

Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Site Assessment Report

Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

September 2018

Quality information

Revision History

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Limitations

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Executive Summary..... | |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Background..... | 1 |
| 1.2 Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan | 1 |
| 1.3 Sites considered through the Site Appraisal..... | 2 |
| 2. Methodology for the site appraisal | 6 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 6 |
| 2.2 Task 1: Development of site assessment pro-forma | 6 |
| 2.3 Task 2: Initial desk study..... | 7 |
| 2.4 Task 3: Site visit | 7 |
| 2.5 Task 4: Consolidation of results | 7 |
| 3. Indicative housing capacity..... | 8 |
| 4. Summary of site appraisals: sites considered in summer 2017 | 10 |
| 4.1 Site 1: Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | 10 |
| 4.2 Site 2: Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park..... | 11 |
| 4.3 Site 3: Land occupied by Cooper Tires..... | 12 |
| 4.4 Site 4: Murray Walk..... | 13 |
| 4.5 Site 5: Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm | 14 |
| 4.6 Site 6: Land north of Sandridge Road..... | 15 |
| 4.7 Site 7: Land west of New Road Farm | 16 |
| 4.8 Site 8: Woodrow House Farm..... | 17 |
| 4.9 Site 9: Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue | 18 |
| 4.10 Site 10: Land between the Railway Line and Beanacre Road | 19 |
| 4.11 Site 11: Land between the River Avon and Beanacre Road | 20 |
| 4.12 Site 12: Middle Farm, Corsham Road | 21 |
| 4.13 Site 13: Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane)..... | 22 |
| 4.14 Site 14: Land south of Western Way..... | 23 |
| 4.15 Site 15: Woolmore Farm Yard | 24 |
| 4.16 Site 16: Merretts Yard, Snarlton Lane | 25 |
| 4.17 Site 17: Whitley Farm | 26 |
| 4.18 Site 18: Land north of Dunch Lane | 27 |
| 4.19 Site 19: Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane | 28 |
| 4.20 Site 20: Beanacre: Lacock Road..... | 29 |
| 4.21 Site 21: Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane | 30 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 5. | Summary of site appraisals: sites considered in summer 2018 | 31 |
| 5.1 | Site 22: Berryfield, land at Semington Road..... | 31 |
| 5.2 | Site 23: Berryfield, land west of Semington Road, south of Berryfield Lane | 32 |
| 5.3 | Site 24: Berryfield, land west of A350 | 33 |
| 5.4 | Site 25: Berryfield, land east of A350 | 34 |
| 5.5 | Site 26: Boundary Farm, Berryfield | 35 |
| 5.6 | Site 27: Land north of Berryfield..... | 36 |
| 5.7 | Site 28: Land to the rear of Woolmore Manor, Bowerhill | 37 |
| 5.8 | Site 29: Old Loves Farm, Bowerhill Lane..... | 38 |
| 5.9 | Site 30: Land at Snarlton Lane..... | 39 |
| 5.10 | Site 31: Land at Woodrow Road..... | 40 |
| 5.11 | Site 32: Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road..... | 41 |
| 6. | Conclusions..... | 43 |
| 6.1 | Conclusions and recommendations | 43 |
| 6.2 | Housing sites to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan | 43 |
| 6.3 | Next steps..... | 48 |
| | Appendix A Completed site appraisal pro-forma | 49 |

Acronyms

| | |
|--------|---|
| BAP | Biodiversity Action Plan |
| DPD | Development Plan Document |
| LPD | Local Plan Document |
| LSOA | Lower Super Output Area |
| MHCLG | Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government |
| MNP | Melksham Neighbourhood Plan |
| NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework |
| NPPG | National Planning Policy Guidance |
| SHELAA | Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment |
| SHLAA | Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment |

Executive Summary

AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent site assessment for the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has made good progress in undertaking the initial stages of preparation for the Neighbourhood Plan, and it is now looking to ensure that key aspects of its proposals will be robust and defensible. In this context, the Steering Group has asked AECOM to undertake an independent and objective assessment of the sites that are available for housing for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy was adopted in January 2015¹. The Core Strategy, which covers the period up to 2026, provides a framework for how future development across Wiltshire will be planned and delivered. Wiltshire Core Strategy states that the indicative housing requirement for Melksham Town is 2,240 dwellings between 2006 and 2026. The housing requirement for Melksham town includes Bowerhill, and, as stated in the Core Strategy "...could include dwellings provided within the Melksham Without Parish Council Area." Whilst this allocation has now been met, the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are keen to take a proactive approach to development in the Neighbourhood Plan area to secure additional community infrastructure, protect and enhance the natural environment and open spaces, and ultimately support the vitality of the town. This includes the option of encouraging a degree of development which recognises the potential for more development that is required for Melksham by the Core Strategy, particularly if it provides additional community infrastructure.

