

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

**PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR THE
PROPOSED ERECTION OF ONE DWELLING**

**ON LAND OFF WEST STREET TO THE REAR OF
THE EXISTING BARN, GREAT SOMERFORD,
CHIPPENHAM, WILTSHIRE, SN15 5EH**

PLANNING STATEMENT

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Our Reference: SWLC.LPC5416

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APPENDICES

	DESCRIPTION
A	Appeal Ref: APP /Y3940/W/24/3345527 – Land at West Street, Great Somerford, Wiltshire
B	Wiltshire Council Housing Land Supply Statement
C	Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/24/3345598 – Land at Glenmore Farm, Westbury BA13 4HQ
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 LPC (Trull) Ltd have been instructed to present a Permission in Principle (PiP) application for the erection of one new detached dwelling on land to the rear of the existing red brick barn off West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 5EH.

1.2 The application approach is defined in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), as below;

The permission in principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

1.3 This establishes that the application is a two-stage process, with the first stage solely intended to establish whether the site is suitable in principle and the second stage then considering the detailed development proposals and potential impacts. The Government's guidance sets out that the scope of the first stage of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development.

1.4 Accordingly, the purpose of this Planning Statement is focused on the principle of development at this location only. Any further details in respect of the intended new house development and its acceptable assimilation will be submitted at the technical details stage. The statement will however provide an overview of the planning policy context and an assessment of the key material planning considerations, including the implications of the newly published National Planning Policy Framework which provides strong support for the proposed development.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION & PLANNING HISTORY

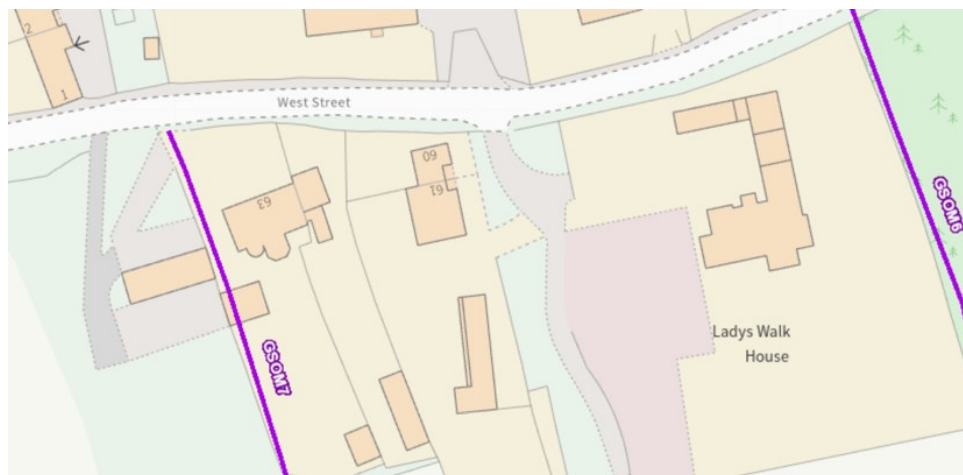
2.1 The application site comprises an area of land to the south (rear) of the existing red brick barn off West Street, Great Somerford, as shown on the aerial extract below: -



2.2 The northern barn is the subject of an extant permission for its residential conversion as a single new dwelling, pursuant to application PL/2023/09139. The site layout and associated red lined domestic curtilage approved at that time is shown by the site layout plan extract inserted below.



- 2.3 The new application site covers an area of 0.09 hectares of land which is proposed to be developed. The site lies outside the village Conservation Area and there are no other national or local landscape or ecological designations, or any other site specific constraints, from a planning perspective that impacts the proposed development of the flat grassed area of land. The site can be accessed from West Street via a new access on a straight section of road that would benefit from good visibility. The site is enclosed due to the mature boundary landscaping to the south and shared residential boundary to the east. It does of course sit behind the intended domestic boundary associated with the barn.
- 2.4 The extract from the definitive footpath plan shows the formal route of the nearest public footpath (GSOM7) to the east of the application site.



