</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                          | <i>None at all and is fully supported by the local public house and if we can support Bellway in any way please do not hesitate to contact The New Inn.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                          | <i>I am a resident of the Bellway Estate in Berryfield, and I have direct experience of two significant issues that this development would make worse. Firstly, drainage and water management. Our estate has already experienced ongoing problems with water in our gardens, which indicates that the local drainage infrastructure is struggling to cope with existing levels of development. Adding further housing on Semington Road and Berryfield Lane would increase surface water runoff and place additional strain on a system that is already inadequate, putting existing homes at greater risk of flooding.<br/><br/>Secondly, traffic. Semington Road already carries a significant volume of traffic generated by existing housing in the area, and it is also regularly used as a cut-through by drivers seeking to avoid the A350. The road was not designed for this level of use. Further residential development would add yet more vehicles to a road that is already under pressure, increasing congestion and safety risks for residents, including pedestrians and children in the area. For these reasons, I ask that these concerns be given serious weight when considering this application, and that the cumulative impact on drainage and traffic in the area be properly assessed before any permission is granted.</i> |

- 5.4.11 Following the public consultation, comments on the emerging proposals were received from a director of the Bowood View Management Company, which managed the Bowood View development previously constructed by Bellway. Bellway has sought to constructively engage with the director of the management company and conversations are ongoing.
- 5.4.12 Bellway Strategic Land values the feedback received as part of the public consultation and is committed to continual engagement with the local community and key stakeholders as the project progresses. Where possible, Bellway has sought to accommodate the requests of the local community and key stakeholders at every stage of the consultation process.
- 5.4.13 In response to the feedback received as part of the public consultation, the following actions were taken in response to key themes:

1. **Proposed Route** of the Canal Link: Feedback was received setting out the importance of protecting the route of the Wilts and Berks Canal. As a result of this feedback, Bellway strengthened the illustrative masterplan, using drainage features to give the appearance of a canal corridor through the Application Site whilst ensuring that sufficient space is provided for the Canal Link should it come forward once approved.
2. **House Types:** Feedback was received which set out the importance of providing a variety of different house types, particularly affordable homes and smaller properties for first time buyers and older residents. Bellway is committed to providing a policy-compliant mix of affordable housing as part of the Proposed Development, and will look to continually engage with the local community to identify an appropriate mix of house types at reserved matters stage.
3. **Open Space:** Feedback was received highlighting the importance of the open space and the Application Site's current agricultural uses. In response, Bellway has further enhanced the landscaping scheme, in particular Townsend Park, the area of public open space that is to be provided within the central and western areas of the Application Site. Townsend Park will be complemented by a comprehensive landscape strategy and a central play area which result in a high-quality public open space, that connects the Application Site to its rural surrounds. The DAS, prepared by Brandt Urban Design and submitted alongside this planning application, was further strengthened through the incorporation of CGI images to demonstrate how the proposed area of open space would sit within the wider Application Site following the consultation.
4. **Drainage:** Feedback was received highlighting existing flooding issues on the Application Site. In response, Bellway has prepared a comprehensive drainage strategy and Flood Risk Assessment which has been submitted alongside the application.
5. **Highways:** Feedback was received around capacity on the highways with concerns relating to the impact additional development will have on the highways network. In response, Bellway has prepared a Transport Assessment which has been submitted alongside the application.

## 6. Sustainable Energy Statement

- 6.1.1 The Proposed Development has been shaped by an ambitious sustainability strategy that would create a resilient, low-carbon extension to Melksham. Sustainability principles have informed the evolution of the proposals from the outset, with the masterplan designed to integrate energy efficiency, climate resilience, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable transport, community infrastructure and healthy placemaking into a cohesive development framework.
- 6.1.2 A key component of the proposals is a fossil fuel-free energy strategy aligned with Building Regulations Part L 2026. The strategy follows the energy hierarchy, reducing demand first through a fabric-first approach incorporating enhanced insulation, low thermal bridging, high-performance glazing and airtight construction. Passive design measures, including building orientation, solar control and natural ventilation, will further improve energy efficiency and occupant comfort where possible. Operational energy demand is proposed to be met through air source heat pumps and rooftop photovoltaic panels, significantly reducing carbon emissions and helping to future-proof the development.
- 6.1.3 Climate resilience has also been embedded within the proposals. The Proposed Development is located within Flood Zone 1, the area of the lowest flood risk. A comprehensive Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) strategy incorporates attenuation basins, wetlands, and landscaped drainage features to manage surface water and restrict runoff. Water-efficient fittings will be specified with the aim of limiting water consumption to 105 litres per person per day.
- 6.1.4 The landscape-led approach seeks to retain and enhance existing hedgerows, and mature trees where possible, whilst introducing new woodland planting, species-rich grassland, wetland habitats and green infrastructure throughout the site and delivering Biodiversity Net Gain. Further measures would seek to reduce embodied carbon through responsible material specification, circular economy principles and construction waste minimisation. A range of environmental and technical assessments have informed the design process and demonstrate that matters including air quality, noise, ground conditions and flood risk can be appropriately addressed through the proposed layout and mitigation measures.
- 6.1.5 The Proposed Development places a strong emphasis on community wellbeing and social sustainability. Extensive public open space, children's play areas, and enhancements to Public Rights of Way would be delivered alongside land safeguarded for the route of the Melksham link canal at the heart of the development. Together, these measures would create a sustainable place that promotes long-term environmental, social and economic resilience, alongside helping to foster social interaction and support the creation of a vibrant and well-connected new neighbourhood.

## 7. Planning Policy Framework

- 7.1.1 This section outlines the relevant adopted planning policy guidance and other material planning considerations that relate to the Proposed Development.

### 7.2 Local Planning Policy

- 7.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that, if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose 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.