In the context of the above, the purpose of the site assessment is therefore to produce a clear appraisal of the suitability of each of the sites available for potential housing development within the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan area.

Sites considered through the appraisal, and assessment findings

32 sites have been considered through the site assessment, listed below in Table ES1. The location of the sites is presented in Figure 1.2.

21 sites were initially assessed in summer 2017. Following further consultation events undertaken on the Neighbourhood Plan, an additional 11 sites were subsequently assessed in summer 2018 using the same methodology.

Following the completion of the site assessment, it is considered that ten sites are most appropriate for shortlisting by the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for taking forward for housing through the Neighbourhood Plan, listed below. This is due to the suitability of the sites to deliver housing, their location and accessibility, their availability, the limited number of environmental constraints present, and the objectives outlined in the Melksham Area Strategy.

- Site 3: Land occupied by Cooper Tires
- Site 6: Land north of Sandridge Road
- Site 7: Land west of New Road Farm
- Site 13: Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane)
- Site 15: Woolmore Farm Yard
- Site 16: Merretts Yard, Snarlton Lane
- Site 17: Whitley Farm
- Site 24: Berryfield, land west of A350

¹ Wiltshire Council (January 2015) Wiltshire Core Strategy <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/adopted-local-plan-jan16-low-res.pdf>

- Site 25: Berryfield, land east of A350
- Site 27: Land north of Berryfield (for small-scale regeneration of the existing developed areas).

In addition to these sites, a further twelve sites are potentially suitable for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, listed below. However, these sites have more significant constraints which would need to be addressed prior to allocation.

- Site 1: Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park
- Site 2: Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park
- Site 4: Murray Walk
- Site 5: Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm
- Site 9: Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue
- Site 12: Middle Farm, Corsham Road
- Site 14: Land south of Western Way
- Site 19: Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane
- Site 21: Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane
- Site 23: Berryfield, Land west of Semington Road, south of Berryfield Lane
- Site 27: Land north of Berryfield
- Site 32: Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road (for small-scale regeneration of the existing developed areas).

A summary of the site assessment findings is presented in Table ES1 below.