3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal seeks 'permission in principle consent' for the erection of one dwelling on the application site. The PiP application has a narrow focus with only the principle of the proposed residential development being considered. The second stage which involves the 'technical details consent' will follow should the 'permission in principle consent' be granted.
- 3.2 The PPG confirms that the scope of permission in principle is limited to **location, land use and amount of development**. However, issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage (Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615).
- 3.3 In recognition of the site's physical parameters it is reasonable to assume that the new dwelling will be restricted in height as either a single storey or one and half storey barn like property, with a restricted aspect towards the north and an L shaped footprint. Parking can be provided off the access with turning within the drive to allow access and egress on to West Street in a forward gear. The mature boundary planting to the southern boundary will be retained to maintain the site's rural fringe setting.
- 3.4 The dwelling will be of a bespoke design yet with traditional proportions, features, and materials to respect the appearance of the nearby barn and nearby Conservation Area.
- 3.5 The proposed dwelling would be served by a vehicular entrance from West Street, which will benefit from good visibility splays due to the straight alignment of the road, and typical road speeds. The roadside hedge to the west of the existing point of access is in the applicant's family control so a Grampian condition can be reasonably applied to ensure it is maintained as necessary to provide the established satisfactory access arrangements.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and associated PPG, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.2 The Government published a new NPPF on the 17 August 2026 which is a key material planning consideration of critical importance to the assessment of the PiP application. The wholly restructured NPPF sets out new clear and rules-based national policies for both plan-making and for making decisions on development proposal and how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.3 The Government explains that the new decision-making policies in the NPPF, which have been separated from those relating to plan-making, will:
 - a. make development management more certain, consistent and streamlined
 - b. standardise policies that apply across the whole of England
 - c. reduce duplication and avoid unjustified local deviation from national policy in local plans
- 4.4 The NPPF continues to highlight that planning law (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, the national decision-making policies in the NPPF are a material consideration of **"critical importance"** for plan making and for decision taking (Paragraphs 1-3).
- 4.5 Some of the national decision-making policies now indicate how much weight "the government would expect a particular consideration to be given, including cases where it is appropriate to give substantial weight to certain benefits, and the limited circumstances in which it is expected that permission would be refused" (Paragraph 7).
- 4.6 The former presumption in favour of sustainable development (the "tilted balance") now has a different weighting, more in favour of development. The former stated that planning permission should be granted unless "any

adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits” (Paragraph 11.d.ii of the 2024 NPPF), whereas the new NPPF says development should be approved “unless the benefits of doing so would be **substantially outweighed** by any adverse effects”. The new presumption is much more tilted in favour of sustainable development. The Government has described the new presumption as a “default yes” policy, and there needs to adverse effects to substantially outweigh the benefits.

4.7 The Government explained that to ensure that the decision-making policies in the NPPF have an immediate impact, they come into effect from the day of its publication. There are no transitional periods or arrangements (other than for plan-making), the Implementation section of new NPPF at Annex A clearly states that development plan policies (or parts of those policies) which are materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies in NPPF should be given **very limited weight**.

4.8 The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. The policies within the following chapters of the NPPF are relevant to the assessment of the proposed development: -

- Chapter 3 – Decision-making Policies
- Chapter 4 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Chapter 6 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
- Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 12 – Making Effective Use of Land
- Chapter 14 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Chapter 15 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 19 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- Chapter 20 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

The Local Development Plan

4.9 The NPPF highlights that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise as noted above. The associated

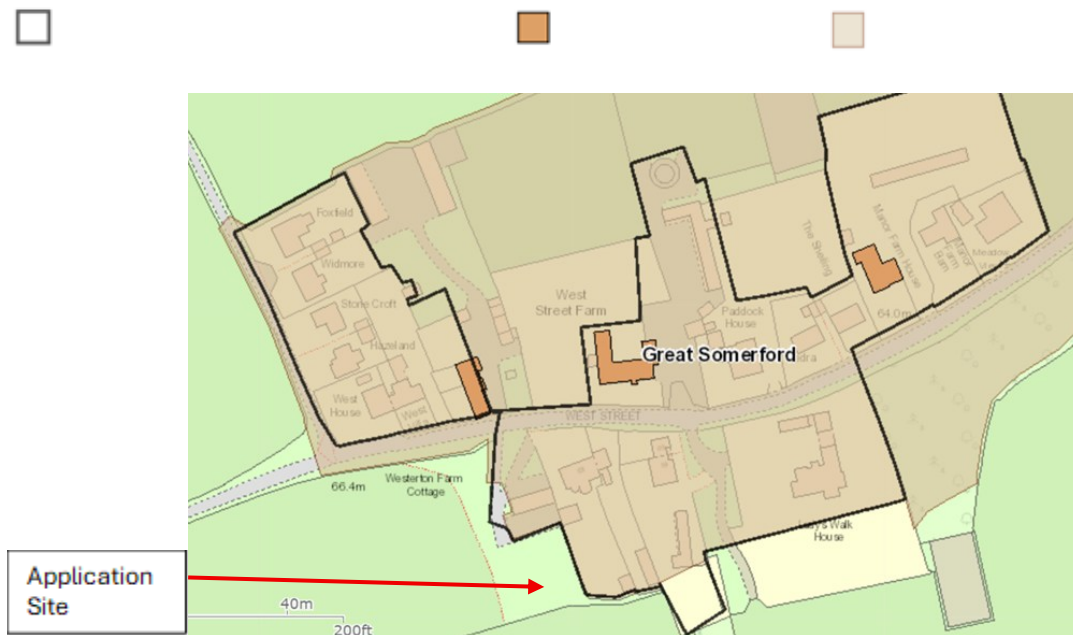
PPG confirms that the same applies to an application seeking permission in principle; “A decision on whether to grant permission in principle to a site following a valid application ... must be made in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan unless there are material considerations, such as those in the National Planning Policy Framework and national guidance, which indicate otherwise” (Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 58-011-20180615).

