

Joanna Carter, Case Officer
West 1, Planning Inspectorate
PINS Reference: 6012754
LPA Ref: PL/2026/03415
Our reference: 26006.cd/cb

25th August 2026

Dear Ms Carter

NPPF 2026 Representation: Land at Sopworth Road, Sherston, Malmesbury

1.0 Introduction

We refer to the Inspector's invitation to comment on the relevance of the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF 2026") to this appeal. The appellant considers it directly relevant, particularly through the application of Policy S5(1)(j), Annex A, Policy N4 and Policy HO7.

The Council's response dated 20th August 2026 accepts that Policy S5(1)(j) applies to the appeal proposal and that substantial weight should be given to the delivery of additional housing under HO7.

2.0 Policy S5(1)(j) and Annex A

Policy S5 introduces a new national decision-making approach to development outside settlements. The Council accepts that the appeal should be assessed against S5(1)(j), which expressly includes housing where the authority cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

The application of S5(1)(j) is particularly relevant given the Council's acknowledged 2.8-year housing land supply¹. As already established in the application and appeal material, the proposal is for up to five accessible single-storey dwellings responding to an identified local need for accessible housing. This is an additional benefit relevant under HO7 and S5(1).

Where the criteria of S5(1)(j) are met, S5(1) provides that permission should be granted unless the adverse effects of doing so would substantially outweigh the benefits when assessed against the national decision-making policies taken as a whole.

Annex A is also relevant. The appellant does not suggest that the development plan policies cited in the reasons for refusal cease to have relevance; however, their weight falls to be considered where their application is materially inconsistent with the new national decision-making policies, including S5(1)(j).

3.0 Relationship with Sherston and Sustainability

The Council accepts that there is a degree of interconnection between the appeal site and the existing settlement having regard to the permitted development to the east, and that the proposed development would not be likely to exceed the capacity of existing or proposed infrastructure. These

¹ The appellant's evidence references the Inspector's Report to the Secretary of State dated 15th June 2026, pursuant to the *Snarlton Lane, Melksham s.78* appeal. The Inspector opines at Paragraph 12.38 that '...the extent of housing land supply shortfall is 2.16 years' (PINS Ref: 3373278).

matters are relevant to the assessment under S5(1)(j), alongside the evidence already before the Inspector concerning the site's relationship with Sherston and accessibility.

4.0 Policy N4 – National Landscape

Policy N4 establishes the relevant national decision-making policy for the National Landscape. The landscape evidence, including the submitted LVIA and Landscape Framework Plan, is already before the Inspector and falls to be considered within the decision-making framework established by the NPPF 2026.

Importantly, the former paragraph 11(d)(i) decision-making approach relied upon in the Cotswolds National Landscape Board's objection has not been carried forward into the NPPF 2026, as the Council acknowledges.

The appeal therefore falls to be determined under the new framework established by N4 and S5(1), on the basis of the landscape evidence and the benefits of the proposal already before the Inspector.

5.0 Policy HO7 and Housing Benefits

The Council accepts that substantial weight should be attributed to the delivery of additional housing under HO7. That benefit is reinforced by the form of housing proposed: as already established in the material before the Inspector, the accessible single-storey accommodation responds to an identified local need for accessible housing within Sherston.

6.0 Conclusion

The NPPF 2026 is materially relevant to this appeal. S5(1)(j) expressly addresses housing outside settlements where an authority cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply; HO7 requires substantial weight to be given to additional housing; Annex A affects the weight to be afforded to materially inconsistent development plan policies; and N4 and S5(1) provide the national policy framework within which the landscape effects are to be assessed.

No new technical evidence is submitted. These comments are confined to the relevance and implications of the NPPF 2026, in accordance with the Inspector's invitation, and rely upon the evidence already before the Inspector.

Yours sincerely



Chris Beaver

Director



E Chris@PlanningSphere.co.uk