Table ES1: Sites considered within the appraisal and their appropriateness for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|---|------|--|
| Site 1: Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | | Potentially Development may not appropriate due to the undeveloped nature of the land and flood risk and biodiversity constraints. It may however be appropriate for a limited level of development and open space provision in association with the redevelopment of Site 2. |
| Site 2: Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | | Potentially Redevelopment of the site would lead to the potential loss of small to medium businesses. However, if the constraints can be overcome, the site would be appropriate for mixed use development of high quality design, accompanied by green infrastructure provision. |
| Site 3: Land occupied by Cooper Tires | | Yes Mixed use development presents significant opportunities to further enhance the quality of the public realm and local distinctiveness and opening up north side of the river in this part of Melksham. This would link with key existing and proposed green and blue infrastructure networks. |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|---|------|--|
| Site 4: Murray Walk | | Potentially The site has good access by walking and cycling and is accessible to existing services and facilities. Development of the site would lead to impacts to biodiversity and significant landscape impacts given the current 'green context' of the site. |
| Site 5: Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm | | Potentially Whilst in many respects the site is relatively unconstrained, it is located outside of the settlement boundary for Melksham Town. Due to its location, the site has significant access and safety issues for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. These issues would need to be overcome before development takes place. |
| Site 6: Land north of Sandridge Road | | Yes The site is relatively unconstrained, and is relatively accessible to services and facilities and the road network. As such the site is appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. |
| Site 7: Land west of New Road Farm | | Yes The site is relatively unconstrained, and is relatively accessible to services and facilities and the road network. As such the site is appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. |
| Site 8: Woodrow House Farm | | No Development on this site would be in contrast to existing land uses and would lead to impacts on landscape and townscape character. Development of the site would contrast with the existing settlement pattern of this part of Melksham, and, unless developed with Site 9, would be separate from the rest of the town. |
| Site 9: Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue | | Potentially The site may be appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan if constraints can be overcome, including the presence of the high voltage power line, and the impact on views from surrounding properties. |
| Site 10: Land between the Railway Line and Beanacre Road | | No Development of the site would increase traffic and road safety issues on the busy A350 corridor and ecological and agricultural land quality constraints are particularly significant in the local context. |
| Site 11: Land between the River Avon and Beanacre Road | | No Whilst the site could deliver a significant number of dwellings, there are a number of constraints to development on the site, including relating to flood risk, biodiversity constraints and the presence of a high voltage power line. Development would also lead to the loss of significant areas of land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land. |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|--|------|---|
| Site 12: Middle Farm, Corsham Road | | Potentially The site may be appropriate for taking forward as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. However there are a number of constraints which would need to be overcome to enable development, including potential impacts on the road network. |
| Site 13: Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane) | | Yes The site is relatively unconstrained, with no significant landscape or biodiversity designations. The site is also located outside of the boundary of any flood risk zones, has good access, and is close to local public transport links into Melksham town centre. |
| Site 14: Land south of Western Way | | Potentially The site has a key role in maintaining the green gap between Melksham and Bowerhill. Other main constraints to development relate to future traffic issues and road safety issues, which would need to be overcome to enable development. |
| Site 15: Woolmore Farm Yard | | Yes Development at this location presents significant opportunities to enhance the setting of Woolmore Farmhouse and the wider setting of the townscape. The site is predominantly unconstrained, with good access to local amenities and facilities. |
| Site 16: Merretts Yard, Snarlton Lane | | Yes Given the existing underutilised previously developed nature of the site, and location within a residential area with relatively few constraints, the site is appropriate for allocating through the Neighbourhood Plan as a residential allocation. |
| Site 17: Whitley Farm | | Yes The site has minor constraints, but development presents the opportunity to enhance the setting of the villagescape and heritage assets in this location, and potentially alleviate surface water flood risk. |
| Site 18: Land north of Dunch Lane | | No The site has a number of locally significant constraints which would provide a constraint for development, including relating to flood risk, biodiversity features, heritage assets and the quality of agricultural land. |
| Site 19: Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane | | Potentially The main constraints to development surround the access issues, its location away from the main built-up area of Melksham, possible changes to the village-scape, and the potential ecological importance of the site. Nonetheless, it is potentially suitable for development if the constraints can be resolved. |
| Site 20: Beanacre: Lacock Road | | No The site has access issues, is located away from the main built-up area of Melksham, will lead to the loss of productive agricultural land, and lead to likely changes to the villagescape of Beanacre. |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|--|------|--|
| Site 21: Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane | | Potentially The main constraints to development surround the access issues, its location away from the main built-up area of Melksham, possible changes to the village-scape, and the potential ecological importance of the site. Nonetheless, it is potentially suitable for development if the constraints can be resolved. |
| Site 22: Berryfield, Land at Semington Road | | No Although the site is relatively unconstrained, the planning approval for 150 dwellings through application 17/12514/REM is a significant limitation. As such, the site is considered to be unsuitable to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. |
| Site 23: Berryfield, Land west of Semington Road, south of Berryfield Lane | | Potentially The main constraints to development concern the landscape and visual sensitivities, its distance from the town centre, and the potential impacts to the setting of nationally designated heritage assets. However, if the constraints can be overcome, the site would be appropriate for small scale development of high quality design, accompanied by green infrastructure provision. |
| Site 24: Berryfield, land west of A350 | | Yes Landscape sensitivities, heritage issues and access concerns provide constraints to what is otherwise a relatively unconstrained site. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable to take forward for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design. |
| Site 25: Berryfield, land east of A350 | | Yes The main constraints to development include the access concerns, the potential impacts to landscape and townscape character, and the locally important priority habitats. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable to take forward for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design. |
| Site 26: Boundary Farm, Berryfield | | No The site is limited by landscape and townscape sensitivities, access issues and the quality of agricultural land, all of which are considered as locally significant constraints to future development. |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|--|------|--|
| Site 27: Land north of Berryfield | | <p>Yes Landscape and townscape concerns provide constraints to what is otherwise a relatively unconstrained site. In particular, the existing developed areas of the site would be suitable for small-scale regeneration</p> <p>Potentially The agricultural areas of the site could be suitable to take forward through, providing the development is sensitive to its setting within the landscape, incorporates green infrastructure provisions and establishes appropriate access.</p> |
| Site 28: Land to the rear of Woolmore Manor, Bowerhill | | <p>No Development could significantly impact upon the setting of the Grade II* listed 'Woolmore Manor', whilst also precluding views of this nationally designated heritage asset from the footpath passing through the site. Ecological and access issues provide further constraints. Therefore, the site is considered unsuitable to take forward.</p> |
| Site 29: Old Loves Farm, Bowerhill Lane | | <p>No There are significant constraints to development including relating to landscape and townscape character, the setting of heritage assets and the suitability of the existing access. As planning application '16/09948/FUL' for a dwelling and garage on land directly to the south of the site was rejected on similar grounds, it is considered that this site is unsuitable for development.</p> |
| Site 30: Land at Snarlton Lane | | <p>No Flood risk concerns, ecological sensitivities, access issues and the quality of the agricultural land are significant constraints to development. Development would set precedence for future expansion of Melksham to the east of the Bypass, impacting upon landscape and townscape character.</p> |
| Site 31: Land at Woodrow Road | | <p>No The main constraints to development concern the impacts to landscape and townscape character, the disturbance of locally significant features of archaeological interest, the suitability of the existing access into the site, and its visibility from surrounding areas. As planning application '16/05644/OUT' was rejected on similar grounds, the site is considered unsuitable to take forward.</p> |