- 7.2.2 Section 38(3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) sets out that the adopted Development Plan consists of the Development Plan documents and any neighbourhood plan. The adopted Development Plan for Wiltshire Council that is relevant to the Application Site comprises:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (January 2015)
- Saved Policies of the West Wiltshire District Plan (September 2007)
- Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (February 2020)
- Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (August 2025)
- Wiltshire Minerals Core Strategy (June 2009)

#### Wiltshire Core Strategy

- 7.2.3 The Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) provides the overarching planning policy framework for Wiltshire. However, it only covers the period to 2026 and is out of date with respect to housing provision and other policies that provide the spatial strategy. Nevertheless, the WCS does contain relevant development management policies. Both the status of the WCS and relevant development management policies are detailed and assessed within Section 8 of this Statement.

- 7.2.4 The following policies from the Wiltshire Core Strategy are relevant to the Proposed Development:

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 3: Infrastructure Requirements
- Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for the Melksham Community Area
- Core Policy 16: Melksham Link Project
- 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 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 53: Wiltshire's Canals
- Core Policy 55: Air Quality
- Core Policy 56: Contaminated Land
- 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 and Development
- Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport network

- Core Policy 67: Flood Risk

### **Saved Policies of the West Wiltshire District Plan**

7.2.5 A number of policies within the West Wiltshire District Plan 1<sup>st</sup> Alteration have been 'saved'. If relevant, these are detailed and assessed within Section 9 of this Statement.

### **Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan**

7.2.6 The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WSHAP) revises settlement boundaries with regards to Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages across Wiltshire and to allocate new sites for housing to assist the LPA in demonstrating a five-year housing land supply up to the end of the current Plan period (2026).

7.2.7 The Application Site is not allocated within the WSHAP, and even with the action undertaken by Wiltshire Council to seek to increase housing supply as part of the work undertaken on the now withdrawn Local Plan Review, Wiltshire still cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. This emphasises the need for suitable sites, such as this Site, to come forward.

### **Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2**

7.2.8 The Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 ('JMNP2' / 'the Neighbourhood Plan') was adopted on 4 August 2025 and is an up-to-date part of the Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges the settlement boundaries of Melksham and Bowerhill and Berryfield's status as a small village. The Neighbourhood Plan contains an objective and related policies that seek to protect the rural character of settlements and countryside gaps across the plan area, but acknowledges that the gap between Berryfield, and Melksham no longer fulfils this purpose due to outline planning permissions being granted at appeal.

7.2.9 The Neighbourhood Plan also acknowledges the Canal Link Project and the benefits that this could bring to Melksham. Priority Statement 3 sets out support for safeguarding of its route. Furthermore the Neighbourhood Plan also includes development management policies that will be detailed and assessed within Section 8 of this Statement.

7.2.10 The following policies from the Neighbourhood Plan are relevant to the Proposed Development:

- Policy 1: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 3: Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management
- Policy 5: Pre-application Community Engagement
- Policy 6: Housing in Defined Settlements
- Policy 8: Infrastructure Phasing and Priorities
- Policy 11: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel
- Policy 12: Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Policy 13: Biodiversity
- Policy 16: Local Green Spaces
- Policy 17: Trees and Hedgerows
- Policy 18: Landscape Character
- Policy 19: Separation of Settlements
- Policy 21: Local Heritage

### **Wiltshire Minerals Core Strategy**

7.2.11 The Wiltshire Minerals Core Strategy (MCS) seeks to manage the availability, extraction and use of primary, secondary and recycled mineral resources whilst seeking to protect the interests of local communities and the wider environment. Within, the Application Site does not appear to be within a Mineral Safeguarding Area.

## 7.3 Relevant Guidance

- 7.3.1 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents are a material consideration in making planning decisions.

### Wiltshire Design Guide

- 7.3.2 The Wiltshire Design Guide (March 2024) elaborates on Core Policy 57 and sets out expectations which applicants must give regard to when designing development proposals. This guidance has taken account of relevant guidance to the outline proposals.

### Melksham Design Guide

- 7.3.3 The Melksham Design Guide (AECOM, July 2023) forms part of the Neighbourhood Plan. Most of the guidance within is relevant to the detailed design stage, however, the guidance has been taken into account as part of these outline proposals.

## 7.4 National Planning Policy

- 7.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) sets out the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development, which provides that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should approve development proposals that accord with statutory plans without delay. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 7.4.2 The NPPF also contains the core planning principles that should underpin development management, including that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development and every effort should be made to identify and meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Further, it states that planning should make effective use of land.
- 7.4.3 Relevant paragraphs of the NPPF are addressed in this Statement.

### Draft NPPF

- 7.4.4 Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework were published on 16 December 2025, with consultation closing on 10 March 2026. The Draft NPPF currently holds no material weight for the determination of planning applications. However, the trajectory of the draft NPPF clearly demonstrates a greater weight in favour of sustainable development in order to meet national and local housing requirements. The publication of the new NPPF has been delayed until after Parliament's 2026 summer recess. An addendum to this Statement will be provided once a new NPPF is introduced.

## 7.5 Emerging Wiltshire Local Plan

- 7.5.1 Wiltshire Council withdrew the draft Wiltshire Local Plan review on 19 May 2026 following feedback from the Inspector at examination. Relevant key issues raised by the Inspectors were around the lack of evidence on figures and dates used for calculating housing need, the distribution of development, the inclusion of the proposed Salisbury Area New Community and the length of the plan period.
- 7.5.2 While the draft Wiltshire Local Plan review carries no weight, it is notable that it continued to recognise Melksham as a Market Town with the potential for significant development and as a "*broad location for growth*".
- 7.5.3 It is also notable that one of the failures of the previous plan, leading to its withdrawal, was the lack

of a clear strategy to bring forward sites for housing in sustainable locations, meaning that the urgency for this has increased still further.