4.10 The Development Plan relevant to the proposed development is the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) (adopted January 2015), which includes saved policies from the former North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011, and The Great Somerford Neighbourhood Plan (G SNP) 2016 – 2026 (made November 2017). The key policies relevant to the ‘in principle’ matters of location, land use and amount of development, are: -

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 13 Spatial Strategy: Malmesbury Community Area;
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 58 Conservation of the Historic Environment
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development

4.11 The adopted Local Plan is accompanied by the Policies Maps, which provides a spatial representation of the Local Plan policies. I have inserted the relevant map extract on the next page. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is outside the village Conservation Area. The site lies adjacent to the Limits of Development for the village.

CS - CP1 - Settlement Framework Boundary CS - CP58 - Listed Buildings CS - CP58 - Conservation Area



Emerging Planning Policy

- 4.12 The WCS was adopted in 2015 and has therefore been under review, resulting in the production of the draft Wiltshire Local Plan (WLP) which was submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government for independent examination on 28 November 2024. There are no fundamental changes proposed to the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan, as presented within Pre-Submission Draft (2020 – 2038) (Regulation 19) Wiltshire Local Plan (September 2023). However, on the 17 November 2025 the WLP Inspectors postponed the hearing sessions scheduled for December 2025 due to a number of concerns in relation to the “Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment, housing need and the housing requirement, and employment land, together with the plan period”.
- 4.13 The Council suggested a further programme of work to address the concerns raised, however, the Planning Inspectorate wrote to the Council on the 27 February 2026 advising that the Council should either (i) withdraw the Local Plan from examination or (ii) request that the Inspectors draft a final report (which would recommend non-adoption).
- 4.14 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 introduced the new Local Plan system which came into effect in March 2026 and the Council, as an authority with a housing need figure that has

substantially increased, is required to publish its timeline and intention to commence a new plan by 30 June 2026. The 30-month prescribed timescale for plan preparation must commence by 31 October 2026. The Council will not therefore have an up-to-date strategy or Local Plan to address and plan for its housing need for years to come.

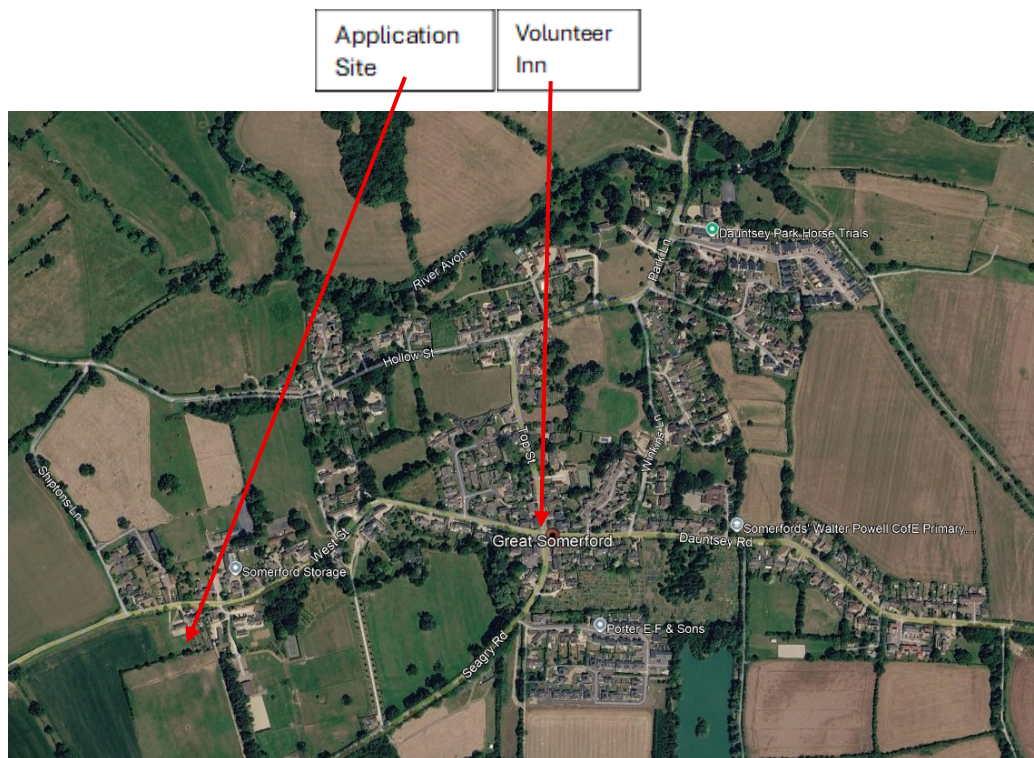
5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The planning considerations associated with this permission in principle application are limited to **location**, **land use** and **amount of development**. These matters associated within the principle of development will be addressed below in order to demonstrate that the site can comfortably accommodate one dwelling without any adverse local or environmental impacts.