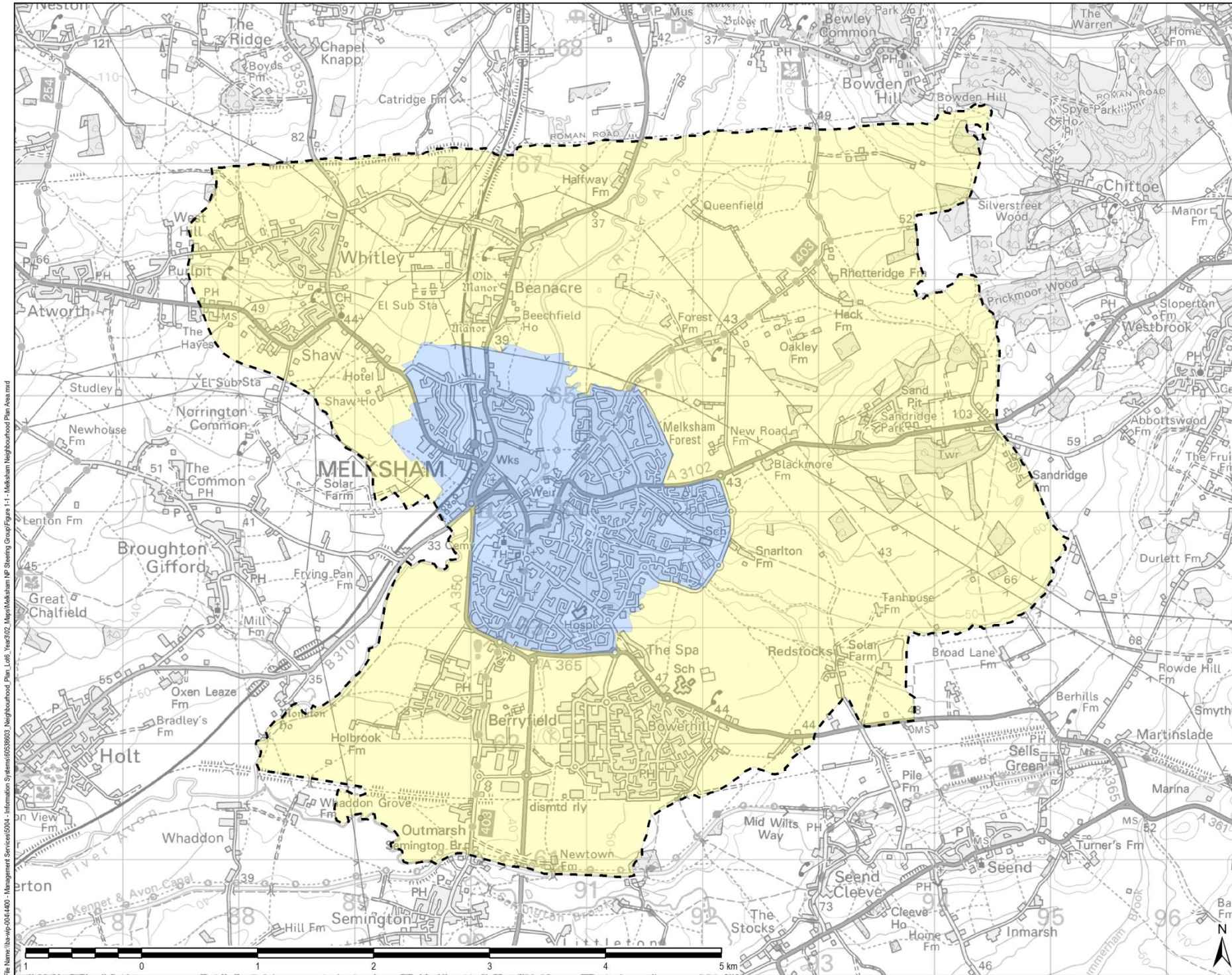
| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| Site 32: Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road | | <p>No There are a number of locally significant constraints which would provide a constraint for development on the greenfield areas of the site, including relating to landscape character and visual amenity value, flood risk issues, agricultural land quality and ecological considerations.</p> <p>Potentially However, providing the constraints can be overcome, the existing developed areas of the site could be suitable for small-scale regeneration of a high quality design, which includes provisions for green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage.</p> |