- 7.5.4 The emerging Wiltshire Local Plan is being prepared under the new plan-making system that came into effect in March 2026 and requires adoption by 2029. At the point of submission Wiltshire is undertaking a call for sites to inform the emerging Local Plan. No weight can be given to the emerging Local Plan.

## 8. Planning Assessment

- 8.1.1 This section assesses the key issues that are material to the planning balance against the relevant parts of the development plan, the NPPF and other material considerations.

### 8.2 The Principle of Development

- 8.2.1 WCS Core Policy 1 sets out the 'Settlement Strategy' for the county and identifies four tiers of settlements: Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large or Small Villages. Melksham is categorised as a Market Town, which are recognised as having the potential for significant development.
- 8.2.2 The Application Site itself is located outside of the Melksham settlement boundary as defined within the WCS. It is acknowledged that Core Policy 2 seeks to limit development outside of settlement boundaries within Wiltshire. However, the WCS, sought to meet Wiltshire's housing needs between 2006 and 2026 and is now, most importantly, out of date. The settlement boundaries outlined on the policies map for the WCS drawn to accord for the plan period, not beyond it.
- 8.2.3 Wiltshire Council is also unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with the most recent Housing Land Supply Statement and Annual Monitoring Report setting out that Wiltshire's housing land supply is currently 2.8 years, in June 2026. In these circumstances the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.
- 8.2.4 As identified in NPPF footnote 8, regard must be had to paragraph 11 (d) and the 'tilted balance' which specifically seeks to direct development to sustainable locations:

#### NPPF Paragraph 11 d)

- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date<sup>8</sup>, granting permission unless:*
- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance<sup>7</sup> 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<sup>9</sup>.*

- 8.2.5 With respect to paragraph d) i. and footnote 7, there are areas of the Application Site that are identified as having risk of surface water flooding. However, as set out in the supporting Flood Risk Assessment, these areas would be suitably managed as part of a sustainable drainage strategy for surface water. The Application Site otherwise does not contain areas or assets of particular importance.
- 8.2.6 The requirements of paragraph d) ii. are relevant. The test within paragraph d) ii. is whether the adverse impacts of granting consent would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development. The following planning assessment clearly identifies that the identified moderate adverse impacts of granting consent would not outweigh the demonstrable benefits of the Proposed Development.

#### Neighbourhood Plan Status

- 8.2.7 The Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 was adopted in August 2025 and postdates the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The JMNP2 sets an emerging overall housing requirement figure of 270 dwellings for the plan area.
- 8.2.8 In circumstances where NPPF paragraph 11 d) is relevant but there is an up-to-date neighbourhood plan, NPPF paragraph 14 is applicable.

**NPPF Paragraph 14**

*In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:*

- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and*
- b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 69-70)*

- 8.2.9 As the JMNP2 became part of the development plan within the last five years, the first test within paragraph 14 of the NPPF is met. The question regarding whether the second test is met was recently discussed within the *Woodrow* appeal. The Inspector determined that Melksham's housing figure of 270 homes set out within the JMNP2 derived from the emerging (and now withdrawn) Local Plan, further noting that the Inspector for the Neighbourhood Plan examination recommended that a review of the housing requirement for the neighbourhood plan area should occur following the examination of the emerging Local Plan. As such, the appeal Inspector concluded that the validity of the housing figure of 270 within the JMNP2 could not be relied upon because that requirement was derived from a plan that was extremely unlikely to go forward. Following the withdrawal of the emerging Local Plan, it is now clear that the validity of the housing figure within the JMNP2 cannot be relied upon.
- 8.2.10 The Inspector also noted that whilst development is coming forward within Melksham, Wiltshire Council's housing land supply shortfall was acute and county-wide, with actions needed to be taken to address the shortfall through the provision of housing on suitable sites. As a result, the Inspector allowed the *Woodrow* appeal, stating that the appeal scheme would provide much-needed housing now and result in a number of important benefits, tilting the planning balance in its favour.
- 8.2.11 In the case of the Proposed Development, the *Woodrow* appeal demonstrates that Melksham's housing figure of 270 contained within JMNP2 was sourced from the emerging Local Plan. The validity of this requirement cannot be relied upon as the plan was withdrawn from examination and therefore demonstrates that paragraph 14 of the NPPF can be overridden in Wiltshire, specifically within Melksham's neighbourhood plan area.
- 8.2.12 The appeal further demonstrated that there is an ongoing need for sites to meet the housing land supply deficit within Wiltshire, and that actions are needed to address the need through the provision of housing on suitable sites. The *Woodrow* appeal decision should inform the planning balance exercise.
- 8.2.13 Whilst the JMNP2 does not remove the 'tilted balance' by not meeting paragraph 14 of the NPPF, it is still a material planning consideration and holds weight when account is had for the planning balance, even if it is limited. As such, this Planning Statement seeks to address the policies contained within the JMNP2 where they are particularly relevant to the Proposed Development.

## 8.3 Housing Need and Supply

### Housing Requirement

- 8.3.1 Under the Government's Standard Method for calculating Local Housing Need (LHN), Wiltshire is required to deliver 3,488 dwellings per annum. This represents an increase of over 80% from the levels previously planned for under the 2015 Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 8.3.2 We acknowledge that this is a significant challenge, and are supportive of Wiltshire Council in its efforts to bring forward a new Local Plan that responds to this requirement. However, this process has only just commenced, and the new plan will not be adopted until well into 2029 at the earliest. In the meantime, there is a severe urgency to address the actual housing shortfall by giving positive consideration to sustainable proposals.