The Local Plan: Site Sustainability & Accessibility

- 5.2 The WCS includes a Spatial Strategy which sets the foundations for how ‘sustainable development’ is defined and applied within Wiltshire. It has three key elements; a Settlement Strategy, Delivery Strategy and Infrastructure Requirements. The settlement and delivery strategies define where development will be the most sustainable across Wiltshire’s settlements.
- 5.3 Core Policy 1 ‘Settlement Strategy’ and Core Policy 2 ‘Delivery Strategy’ of the WCS outline that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages and development should be restricted to within the Limits of Development other than in exceptional circumstances as set out within the relevant core policies contained within the plan, i.e. the ‘exception policies’.
- 5.4 In the Malmesbury Community Area, where the site is located, the most sustainable location to which most growth is directed is the ‘Market Town’ of Malmesbury, with the surrounding ‘Large Villages’, which include Great Somerford, being able to accommodate some growth in order to help retain the vitality of these communities. The WCS states that at Large Villages “development will predominantly take the form of small housing and employment sites within the settlement boundaries. Small housing sites are defined as sites involving fewer than 10 dwellings (i.e. not a major application).
- 5.5 The application site lies adjacent to the Limits of Development of Great Somerford and is well related to the established built environment, as shown on the aerial view below. The proposed scheme will be in-keeping with the

development along West Street and will not materially extend into the open countryside beyond the village, harmfully elongating its built form.



- 5.6 The site is within easy walking distance of the bus stops at the village centre along West Street and other facilities within the village near the Volunteer Inn, identified on the aerial view above. The current site is well served by a bus service which offers a genuine convenient alternative choice of means of travel for future occupiers. This site is therefore considered to be an accessible location, and the development would accord with Core Policies 60 and 61 of the WCS which together support development in locations which reduce the need to travel and support sustainable transport alternatives to the use of the private car.

Manual for Streets makes the following accessibility comments, further to which the application site is less than 640m from the Volunteer Inn where, in addition to the public house there are bus stops (Service 91) and convenience shopping (Londis Store and Post Office). As a large village there are other facilities nearby too, including a primary school, pre-school, church and allotments.

4.4.1 Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having an arrangement of facilities within 10 minutes' (up to about 800 m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot. However, this is not an upper limit and PPS134 states that walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2 km. MfS encourages a reduction in the need to travel by car through the creation of mixed-use neighbourhoods with interconnected street patterns, where daily needs are within walking distance of most residents

- 5.7 The Spatial Strategy of the WCS does support small scale development at Great Somerford as outlined above. The village has a Primary School, Church, village shop and Post Office, a Public House, and sports facilities etc. It is recognised that the proposed development does not strictly align with the Spatial Strategy of the WCS due to the location of the site outside the Limits of Development, however, this factor does not make the site any less sustainable than one within the Limits of Development, and a key material planning consideration which weighs heavily in favour of the proposal is its ability to meet current local housing need, in line with up to date national policy, as outlined below.

2026 National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.8 Notwithstanding the above, under the new NPPF the development is now acceptable in principle. The NPPF introduces a permanent presumption in favour of sustainable development, replacing the previous “tilted balance” approach under paragraph 11 of the 2024 NPPF as noted above. The presumption is now clearly structured within Chapter 4 ‘Achieving Sustainable Development (within policies S3 – S6). There is no qualifying criteria or threshold; Policy S3 ‘Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development’ clearly states that “Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. This has been described as a default ‘yes’.
- 5.9 Policy S3 goes on to state that Policy S4 ‘Principle of Development Within Settlements’ should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements, and Policy S5 ‘Principle of Development Outside

Settlements' applied for development proposals outside settlements. These policies are of **critical importance** to the development the subject of this current PiP application and add further justification for the granting of PiP. The development is no longer purely acceptable within the context of the former "tilted balance", as explained further below, it is now acceptable in principle from the outset, due to its alignment with the new national decision-making policies and the reduced weight of the Development Plan.

Policy S4 'Principle of Development Within Settlements' & Policy S5 'Principle of Development Outside Settlements'

- 5.10 Policy S4 (1) states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies as a whole. The NPPF however introduces a new 'settlement' definition which is as follows:

Settlement: Includes cities, towns, villages and other predominantly built-up areas, including land which is allocated or has permission for development which will form part of the built-up area once the development is complete. This includes areas defined as a settlement in the development plan (whether using defined settlement boundaries or equivalent terms, or criteria for identifying settlement extents where boundaries have yet to be defined). Settlements do not include hamlets and scattered groups of houses located outside predominantly built-up areas, unless specifically defined as a settlement in the development plan. For the purpose of this Framework they also exclude villages which lie within and are defined as part of the Green Belt in the development plan.