Next steps

Sites to be taken forward for the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered and chosen by the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on the basis of:

- The findings of this site assessment;
- Responses received during consultation on proposed sites;
- The scope for the sites to meet identified infrastructure needs of the community;
- Viability studies; and
- The extent to which the sites support the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan.

This process will be incorporated within the next stages of development for the Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with engagement with landowners, Melksham Town Council, Melksham Without Parish Council and other stakeholders.



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LEGEND

- - - Melksham
- - - Neighbourhood Area
- Melksham Parish
- Melksham Without Parish

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Project Title: **SITE ASSESSMENT FOR THE MELKSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title: **MELKSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA**

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FIGURE 1.1

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File Name: \\bar-wp-004-1400 - Management Services\004 - Information Systems\0636803 - Neighbourhood Plan_Lu6_Year5\02 - Maps\Melksham NP Steering Group\Figure 1.1 - Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Area.mxd

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent site appraisal for the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The work initially undertaken was agreed with the Melksham Town Council, Melksham Without Parish Council and the former Department for Communities and Local Government in October 2016.

The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have made good progress in undertaking the initial stages of preparation for the Neighbourhood Plan, and are now looking to ensure that key aspects of its proposals will be robust and defensible. In this context, the Steering Group have asked AECOM to undertake an independent and objective assessment of the sites that are available for housing for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan, which will cover the areas of Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parish (see Figure 1.1 above), is being prepared in the context of the Wiltshire Local Plan. Adopted in 2015, the Local Plan Core Strategy is the overarching Development Plan Document (DPD) for Wiltshire, covering the period until 2026. Along with the Core Strategy, the Local Plan includes the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan and saved policies from district local plans and minerals and waste plans.

The purpose of the site appraisal is therefore to produce a clear assessment as to whether the sites considered are suitable, available and viable for housing development. In this context it is anticipated that the site selection process will be robust enough to meet the Basic Conditions considered by the Independent Examiner, as well as any potential legal challenges by developers and other interested parties.

1.2 Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

The Local Planning Authority for the Neighbourhood Plan area is Wiltshire Council. The Wiltshire Core Strategy² was adopted in January 2015 and sets out a framework for how future development across Wiltshire will be planned and delivered in the period to 2026.

Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for Wiltshire, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy states that it seeks to give communities a solid framework within which appropriate community-led planning policy documents, including neighbourhood plans, can be brought forward. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the Core Strategy and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Core Strategy to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Wiltshire, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

Melksham is defined by the Core Strategy as one of Wiltshire's market towns, which are settlements that have the ability to support sustainable patterns of living in Wiltshire through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities. The Wiltshire Core Strategy states that the indicative housing requirement for Melksham Town is 2,240 dwellings between 2006 and 2026. The housing requirement for Melksham town includes Bowerhill, and, as stated in the Core Strategy "...could include dwellings provided within the Melksham Without Parish Council Area."

Whilst this allocation has been met in Melksham, the Core Strategy seeks to stress that "*the indicative figures also allow a flexible approach which will allow the council including through the preparation of the Sites Allocation DPD and local communities preparing neighbourhood plans to respond positively to opportunities without being inhibited by an overly prescriptive, rigid approach which might otherwise prevent sustainable development proposals that can contribute to maintaining a deliverable five year*

² Wiltshire Council (2015): 'Wiltshire Core Strategy', [online] available to download via: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshirecorestrategy.htm> last accessed [24/09/18]

housing land supply and delivering the strategic objectives of the plan. Neighbourhood Plans should not be constrained by the specific housing requirements within the Core Strategy and additional growth may be appropriate and consistent with the Settlement Strategy."

The 'Melksham Area Strategy' presented in the Core Strategy states that community and health facilities in Melksham are under pressure, and the primary and secondary schools are at capacity. Although Melksham has a relatively strong existing employment base, and has the capacity for future employment growth, there is a high degree of economic out-commuting. The aim will therefore be to ensure that an appropriate and balanced mix of housing and employment growth is managed to provide contributions to town centre improvement and the delivery of enhanced services in the town. The Melksham Area Strategy also states that the identity of Melksham and Bowerhill as separate communities will need to be preserved through the planning process.