### Housing Land Supply

- 8.3.3 As noted above, Wiltshire Council is also unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply with the latest measurement by the Council itself being 2.8 years<sup>4</sup>. In the recent *Snarlton Farm* appeal, the Inspector found Wiltshire's housing land supply to be as low as 2.16 years. Notwithstanding this, it is clear that Wiltshire has a significant lack of housing land supply.
- 8.3.4 It is important to be clear on the real-world scale of the problem behind this lack of a five-year supply. Over five years, the local housing need would require about 17,438 dwellings to be brought forward. On top of this, there is a requisite buffer of 5% (a further 872 dwellings), bringing the total to 18,310.
- 8.3.5 In stark contrast to this, Wiltshire Council assess its deliverable supply to be only 10,268 dwellings, representing a shortfall of 8,042 dwellings, even in the best-case scenario whereby the Council's assumptions on forward pipeline are correct.
- 8.3.6 As a shortfall of over 8,000 dwellings is already significant, we do not seek to analyse the Council's supply assumptions further. However, we note that in its appeal for development at Snarlton Farm, Melksham, Catesby Estates (led by Christopher Young KC) has argued that the shortfall, when fully analysed, in fact exceeds 10,000 dwellings. The provision of up to 225 dwellings against a lack of a five-year housing land supply and the severe shortfall in deliverable housing sites should be given substantial positive weight in the planning balance.

### Housing Delivery Test

- 8.3.7 The latest 2023 Housing Delivery Test figures are based on a housing requirement of 5,358 new homes over the three-year period. Wiltshire delivered 135% of this requirement due to over-delivery in the 2021 and 2023 measurement years. When the next Housing Delivery Test figures are released we consider it likely that Wiltshire will fail due to significantly increased requirements of the latest Standard Method and historically not delivering these latest requirement numbers. This highlights a clear need for sites to come forward to contribute toward Wiltshire's identified housing need, which should be given substantial positive weight in the planning balance.

### Affordable Housing Need

- 8.3.8 The Melksham & Melksham Without Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM, July 2022) recognised the significant number of households currently on the Housing Register. As recognised in Woodrow<sup>5</sup>, Wiltshire has an affordable housing need of over 1,200 dwellings. Core Policy 43 of the WCS

<sup>4</sup> Wiltshire Council Housing Land Supply Statement Published June 2026

<sup>5</sup> Appeal Decision APP/Y3940/W/25/3374421, Land off Woodrow Road, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7AY, 09 April 2026

requires at least 30% affordable housing to be provided in Melksham and for affordable housing units to be dispersed throughout a development.

- 8.3.9 JMNP2 Policy 6 seeks to increase the supply of affordable homes. It is proposed for 30% of the dwellings delivered on the Application Site to be affordable homes. Should the maximum 225 homes come forward through detailed proposals, it would result in 68 new affordable homes. This would be one of the largest contributions of affordable housing in Melksham in recent years. Substantial positive weight should be given to affordable housing delivery in a sustainable location in the context of Wiltshire's affordable housing need.

## 8.4 Melksham Link Canal

- 8.4.1 Core Policy 16 of the WCS seeks to safeguard the route of the Melksham link canal from inappropriate development. Policy 12 of the JMNP2 further identified the Melksham link canal as a key priority for the Neighbourhood Plan area's green and blue infrastructure (GBI), with the policy stating that major development proposals should identify and demonstrate how GBI has been incorporated into proposals.
- 8.4.2 The proposed route of the Melksham link canal runs through the Application Site, running northwest to southeast. The route of the proposed canal link was identified early in the design process and Bellway has been in conversation with the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal Trust since mid-2025, meeting twice to discuss emerging proposals. Bellway has sought to safeguard the proposed route of the canal and sees it as an opportunity to deliver a high-quality development within Melksham. The Land Use and Access, and Green Infrastructure Parameter Plans both set out space for the implementation of the Melksham link canal and direct residential development to the north and south of the proposed route. The space safeguarded for the proposed route of the Canal would be utilised for SuDS which would have a canal-like appearance once implemented, and would not prevent the Melksham link canal from being brought forward if consented.
- 8.4.3 As the Proposed Development safeguards the route of the proposed canal link, it is considered that the Proposed Development is consistent with Core Policy 16 of the WCS and Policy 12 of the JMNP2.

## 8.5 Landscape and Visual Impact

- 8.5.1 Core Policy 51 of the WCS sets out that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character. Any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures.
- 8.5.2 Core Policy 52 further relates to green infrastructure and sets out that development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained.
- 8.5.3 Policy 18 of the JMNP2 expects development to respond sensitively to the settlement setting and transition between their edges and countryside. The policy also seeks to conserve or enhance the character, openness, tranquillity and amenity of the open countryside.
- 8.5.4 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Savills Urban Design Studio and has been submitted alongside this application. The LVA concludes that there will be inevitable change to the overall landscape character through the development of a residential neighbourhood on an area of agricultural land, resulting in landscape effects of a 'medium-adverse' magnitude.
- 8.5.5 With regard to visual effects, the main significant adverse changes to views will occur from the existing PRoWs which run through the Application Site, as a result of the development of a residential neighbourhood on an area of agricultural land. The visual effects of the Proposed

Development diminish beyond the Application Site due to existing vegetation found along the Application Site's boundaries, or the lack of views of the surrounding context which includes existing residential development, the highways network and footpaths.

- 8.5.6 The LVA further sets out that the Proposed Development will provide a range of recreational and amenity benefits through the provision of accessible open space, in addition to providing opportunities to strengthen boundary planting across the Application Site.
- 8.5.7 Overall, whilst the Proposed Development would result in landscape and visual effects as a result of changes to landscape character of the Application Site as a result of the development of a residential neighbourhood on an area of agricultural land, it would provide a range of recreation and amenity benefits through the provision of open space and strengthened boundary planting. As such, it is considered that it would be consistent with Core Policies 51 and 52 of the WCS, and Policy 18 of the JMNP2.

