

NPPF 2026

22nd September 2026

Site address: Land North of West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, SN15 5EH

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on whether the material change in national planning policy has relevance to Wiltshire Council's application PL/2026/01620

The Council recognises that the NPPF 2026 places substantial weight on meeting evidenced housing need and acknowledges that the proposal would provide a limited contribution towards that objective; however, having fully considered the NPPF 2026, the Council does not consider that the updated Framework materially changes the assessment of the proposal or the decision made under the previous NPPF version.

For the avoidance of doubt, the following context and elaboration is provided:

Housing Delivery

As set out in the Council's delegated report and appeal statement, the Council's Housing Land Supply (HLS) position engaged the former 'tilted balance' approach under Paragraph 11 of the previous version of the NPPF.

At the time of writing, the Council is still unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

HO7 and Annex A

The Council has taken account of HO7 of the NPPF 2026 and accepts that *substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community [...]*

The Council acknowledges that Annex A of the NPPF 2026 outlines that *development plan policies (or parts of those policies) which are materially inconsistent with national decision making policies in [the NPPF 2026] should be given very limited weight* but expresses that *development plan policies should not be given reduced weight simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of [the NPPF 2026]*.

The Council notes that the NPPF 2026 does not establish an automatic presumption in favour of housing development regardless of site constraints. Development proposals must continue to be assessed against the framework as a whole, including policies relating to heritage assets, local green space, design, character and sustainable development.

Historic Environment Policies, and Refusal Reasons 1 and 2

Refusal reasons 1 and 2 relate to harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.

The Council has reviewed Chapter 20 of the NPPF 2026 and notes that the Framework continues to identify heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource; Policy HE6 confirms that substantial weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and that any harm remains a matter of considerable importance and weight in the planning balance.

Taking fully into account Annex A, the Council does not consider that the development plan policy referred to in refusal reasons 1 and 2 is materially inconsistent with the NPPF 2026.

Given that the NPPF 2026 continues to afford strong protection to designated heritage assets and continues to require decision-makers to give great weight to their conservation, the Council maintains that the heritage harm should be afforded weight in the planning balance.

S5, HC8, Green Belt Policies, and Refusal Reason 3

It is acknowledged that Policy S5(1)(j) of the NPPF 2026 supports development outside settlements in certain circumstances; however, S5(5) confirms that Policy S5 does not apply to land designated as local green space and that in those circumstances schemes should instead be assessed against Policies HC8, GB6, GB7 and/or GB8.

Refusal reason 3 relates to the site's designation as local green space 'LGS7' within the Great Somerford Neighbourhood Plan and the harm that would arise from the loss of part of that designated area.

Policy HC8 requires development affecting local green space to be determined in a manner consistent with Green Belt policy. GB6 identifies the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy as preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, with openness being an essential characteristic. GB7 confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances; GB8 identifies certain forms of development which may not be inappropriate, including limited infilling in villages.

The Council maintains that the proposal does not fall comfortably within the intended scope of any development types identified by GB8; furthermore, the Council maintains that the development would fail to preserve the openness and special qualities that justified designation of the land as local green space.