The latest Draft Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan³ (released on 14th July 2017) does not identify any additional sites for development within Melksham, but takes an approach which aims to enable development to come forward in the town and surrounding villages which reflects their sustainability and will respond to local needs. Through this approach, it seeks to achieve a balance so that development maintains and improves the viability of the areas whilst also being of an appropriate scale – respecting their character and in particular, any landscape designations, and the priorities outlined in the Melksham Area Strategy within the Core Strategy.

In this context the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group wish to help ensure that community benefits are secured through the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan through encouraging a degree of high quality and appropriate development which delivers the requisite community infrastructure for the Neighbourhood Plan area.

1.3 Sites considered through the Site Appraisal

The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is keen to take a proactive approach to development within the Neighbourhood Plan area, particularly to secure additional community infrastructure. This reflects the outcomes of consultations initiated during earlier stages of development of the Neighbourhood Plan, including through an open meeting⁴ held by the Steering Group in March 2015, where residents were invited to comment on five key issues identified for the MNP to address: Housing, Employment & Economy, Health & Wellbeing, Education and Transport, and a subsequent 'Priorities Survey'. There was also a clear indication that there is a preference for brownfield sites to be developed in favour of greenfield sites.

To help deliver these aspirations, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were offered technical support to consider potential sites within the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan area which have been offered up by landowners as appropriate for development and included within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for the Local Plan⁵, completed in 2012. Along with any available brownfield sites, the SHLAA sites which scored favourably were also taken forward for consideration through the site assessment. This process resulted in 21 sites being taken forward for the purposes of the site assessment process, with the appraisals completed between May 2017 and July 2017.

In July 2017 Wiltshire Council published a 'Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' (SHELAA), providing information on a range of potential sites for housing and economic development in Wiltshire. The council completed a 'call for sites' for the SHELAA, with all sites submitted before 1st January 2017 considered within the assessment. Although the SHELAA updates and replaces the 2012 SHLAA, all of the sites contained within the 2012 SHLAA were also considered

³ Wiltshire Council (2017): 'Draft Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan', [online] available to view via:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment/planningpolicy/wiltshsgsiteallocationsplan.htm> last accessed [18/07/17]

⁴ Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (2015): 'Comments made by the public at the MNP Steering Group open meeting, March 2015', [online] available to download via: <http://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/library> last accessed [18/07/17]

⁵ Wiltshire Council (2012) Strategic housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment/planningpolicy/strategichousinglandavailabilityassessment.htm>

in the assessment. Appendix 5.9 of the SHELAA presents the details for all sites within the 'Melksham Community Area'⁶.

Following the publication of the SHELAA, the Steering Group were keen to consider additional sites within the site assessment, particularly those which:

- Had the potential to accommodate 10 dwellings or more;
- Scored favourably within the SHELAA; and
- Had support from local residents, based on the results of the community consultation which took place though autumn and winter 2017.

Subsequently, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were offered technical support in May 2018 to consider an additional eleven sites within their site assessment process, with the appraisals for each site completed between July 2018 and September 2018. Therefore, 32 sites in total have been considered within the site assessment. The size of each site has either been calculated using Google Earth (starred within Table 1.1 below), or taken from the SHELAA where available (un-starred within Table 1.1 below).