## 8.6 Highways and Access

- 8.6.1 Core Policy 61 of the WCS seeks for new development to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives. The policy also requires a Transport Assessment and that the proposed development is capable of being served by safe access to the highway network.
- 8.6.2 Policy 11 of the JMNP2 seeks for development proposals to complement the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy, including provision for ultra-low emission vehicles. The policy also seeks a Travel Plan to demonstrate how sustainable transport modes are maximised and that safe and suitable movement can be achieved for all people.
- 8.6.3 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared by i-Transport and has been submitted alongside this application. The TA provides the vision for the Proposed Development and an assessment of site accessibility, highway safety, access arrangements, trip generation and transport impact. The TA is clear that the Application Site is located in a sustainable location that is well situated to access local facilities and services with education, leisure, health, employment and retail uses within walking distance. The Application Site is also located on route 403 of the National Cycle Network and Semington Road has bus stops that serve routes to Melksham, Chippenham, Trowbridge and Frome. No safety issues have been identified on Semington Road.
- 8.6.4 The Land Use and Access Parameter Plan identifies the access points to the northwest of the Application Site and illustrates how it is anticipated for the parcels within the Application Site to be connected along with the retained routes of the PRowWs on the Application Site.

### Vehicular Access

- 8.6.5 Vehicular access to the Application Site would be taken from Semington Road. The access has been designed in detail and is shown on drawing ITB200590-GA that has been submitted alongside this application.
- 8.6.6 The access would function as a simple priority T-junction of 5.5m width to allow for large vehicles to enter into the Application Site. The access has been tracked to demonstrate suitability by a large rigid vehicle and an articulated vehicle. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 51.1m to the north and 2.4m x 53.0m to the south are provided. The access design is supported by a Road Safety Audit and Designer's Response (within the TA). Together this demonstrates safe access to the highway in accordance with Core Policy 61.
- 8.6.7 Full details of internal access would be provided at Reserved Matters Approval stage following outline consent.

## Pedestrian and Cycle Access and Public Rights of Way

- 8.6.8 The WCS treats Public Rights of Way (PRoW) as Green Infrastructure. Core Policy 52 of the WCS sets out that development should retain and enhance green infrastructure. The Proposed Development seeks to retain and improve the on-site PRoWs with these routes being set in much larger areas of public open space, providing much more opportunity for recreation than their current linear form. Additional points of pedestrian and cycle access will also be provided onto Semington Road and Berryfield Road with full details to be provided at Reserved Matters stage. It is considered that the Proposed Development would be consistent with Core Policy 52 and should be given moderate positive weight in the planning balance.

## Traffic Impact

- 8.6.9 Core Policy 62 of the WCS seeks for development to provide appropriate mitigating measures to offset any adverse impacts on the transport network at both the construction and operational stages. The TA tests a number of scenarios including the implementation of the Canal Link which would impact on the highway network on Semington Road to the south of the Application Site.
- 8.6.10 In further considering traffic impact, NPPF paragraph 118 sets out that all developments which generate significant amounts of transport movement should be required to provide a Travel Plan. The supporting Framework Travel Plan sets out how the objectives of a future Travel Plan, which could be secured by condition, would address the specific requirements of a detailed proposal at Reserved Matters stage.
- 8.6.11 The TA also tests the vision-led scenario that includes all of the measures identified in the sustainable transport strategy that will increase sustainable methods of travel.
- 8.6.12 The TA finds that, in the worst case, the proposed development would add approximately 133 weekday AM peak trips and 122 PM peak trips. This equates to an average of just over two additional vehicle movements each minute in the AM and PM peak weekday hours. Junction modelling demonstrates that the proposed development would not have a severe impact on the operation of the highway network.
- 8.6.13 The Proposed Development would deliver safe access to the Application Site, improvements to the PRoW network and would provide for sustainable transport in accordance with local and national policy.

## 8.7 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 8.7.1 Core Policy 67 of the WCS requires all new development to include measures to reduce the rate of rainwater run-off and improve rainwater infiltration, such as SuDS, unless the site or environmental conditions make these measures unsuitable.
- 8.7.2 Policy 3 of the JMNP2 further requires development proposals to demonstrate how flood risk is mitigated including measures to reduce the amount of rainwater run-off and incorporate SuDS.
- 8.7.3 Paragraph 181 of the NPPF states that:
- “When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:*
- a) *within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;*

- b) *the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;*
- c) *it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;*
- d) *any residual risk can be safely managed; and*
- e) *safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan."*

8.7.4 In accordance with paragraph 181 and footnote 63 of the NPPF, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy have been prepared by PFA Consulting, and have been submitted alongside this application. The FRA sets out that the Proposed Development is wholly located within Flood Zone 1, with localised areas of surface water flood risk across the Application Site.

8.7.5 A preliminary drainage strategy incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff from the Proposed Development has been incorporated within the FRA. Strategic SuDS features, including detention basins, ponds and oversized pipes, are proposed to provide storage and attenuation. Flow balancing and attenuation measures are proposed to attenuate surface water runoff to greenfield runoff rates with discharges to the local watercourse via a pumping station. The preliminary drainage strategy will sustainably replicate pre-development runoff patterns prior to development, account for climate change, and reduce flood risk both on-site and within the surrounding area.

8.7.6 As the Application Site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, the Proposed Development is directed to land at the lowest probability of fluvial flooding. The accompanying Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the Proposed Development incorporates appropriate design and mitigation measures to ensure that occupiers and users remain safe from surface water and ground water flooding for the lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk elsewhere. As such, the sequential test is not required.

8.7.7 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would be appropriately safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, the proposals would not increase flood risk elsewhere, and would reduce flood risk overall. As such, it is considered that the Proposed Development is consistent with the NPPF, Core Policy 67 of the WCS, and Policy 12 of the JMNP2.

## 8.8 Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

8.8.1 Core Policy 50 of the WCS seeks to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive species and habitat and to enhance biodiversity. Policy 13 of the JMNP2 seeks to deliver tangible benefits for biodiversity and specific attention for protected species.