- 5.11 The application site lies on the edge of the village of Great Somerford. As such, if the Council does not consider the site to fall within the physical limits of the settlement, and thus outside the scope of Policy S4 'Principle of Development Within Settlements' then Policy S5 'Principle of Development Outside Settlements' is relevant.
- 5.12 Policy S5 (1) sets out a list of developments that are acceptable in principle outside settlements, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially

outweighed by any adverse effects. The developments listed within S5 (1) are those that have typically been supported by both national and local planning policy such as agricultural, rural and tourism developments, and gypsy, traveller or travelling showpeople accommodation. However, there is a significant change in policy position with a much broader range of developments being permitted in principle.

- 5.13 The developments that are acceptable in principle outside settlements and thus apply to the current proposal are outlined within Policy S5 (1) 'j', which are as follows:

j. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test²⁷), and where the development would:

- i. Be physically well-related to an existing settlement²⁸(unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; or*
- ii. Comprise major development for freight and logistics purposes which accords with policy E3.*

- 5.14 The Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-Year Housing Land Supply Position, as explained within Section 7 below, and therefore this current proposal will contribute towards meeting an evidenced unmet need for housing. The site is clearly physically well-related to the existing settlement and can accommodate a development that would respect the established pattern, character and appearance of the built environment. The provision of one dwelling is also of an appropriate scale, noting that the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan states that developments of up to 10 dwellings is appropriate.

- 5.15 It is therefore clear that the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within Policy S3, applies to the proposed development and it is acceptable in principle under Policy S5 (1) 'j'. Policy S5 (2) however outlines that in applying the policy, "the circumstances in which the benefits of

approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances”.

5.16 The new NPPF now limits the situations or policies which require developments to be refused in specific circumstances. There are 15 specific circumstances, rather than generic policies, which include the following:

- 1) **Town Centres:** failure to satisfy the retail sequential test (TC3[4])
- 2) **Transport:** development that has a severe impact on the transport network (TR6[4])
- 3) **Hot Food Takeaways:** proposal for hot food takeaways in certain locations (HC5[1])
- 4) **Density:** proposals that do not make efficient use of land (L3[4])
- 5) **Green Belt:** Inappropriate development in the Green Belt (GB6[2])
- 6) **Design:** development of a poor design (DP3[3])
- 7) **Protected Landscapes:** proposal for major development within protected landscapes other than in exceptional circumstance (N4[2])
- 8) **International Biodiversity Sites:** developments that result in significant harm to a habitat site (fails the appropriate assessment) (N6[1a])
- 9) **Irreplaceable Habitats:** (loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (N6[2])
- 10) **Designated Heritage Assets:** developments that would cause harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, unless the harm justified / outweighed by public benefits (HE6[5])
- 11) **Peat Extraction:** proposals for the extraction of peat at new or extended sites (M5[1])
- 12) **Coal, Oil, Gas:** proposals for coal working, onshore oil and gas extraction unless justified (M5[2])
- 13) **Flood Risk (river/sea):** development is incompatible with the risk from river or sea flooding (F6[1a])
- 14) **Flood Safety:** development at risk of flooding in certain circumstance (F7[2])
- 15) **Coastal Change:** development within a Coastal Change Management Area unless justified (F9[1/3])

5.17 None of the national decision-making policies indicate that permission should be refused for the development the subject of this PiP application. The only

relevant consideration is the impact on designated heritage assets due to the location of the site within the setting of the village Conservation Area. This is considered below within the Heritage Impact Assessment section which concludes there will be no harm to the significance of any heritage assets. There are therefore no adverse effects which need to be considered against the benefits of the proposal. Policy S5 (2) is satisfied, and the development remains acceptable in principle.

- 5.18 Parts (3), (4), and (5) of Policy S5 are not relevant to the current proposal. Part (3) relates to ‘isolated homes’, Part (4) relates to developments that do not fall within any of the Policy S5 (2) categories, and Part (5) relates land within the Green Belt or designated as Local Green Space.
- 5.19 It is however considered important to highlight the new NPPF definition of ‘isolated homes’, which are permitted by Policy HO11 ‘Isolated Homes in the Countryside’. The Court of Appeal within the case of *Braintree District Council v Secretary of State [2018]* noted that the NPPF did not then define ‘isolated’ and held that an isolated home is one that is physical and spatially separate or remote from a settlement. The new NPPF however clarifies that, for the purposes of the new national decision-making policies around achieving sustainable development, isolated homes are “those lying outside settlements or groups of houses”. The application site is not separate or remote from a settlement; it is physically well-related to the Great Somerford and cannot be reasonably described as isolated.
- 5.20 The proposed development the subject of this PiP therefore fully complies with Policy S5 (1) to (5) and is therefore acceptable in principle.