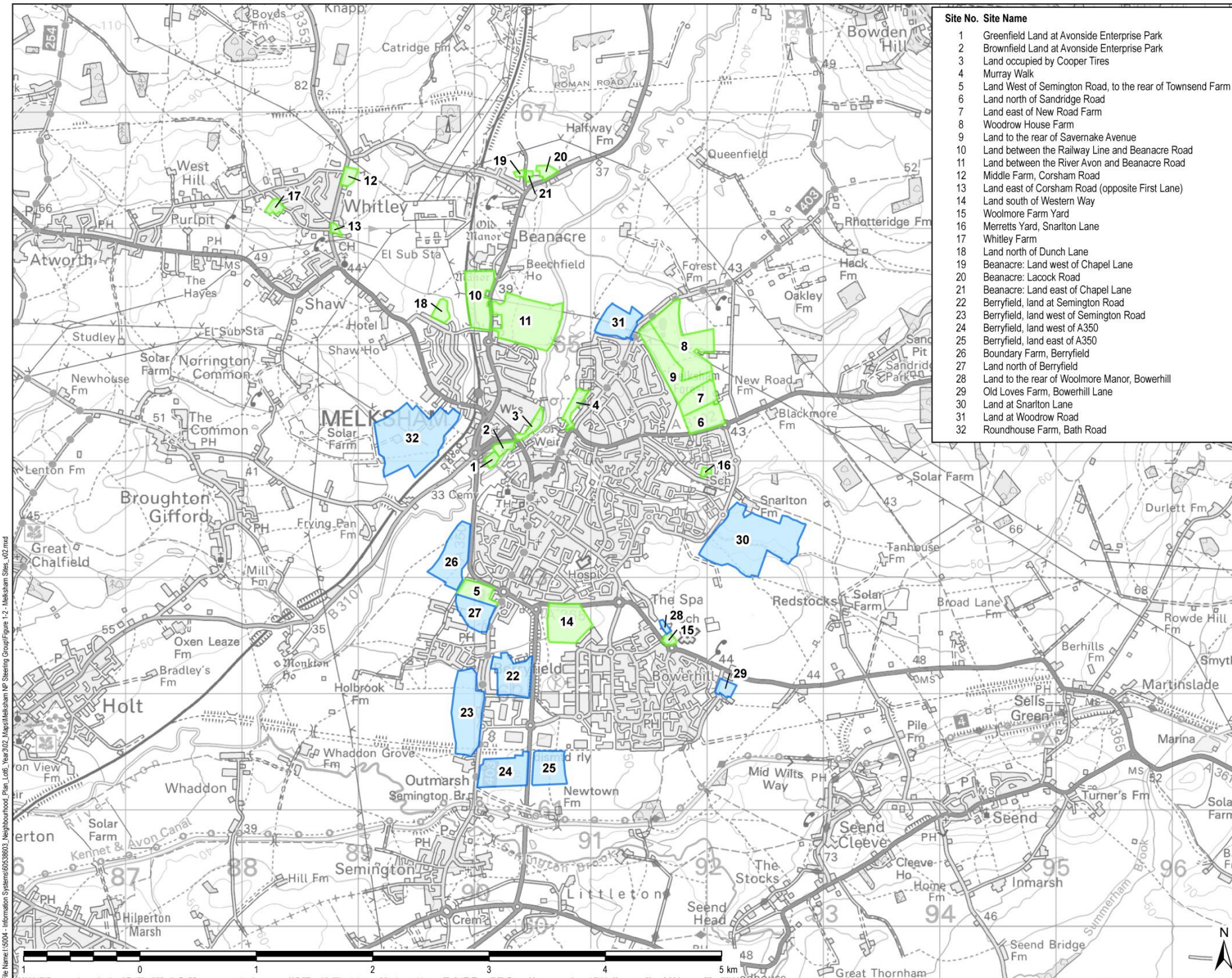
The location of the sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area is shown in Figure 1.2 (overleaf). Those in green are the sites initially assessed in 2017; those in blue are the sites assessed in summer 2018.

Table 1.1: Sites Considered through the Site Appraisal

| Name | Size (ha) |
|---|-----------|
| Stage 1 Sites <i>(assessed between May 2017 and July 2017)</i> | |
| Site 1: Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | 1.18 |
| Site 2: Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | 1.48 |
| Site 3: Land occupied by Cooper Tires | 2.26 |
| Site 4: Murray Walk | 3.31 |
| Site 5: Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm | 5.39 |
| Site 6: Land north of Sandridge Road | 6.16 |
| Site 7: Land west of New Road Farm | 5.58 |
| Site 8: Woodrow House Farm | 17.63 |
| Site 9: Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue | 12.41 |
| Site 10: Land between the Railway Line and Beanacre Road | 10.19 |
| Site 11: Land between the River Avon and Beanacre Road | 20.64 |
| Site 12: Middle Farm, Corsham Road | 1.60 |
| Site 13: Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane) | 0.65 |

⁶ Wiltshire Council (2017): 'Wiltshire SHELAA Appendix 5.9: Melksham Community Area', [online] available to download via: http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-monitoring-evidence#collapse0_717089 last accessed [24/09/18]