8.8.2 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) prepared by FPCR Environment and Design has been submitted alongside this application. The Application Site was found to have the potential to support badgers, bats, breeding birds, hazel dormouse and reptiles. Ecological surveys have been, and are in the process of being conducted for the aforementioned species/groups and are discussed in turn below.

### Hedgerow

8.8.3 An extensive network of native hedgerow, the majority of which serves as priority habitat, is present on the Application Site. The Proposed Development would require the removal of approximately 490 metres of hedgerow to facilitate the proposals, however, the losses would remain localised and not impact the connectivity across the Application Site and wider landscape. The Proposed Development would provide opportunities to strengthen habitat connectivity across the Application

Site, and mitigation, compensation and enhancements in the form of a CEMP, replacement planting and a lighting strategy. As a result, it is not expected to result in significant adverse effects on the local hedgerow resource at a local level.

#### Badgers

- 8.8.4 The EclA outlines that the Proposed Development has the potential to damage, destroy or disturb badger setts during construction. The damage would also result in the loss of habitats used for badger foraging. However, these habitats are of relatively low suitability and there is evidence of limited use and as a result, habitat loss is not considered likely to have a significant effect on the local badger population. Mitigation, compensation and enhancements will be provided in the form of securing appropriate licences for affected setts, the implementation of good practice measures through a CEMP, and traffic calming measures during the operational phase. As a result, no significant effects on badgers are expected at a local level.

#### Bats

- 8.8.5 The EclA sets out that a day roost will be lost to accommodate the Proposed Development, whilst existing trees and hedgerows will be retained, but subject to disturbance during construction and operation resulting in a minor adverse effect at a local level. Mitigation, compensation and enhancement will be provided through securing a licence to remove the confirmed roost, alongside providing an appropriate replacement roost subject to additional surveys. Hop-overs will be incorporated where hedgerow removal is required, alongside incorporated bat boxes and bat bricks around the Proposed Development. A lighting strategy will also be designed for the Application Site. As a result, the Proposed Development is anticipated to have a not significant effect at a local level.

#### Breeding Birds

- 8.8.6 A breeding bird survey was conducted, with the EclA finding that whilst the proposals will result in the loss of some habitats used by breeding birds, such as house sparrow, starling, greenfinch, stock dove and dunnock, mitigation, compensation and enhancement through the retention of the principal habitat network and delivery of extensive habitat creation means the Proposed Development would have a not significant effect at a local level.

#### Reptile

- 8.8.7 Given the generally low suitability of the Site and the availability of suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape for reptiles, and the inclusion of mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures such as a CEMP, the incorporation of replacement habitats and log pile and habitat management, the Proposed Development would have no significant effects at a local level.

#### Dormouse

- 8.8.8 The EclA sets out that targeted hazel dormouse surveys are ongoing and, although no field records have been identified to date, the assessment assumes the species is present within the Application Site until surveys are complete, due to their presence in the wider landscape. Based on the assumption that dormouse are present on site, a reduction in suitable habitats and habitat connectivity alongside increased disturbance and artificial lighting could have a minor adverse effect at a local level. Appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement will be incorporated into the Proposed Development on completion of the field surveys. However, if present on site, appropriate licences, a Precautionary Working Method Statement or similar, protective fencing, a sensitive lighting strategy and providing ecological supervision during vegetation clearance will be incorporated in addition to new planting, would likely result in no significant effects at a local level. The additional field surveys will be submitted in support of this planning application upon completion.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain

- 8.8.9 The EcIA outlines that the Proposed Development will result in a -4.07% loss in habitat units, and a -28.40% loss in hedgerow units. As such, the Proposed Development will require amending to deliver the requisite 10% gain on site, or an offsite solution sought. Feasibility studies have determined that achieving a 10% biodiversity net gain on site for both habitats and hedgerows is feasible, and that details will be set out at reserved matters stage. There are no concerns that achieving a 10% net gain is possible, and there is sufficient space on site to accommodate the required length of hedgerow.
- 8.8.10 Overall, subject to the completion of further dormouse field surveys, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not result in significant impacts upon ecology and would provide opportunities for habitat enhancements across the Application Site. It is further considered that the Proposed Development has sufficient space to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain with further details to be set out at reserved matters stage. As such, it is considered that the Proposed Development would be consistent with Core Policy 50 of the WCS, and Policy 13 of the JMNP2.

## 8.9 Trees and Hedgerows

- 8.9.1 Core Policy 57 of the WCS seeks retention and enhancement of trees and hedges. Policy 17 of the JMNP2 seeks to retain trees of good arboricultural and amenity value and incorporate trees and hedgerows into placemaking features, and also seeks to increase tree canopy cover.
- 8.9.2 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) that has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design. The AIA identifies that there is one individual category A tree and two groups of category A trees on the Application Site. Individual and group category B trees are also identified.
- 8.9.3 The Tree Survey Plan and Tree Retention Plan within the AIA demonstrate that all category A and B trees and groups would be retained by the Proposed Development, illustrated by the Illustrative Masterplan which is informed by the Parameter Plans submitted for approval. The Illustrative Masterplan also shows the opportunity for the planting of a significant number of trees that would also provide mitigation for landscape impact as identified in the LVIA.
- 8.9.4 Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would be consistent with Core Policy 57 of the WCS and Policy 17 of the JMNP2.