Principle of Development Conclusion

- 5.21 In summary, the **location**, **land use** and **amount of development** is considered to be acceptable in principle. The site can be accessed via sustainable modes of transport, and the development can be designed to ensure it does not appear out of place with the established pattern and form of the built-environment. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated at the Technical Details Stage that the scheme can be designed to ensure no unacceptable

harms to landscape character, the historic environment, visual amenity, the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, or highway safety.

6.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Heritage Legislation

- 6.1 The duty placed on the Council under sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Furthermore, Section 72 of the Act outlines that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Conservation Area special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

National Heritage Policy

- 6.2 Chapter 20 of NPPF includes policies on conservation of the historic environment with the main underlying policy that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Policy HE4 notes that heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and indicates this includes their setting. The level of detail to assess the impact should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (Policy HE5:1.).
- 6.3 The NPPF advises that for heritage policy, 'significance' means "the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological, architectural, artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting" (p.113) (emphasis added).
- 6.4 In terms of the key components mentioned above which give a heritage assets its interest, the Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723) advises they can be interpreted as follows: -
- **archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a

heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

- **architectural and artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
- **historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Local Heritage Policy

- 6.5 The development plan must be read as a whole but Core Policy 58 'Conservation of the Historic Environment' of the WCS is of particular relevance from an historic environment perspective.

Heritage Assets & Impact of Proposed Development

- 6.6 The application site falls just outside the Great Somerford Conservation Area (GSCA) which is tightly drawn around the existing barn, excluding the land to the south and west. The nearest Listed Buildings are on the north of West Street and are screened from the application site by the intervening presence of the existing brick built barn. The application site is not therefore within the setting of the listed building. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 mentions that a Conservation Area is designated because it has special architectural or historic interest, and the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 6.7 There is no Character Appraisal or Management Plan for the GSCA, but the GSNP confirms it was first designated in 1975, covering the heart of the village including 20 listed buildings. The extension to the Conservation Area

in 2006 included the former railway station complex, junction of the World War 2 defences at Pillbox in the Showground, the Free Gardens and part of Dauntsey Road defined by historic allotment boundaries. The current extent of the Conservation Area is shown by the extract from the Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Assets map inserted below.



- 6.8 The character and appearance of the Conservation Area along West Street is characterised by residential properties, of different ages, size and design, spread along the road. The main character is that of residential development along the street. While the application site is currently an undeveloped area of grass land behind the barn at the end of the built ribbon. Its position in depth and lack of any obvious function means it can be sensitively developed to respect the established character of the Conservation Area where many buildings are positioned in depth.
- 6.9 The application site can comfortably accommodate one dwelling as previously described, which would respect the established building depth, mixed plot ratios, and density of the existing dwellings along West Street. The site itself is well screened from the road by the barn and dwellings to the east so there will not be a significant impact on the appearance of the street scene. Planning permission has recently been approved for the erection of a new dwelling positioned in depth at No 61 West Street as shown on the next page,

and just to the east of the application site (application PL/2026/02956), That approval reinforces the fact that the proposed development will be in-keeping with the established irregular pattern of development. As indicated, it is anticipated too that it will adopt a similar rural design typology.



6.10 There is no reason or need for the application site to remain open. A sensitive residential development scheme would preserve the character and appearance of the GSCA in this part of the village. This is the conclusion reached by the Planning Inspectorate for another development within the Conservation Area further east and south of West Street. The appeal was against the decision of the Council to refuse PiP for 2 No. Dwellings on Land at West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 5EH (appeal ref APP/Y3940/W/24/3345527) is relevant. A copy of the appeal decision can be seen at Appendix A.

6.11 The Inspector noted that while the introduction of two dwellings would diminish the rural character of the undeveloped open land, there is “no reason why, given the existing site characteristics and context, that a development sympathetic to the character of the locality, including the GSCA and its setting, could not be achieved” (Paragraph 12). Furthermore, the Inspector noted that “There is no reason that a sympathetic approach on the appeal site could not be achieved without causing harm to the historic environment. The Proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. It

would preserve the character and appearance of the GSCA and its setting” (Paragraphs 13 - 14).

- 6.12 In light of the above, and in paying special attention the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the GSCA, where the application site sits in its setting, it is considered there would similarly be no harm to the designated heritage asset. There would be no conflict with the heritage policies and tests outlined with the NPPF or Core Policy 58 of the WCS. The application site is capable of delivering a scheme of a high quality design and sensitivity within the context of the setting of the established historic environment, where there would be a neutral impact when considering the overall planning balance. Furthermore, the proposal will result in significant public benefits which will be considered within the Planning Balance section below.