## 8.10 Heritage and Archaeology

- 8.10.1 Core Policy 58 of the WCS seeks for development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. Policy 21 of the JMNP2 seeks for development proposals to give appropriate consideration to heritage assets.
- 8.10.2 The application is supported by a Heritage Statement that has been prepared by Pegasus, which reviews the heritage assets on and around the Application Site and assesses the impact of the proposals on these in accordance with the NPPF.
- 8.10.3 The Heritage Statement reviews the archaeological works undertaken as part of the Melksham Canal Link proposals and other nearby applications and finds that the potential for archaeological interest is low and would not be a constraint to development.
- 8.10.4 The Heritage Statement further finds that the built form within the Application Site associated with the WWII transit camp is considered to hold sufficient intrinsic heritage value to be regarded as a non-designated heritage assets. The Heritage Statement also finds that no harm to the Grade II Listed Berryfields Cottages would arise as part of the proposed development.
- 8.10.5 It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development would cause no significant impacts to

heritage and archaeological assets, and would be consistent with Core Policy 58 of the WCS, and Policy 21 of the JMNP2.

## 8.11 Agricultural Land

- 8.11.1 NPPF paragraph 187 seeks to protect soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality and recognises the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. It is noted that neither the WCS nor the JMNP2 prevent development on the BMV agricultural.
- 8.11.2 Planning Practice Guidance sets out that Natural England should be consulted on development proposals that would result in the loss of 20 hectares or more of Grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land, a position reiterated within Natural England's published guidance<sup>6</sup>. Natural England's guidance sets out that the loss of BMV agricultural land is only considered to be a concern where the area of loss exceeds 20 hectares (ha).
- 8.11.3 Defra's Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map for England sets out that the Application Site comprises mostly Grade 2 agricultural land, with areas of unclassified land around the chicken sheds to the south. The majority of the Application Site is therefore considered to be BMV agricultural land. In total, the Application Site extends to approximately 11.1ha and therefore falls substantially below the 20-hectare threshold where the loss is considered a concern.
- 8.11.4 This position is supported by the recent planning appeal to the north of the Application Site against Wiltshire Council's decision to refuse outline permission for up to 53 dwellings on land west of Semington Road<sup>7</sup>, where the Inspector attached limited weight to the loss of BMV agricultural land due to the limited amount of land that was to be lost.
- 8.11.5 Overall, whilst it is acknowledged that the Proposed Development will result in the loss of some BMV agricultural land, the limited amount of land that is to be lost can only be attributed limited weight.

## 8.12 Sustainability

- 8.12.1 Core Policy 41 of the WCS and JMNP2 Policy 1 require the submission of a Sustainable Energy Strategy to demonstrate how carbon emissions are minimised. Policy 1 of the JMNP2 also requires embedding of the Energy Hierarchy within the design of buildings.
- 8.12.2 Section 7 of this Planning Statement provides details of how dwellings built by Bellway are constructed and include measures to ensure low energy use and reduced bills for occupants to, at a minimum, meet current Building Regulations requirements. Full details would be provided at Reserved Matters Approval stage.

## 8.13 Contamination

- 8.13.1 Core Policy 56 seeks for development on or adjacent to land which may have been subject to contamination to effectively mitigate the impacts of contamination. The application is supported by a Phase 1 Ground Conditions Assessment (Stantec, July 2026). This seeks to identify the likely ground conditions and environmental setting using published and publicly available information. The Assessment finds that any risks could be managed through ground investigation and appropriate working practices during construction. These could be secured by condition to ensure accordance

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land>

<sup>7</sup> <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?caseid=3343787>

with Core Policy 56. Subject to the inclusion of such condition, it is considered that the Proposed Development would be consistent with Core Policy 56 of the WCS.

## 8.14 Residential Amenity

- 8.14.1 Core Policy 57 of the WCS seeks to achieve appropriate levels of amenity within the development itself and for adjoining buildings and uses.
- 8.14.2 The Land Use and Access Parameter Plan, illustrated through the Illustrative Masterplan, demonstrates that the Proposed Development would respect the boundaries of the Application Site and would ensure that there is sufficient separation between proposed dwellings and those existing and proposed dwellings to the north and south to ensure that there would not be any significant adverse impact on residential amenity. Full details would be provided at Reserved Matters stage.

### Air Quality

- 8.14.3 Core Policy 55 of the WCS seeks not to exacerbate existing areas of poor air quality and for mitigation where appropriate. The Application Site is not located in an Air Quality Management Area but we are conscious of the guidance within the Wiltshire Air Quality SPD. The detailed design of the Application Site will seek to achieve good design in respect of air quality through measures such as providing charging points for electric vehicles.

### Noise

- 8.14.4 The Application Site is situated adjacent to existing and proposed residential areas where no generator of noise that would be harmful to the amenity of occupants is anticipated.

## 9. Conclusion

- 9.1.1 We have in these proposals set out a positive vision for the housing-led development in a sustainable location, bringing an array of material planning benefits. These include:
1. Up to 225 dwellings to contribute toward Wiltshire's severe housing and affordable need and lack of a five-year housing land supply:
    - a) about 157 market homes; and
    - b) about 67 affordable homes, based on the prevailing policy for affordable housing of 30%.
  2. Substantial public open space measuring 2.72ha.
  3. On-site improvement to existing Public Rights of Way.
  4. Provision of new public open space including two play areas.
  5. Preservation of land for the proposed canal link.
  6. Economic benefits to the area relating to the construction process and additional spending in the local area by new residents after the Proposed Development is completed. The Economic Footprint of House Building in England and Wales (July 2018) report, prepared by the Home Builders Federation and Lichfields, states that each new dwelling generates 3.1 jobs (when direct and indirect jobs are considered), delivers significant fiscal benefits, and generates spending in shops and on local services.
  7. Contributions toward local infrastructure.
  8. Financial benefits to Wiltshire Council through the New Homes Bonus and additional Council Tax revenue.
- 9.1.2 Melksham is a sustainable location for development, with the Council itself having proposed the town as a location for future substantial growth within the plan that was recently withdrawn. The Application Site is well-placed to access, and to complement, key services and facilities within the town, and by fitting within areas of existing built-up housing, the proposed development would not extend the overall envelope of the town's influence.
- 9.1.3 Whilst the Application Site is not provided for within the made neighbourhood plan, the *Woodrow* appeal confirms that the severity of the housing shortfall in Wiltshire and Melksham specifically means that this does not provide a reason to resist development. More positively, the proposed development upholds a number of the objectives of the JMNP2, particularly through the provision of substantial new public open space and facilitation of the canal link project.
- 9.1.4 In the absence of an up-to-date plan, a significant housing deficit and with no prospect of a new Local Plan until at least 2029, the decision on this application hinges on NPPF paragraph 11 d). This means that the starting point for this decision must be positive, and refused only if the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As set out throughout this Statement and the supporting environmental and technical work, there will be no significant adverse impacts from the development. As such the tilted balance in favour of the application very clearly applies and permission should be granted.

# Appendix A: Appendix A: Planning History for Nearby Sites

| Application Reference and Address                                        | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Decision and Date                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 16/00497/OUT<br>Land East of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire         | <i>Outline application for the erection of up to 150 dwellings with access, new village hall and areas of open space (Resubmission of 14/07526/OUT)</i>                                                                            | Approve with Conditions<br>19 May 2017       |
| 17/10416/VAR<br>Land East of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire         | <i>Variation of the approved site access plan and associated amendments to conditions 4, 20 and 21 of outline permission 16/00497/OUT (Erection of up to 150 dwellings with access, new village hall and areas of open space).</i> | Approve with Conditions<br>19 July 2018      |
| 17/12514/REM<br>Land East of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire         | <i>Development of 150 Dwellings with Associated Access, Infrastructure, Parking, Landscaping and Local Equipped Area of Play. Following Outline Permission Ref 16/00497/OUT</i>                                                    | Approve with Conditions<br>22 May 2018       |
| 20/07334/OUT<br>Land West of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire         | <i>Outline planning permission for up to 50 dwellings and formation of access and associated works (Outline application to consider access with all other matters reserved).</i>                                                   | Appeal Allowed<br>30 May 2022                |
| PL/2023/00808<br>Land West of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire        | <i>Approval of reserved matters following Outline application 20/07334/OUT approved under Appeal ref APP/Y3940/W/21/3285428 for up to 50 dwellings, (appearance, scale, layout and landscaping)</i>                                | Approve with Conditions<br>03 Augst 2023     |
| PL/2022/08155<br>Land to the West of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire | <i>Outline planning permission for up to 53 dwellings including formation of access and associated works, with all other matters reserved</i>                                                                                      | Appeal Allowed<br>30 September 2024          |
| PL/2024/11665<br>Land to the West of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire | <i>Application for reserved matters pursuant to application ref: PL/2022/08155 for appearance, scale, layout and landscaping.</i>                                                                                                  | Approve with Conditions<br>30 October 2025   |
| PL/2025/00626<br>Land North of Berryfield Lane, Melksham, Wiltshire      | <i>Outline planning application for up to 58 dwellings and formation of new access and associated works (All matters reserved other than access).</i>                                                                              | Pending Determination                        |
| 20/01938/OUT<br>Land at Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire              | <i>Outline planning permission for up to 144 dwellings with informal and formal open space, associated landscaping and</i>                                                                                                         | Approve with Conditions<br>10 September 2021 |

| Application Reference and Address                                            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Decision and Date                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|                                                                              | <i>vehicular and pedestrian accesses off Semington Road. All matters reserved except for principal means of access.</i>                                                                                                                                     |                                            |
| PL/2022/02749<br>Land at Semington Road,<br>Melksham, Wiltshire              | <i>Reserved matters (Following Outline Permission 20/01938/OUT) for development comprising the erection of 144 dwellings with informal and formal open space, associated landscaping and vehicular and pedestrian accesses off Semington Road.</i>          | Approve with Conditions<br>11 May 2023     |
| PL/2024/04153<br>32 Lancaster Road, Bowerhill,<br>Melksham, Wiltshire        | <i>EIA Screening Opinion for a Strategic Operational Depot at 32 Lancaster Road, Melksham</i>                                                                                                                                                               | EIA not Required<br>23 May 2024            |
| PL/2022/08504<br>Land South of Western Way,<br>Melksham, Wiltshire           | <i>Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of up to 210 residential dwellings (Class C3) and a 70 bed care home (Class C2) with associated access, landscaping and open space (Resubmission of 20/08400/OUT)</i> | Appeal Allowed<br>14 November 2023         |
| PL/2025/07391<br>Land South of Western Way,<br>Melksham, Wiltshire           | <i>Reserved Matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) for 210 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), along with associated open space, landscaping, and parking, pursuant to Condition 2 of Outline Planning Permission ref. PL/2022/08504.</i>    | Pending Determination                      |
| 16/01123/OUT<br>Land South of Western Way,<br>Bowerhill, Melksham, Wiltshire | <i>Outline application for residential development of up to 235 dwellings, primary school with early years nursery and open space provision</i>                                                                                                             | Approve with Conditions<br>23 March 2017   |
| 17/06285/REM<br>Land South of Western Way,<br>Bowerhill, Melksham, Wiltshire | <i>Reserved Matters Application Pursuant of Planning Permission 16/01123/OUT in relation to Access.</i>                                                                                                                                                     | Approve with Conditions<br>03 October 2017 |
| 18/04477/REM<br>Land South of Western Way,<br>Bowerhill, Melksham, Wiltshire | <i>Reserved Matters Application Pursuant to 16/01123/OUT and 17/06285/REM (Access). Erection of 213 Dwellings and Associated Works at Land South of Western Way, Bowerhill, Melksham</i>                                                                    | Approve with Conditions<br>26 October 2021 |

## **Appendix B: Minutes from meeting with Melksham Without Parish Council**

## Appendix C: Public consultation banners

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