7.0 HOUSING NEED & STATUS OF THE LOCAL PLAN

Housing Need & Land Supply

- 7.1 The Council's most up to date Housing Land Supply Statement details that it has 2.42 years of deliverable housing land supply. A copy of the document can be seen in Appendix B. The intention of the WLP was to identify future levels of need for new homes and employment land over the period 2020-2038, however, the evidence that underpins the draft WLP was prepared in accordance with the now superseded December 2023 version of the NPPF, and critically it has been found to be unsound and will not proceed beyond the Examination process.
- 7.2 The Council will not therefore be able to demonstrate a five year Housing Land Supply position for years to come and therefore its previous Briefing Note (No.24-20 – December 2024), which set out the implications of the 2024 NPPF and revisions to the standard methodology on its housing land supply position, comes into greater focus and carries even greater weight when considering applications for residential development. It explained that due to the change to the standard methodology, which is used to calculate local housing need, the number of homes the Council must plan for on an annual basis has increased from 1,917 to 3,525 (the annual Local Housing Need figure), an increase of 84%.

Status of the Local Plan

- 7.3 The Spatial Strategy of the WCS is now out of date and the Council has a significant housing land supply shortfall as noted above. The Council's Housing Land Supply position and the weight to be attributed to the Spatial Strategy of the WCS was under focus at an appeal for a residential development scheme on Land at Glenmore Farm, The Ham/Hawkeridge Road, Westbury (reference 3345598) early last year. The Council did not defend the appeal due to its Housing Land Supply Position, and the Inspector stated the following within the decision notice dated 21 January 2025 (the appeal decision can be seen in full at Appendix C): -

“41. Aside from the emerging Local Plan, which has only just been submitted for Examination, there is no other obvious remedy to the shortfall in the short

or medium term. This overall position indicates that **the development plan is failing to meet its strategic challenges**. Thus, its settlement strategy and limits of development are not working effectively. These policies are therefore of **limited weight**, as is the conflict with them.” (emphasis added)

- 7.4 The weight to be attributed to the Local Plan has further diminished following the withdrawal of the draft WLP from the examination process. A recent appeal (3374421) for a residential scheme in Melksham highlighted the perilous position the Council finds itself in and the extreme need to support and deliver new housing schemes. A full copy of the appeal decision (dated 09 April 2026) can be seen in Appendix D but the Inspector noted the following about the housing need position:

“12 ... the minimum housing target expressed in the CS of 42,000 homes over the plan period was not met, with a shortfall of around 1000 homes. Exacerbating this is the Council’s five-year housing land supply shortfall of over 9,500 dwellings and a separate affordable housing need of over 1,200. It is inevitable and accepted by the Council, that permission for housing will need to be granted on unallocated greenfield sites even though that will conflict with CS Policies CP2 and CP15. (emphasis added)

- 7.5 The Inspector went on to outline the implications of the withdrawal of the draft Wiltshire Local Plan from Examination:

14. The implication of this is that there will not be a strategic plan in place to lead development in Wiltshire for the foreseeable future. Importantly there will be no plan led mechanism to rectify the housing land supply shortfall, thus making it ever more pressing that housing continues to come forward in a timely manner in sustainable locations such as Melksham. The appeal site is well related to the existing built-up area and would form a logical extension to this part of the town.

- 7.6 It was also significant that the appeal site was within an area with an up-to-date Neighbourhood Plan, yet the Inspector still allowed the appeal due to the Council’s chronic housing land supply shortfall:

43. Regardless of the parties' contrary positions on the application of Framework paragraph 69, in the parlance of Framework paragraph 14 'likely' does not and cannot mean 'absolute'. It does not place a firm bar against development going ahead even if counter to a Neighbourhood Plan that meets the tests in Framework paragraph 14. I acknowledge that the JMNP2 has relatively recently been made and reflects the wishes of those who supported it at referendum. I also note that development has been coming forward in Melksham, but the Council's housing land supply shortfall is acute and county-wide. Action to address that needs to be taken now through the provision of housing on suitable sites.

7.7 In light of the above, due to the age of the WCS and the substantial shortfall in housing land supply, it is considered that very limited weight should be attributed to any perceived conflict with the Spatial Strategy of the WCS, which as noted above is not working effectively and is failing to deliver housing in a strategic plan-led way. This conclusion is important and is considered further below within the Planning Balance section.

7.8 The **critical importance** of the NPPF as a material planning consideration will in certain circumstances overrule the primacy of the Local Plan. The NPPF clearly advises that Local Plan policies which are materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies in the NPPF should be given very limited weight. This applies in Wiltshire because its Settlement Strategy (Core Policies 1–3) is materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies (Policies S3–S5). It is clear that preference has to be given, or the starting point, is the new NPPF in this instance and then only very limited weight is given to the relevant out-of-date / materially inconsistent policies of the Local Plan.

Wiltshire Council 'Tilted Balance' Examples

7.18 Whilst it is recognised that all cases should be considered on their own merits there are a number of very recent decisions on applications where the Council's current housing land supply shortfall has been considered and the former 2024 NPPF tilted balance applied. Permission in Principle, reference PL/2024/08878, for a single dwelling on land at No 1, Lamberts Marsh,

Southwick, was granted following an earlier refusal due to the location of the site outside the defined Limits of Development for the Large Village. The Case Officer noted that “in the absence of adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, officers in acting reasonably and mindful of the difficulties a refusal of this PIP would present, the application is recommended for approval”.

- 7.19 A more recent example is Permission in Permission, reference PL/2025/00407, for a single dwelling on Land at School Lane, Lea, Malmesbury, SN16 9PQ granted on the 10 April 2025, which was again granted following an earlier refusal. The Case Officer noted that considering the reduced weight that must be given to the harm arising from the technical breach in planning policy, “it is not considered in this case that the adverse impacts of permitting the development proposed would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Following the process required in the tilted balance, therefore, it is recommended that the principle of development of a single dwelling at this site should not be resisted.”. It is considered that the same conclusion should be reached for the development the subject of this current application.
- 7.20 There are also many recent decisions by the Planning Inspectorate which are material to the consideration of this current application. One recent appeal example is the PiP for 2 dwellings on Land at West Street, Great Somerford as mentioned earlier above. The site is located outside, but adjoining, the defined Limits of Development for the Large village of Great Somerford.
- 7.21 The appeal was however allowed on the 19th November 2024 (a copy of the Decision Notice can be seen in Appendix A). The Inspector stated there would be conflict with Core Policies 1 and 2 of the WCS because the site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and therefore in the countryside for planning purposes. However, the development of rural homes in an accessible location which would help to support rural communities, services and facilities is a positive aspect of the scheme that weighs in its favour. The tilted balance was applied and the following conclusions reached:

“When assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, the adverse impact does not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of two additional homes on a windfall site. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development indicates that permission should be granted.” (paragraph 31).

- 7.22 These examples demonstrate that any conflict with the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan is given limited weight within the overall planning/tilted balance, which certainly does not demonstrably outweigh the benefits of housing delivery, especially when considering the current national planning policy position which seeks to boost the supply of housing and the local shortfall in housing delivery to meet the minimum need. These examples and the precedent set weight heavily in favour of granting PiP for the current application. However, it must be highlighted that these examples pre-date the new NPPF which has now introduced a different weighting for the ‘presumption in favour of development’ which is more in favour of sustainable development.

8.0 CONCLUSION & PLANNING BALANCE

- 8.1 The application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the construction of one new dwelling on land south the barn off West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 5EH.
- 8.2 The site lies adjacent to the defined Limits of Development for Great Somerford which is a settlement identified as being suitable for small scale developments by the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan. The site is also accessible on foot to public transport services which connect the site to higher tier settlements with a greater range of facilities. The proposal would result in the provision of up to one dwelling tailored towards meeting local need and can be designed to respect the layout, height and appearance of neighbouring houses along West Street. The site can be developed without unacceptable harm to landscape character, visual amenity, the historic environment or highway safety.
- 8.3 The Government's publication of the new NPPF on the 17 August 2026 has had a significant impact on the assessment of planning applications. The NPPF introduces a new presumption in favour of sustainable development (Policy S3) and introduces "default yes" policies for certain types of developments within and outside settlements (Policies S4 and S5). The new NPPF strengthens the presumption in favour of development with more weight in favour of development. However, the development, the subject of this PiP application is acceptable in principle under new national decision-making Policy S5 (1) 'j'.
- 8.4 The new national decision-making policies have primacy over the out-of-date Local Plan in this case due to the critical importance that should be afforded to the new NPPF and the "very limited weight" that should be afforded to the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan because it is materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies. The new NPPF policies on achieving sustainable development indicate that the proposed development is now acceptable in principle.
- 8.5 The NPPF advises that such applications should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse

effects. There are no adverse effects associated with the proposal but there are significant benefits. The proposed development would result in the provision of up to two new dwellings that would contribute towards the substantial deficit in the Council's five-year housing land supply, which is a significant benefit that should be given substantial positive weight, as required by Policy HO7 of the NPPF.

- 8.6 The development would also produce short term benefits to the construction industry, and the development would also generate ongoing revenue for the Council from Council Tax etc.. There will also be further modest benefits that would result from the additional support to the vitality of the local community from the future occupiers of the development. These benefits should also be given moderate weight in favour of the proposed development.
- 8.7 The PiP application has a narrow focus with only the principle of the proposed residential development being considered. The scope of the assessment is limited to the location, land use and amount of development. However, issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. The new NPPF provides support in principle for the proposed development and there are no other matters or policies that indicate that PiP should be refused.
- 8.8 The neighbouring barn conversion was considered to be acceptable within the context of the 2024 NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development. The new NPPF strengthens the presumption in favour of development with more weight in favour of development. However, notwithstanding these points, national policy now also supports the principle of new development locationally.
- 8.9 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The new NPPF is a material consideration of critical importance which indicates that the development is acceptable in principle and there are no policies or reasons to refuse permission in principle.

- 8.10 In light of the above, having considered the individual planning merits of the proposal, it is considered that the material considerations indicate that permission should be granted. It is therefore respectfully requested that PiP be granted.