| Name | Size (ha) |
|---|------------------|
| Site 14: Land south of Western Way | 7.70 |
| Site 15: Woolmore Farm Yard | 0.89* |
| Site 16: Merretts Yard, Snarlton Lane | 0.52* |
| Site 17: Whitley Farm | 1.33* |
| Site 18: Land north of Dunch Lane | 2.16 |
| Site 19: Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane | 0.58 |
| Site 20: Beanacre: Lacock Road | 1.62 |
| Site 21: Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane | 0.46 |
| Stage 2 Sites (<i>assessed between July 2018 and September 2018</i>) | |
| Site 22: Berryfield, land at Semington Road | 9.64* |
| Site 23: Berryfield, land west of Semington Road | 20.01 |
| Site 24: Berryfield, land west of A350 | 13.49 |
| Site 25: Berryfield, land east of A350 | 8.26 |
| Site 26: Boundary Farm, Berryfield | 15.47 |
| Site 27: Land north of Berryfield | 8.01 |
| Site 28: Land to the rear of Woolmore Manor, Bowerhill | 1.22 |
| Site 29: Old Loves Farm, Bowerhill Lane | 1.97 |
| Site 30: Land at Snarlton Lane | 33.32 |
| Site 31: Land at Woodrow Road | 7.83 |
| Site 32: Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road | 29.53 |



| Site No. | Site Name |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park |
| 2 | Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park |
| 3 | Land occupied by Cooper Tires |
| 4 | Murray Walk |
| 5 | Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm |
| 6 | Land north of Sandridge Road |
| 7 | Land east of New Road Farm |
| 8 | Woodrow House Farm |
| 9 | Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue |
| 10 | Land between the Railway Line and Beanacre Road |
| 11 | Land between the River Avon and Beanacre Road |
| 12 | Middle Farm, Corsham Road |
| 13 | Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane) |
| 14 | Land south of Western Way |
| 15 | Woolmore Farm Yard |
| 16 | Merrets Yard, Snarlton Lane |
| 17 | Whitley Farm |
| 18 | Land north of Dunch Lane |
| 19 | Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane |
| 20 | Beanacre: Lacock Road |
| 21 | Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane |
| 22 | Berryfield, land at Semington Road |
| 23 | Berryfield, land west of Semington Road |
| 24 | Berryfield, land west of A350 |
| 25 | Berryfield, land east of A350 |
| 26 | Boundary Farm, Berryfield |
| 27 | Land north of Berryfield |
| 28 | Land to the rear of Woolmore Manor, Bowerhill |
| 29 | Old Loves Farm, Bowerhill Lane |
| 30 | Land at Snarlton Lane |
| 31 | Land at Woodrow Road |
| 32 | Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road |

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LEGEND

- Stage 1 Sites
- Stage 2 Sites

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Purpose of Issue: **DRAFT**

Client: **MELKSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Project Title: **SITE ASSESSMENT FOR THE MELKSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title: **SITES CONSIDERED THROUGH THE SITE ASSESSMENT FOR THE MELKSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

| | | | |
|--|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Drawn CN | Checked JW | Approved RP | Date 21/09/2018 |
| AECOM Internal Project No. 60504464 | | Scale @ A3 1:30,000 | |

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Rev: **01**

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2. Methodology for the site appraisal

2.1 Introduction

Site selection and allocations is one of the most contentious aspects of planning, raising strong feelings amongst local people, landowners, builders and businesses. It is important that any selection process carried out is transparent, fair, robust and defensible and that the same criteria and thought process is applied to each potential site. Equally important is the way in which the work is recorded and communicated to interested parties so the approach is transparent and defensible.

The approach undertaken to the site appraisal is based primarily on the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (Housing and Economic Assessment of Land Availability)⁷ published in 2014 with ongoing updates, which contains guidance on the assessment of land availability and the production of a SHLAA as part of a local authority's evidence base for a Local Plan.

Although a Neighbourhood Plan is at a smaller scale than a Local Plan, the criteria for assessing the suitability of sites for housing are still appropriate. This includes an assessment of whether a site is suitable, available and achievable.

In this context, the methodology for carrying out the site appraisal is presented below.

2.2 Task 1: Development of site assessment pro-forma

Prior to carrying out the appraisal, site appraisal pro-formas were developed. The purpose of the pro-forma is to enable a consistent evaluation of each site through the consideration of an established set of parameters against which each site can be then appraised.

The pro-forma utilised for the assessment enables a range of information to be recorded, including the following:

- Background details on the site;
- Existing land uses;
- Surrounding land uses;
- Site characteristics;
- Site planning history;
- Suitability;
- Accessibility;
- Environmental considerations;
- Community facilities and services;
- Heritage considerations;
- Flood risk;
- Existing infrastructure;
- Land ownership; and
- Site availability.

⁷ GOV UK (2014): 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' [online] available to access via: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment> last accessed [08/03/17]

2.3 Task 2: Initial desk study

The second task involved conducting a desk study for each of the sites, obtaining the preliminary information needed to complete the pro-formas and highlighting areas which should be examined in more detail during the subsequent site visits (Task 3).

2.4 Task 3: Site visit

After the completion of the initial desk study, site visits to the Neighbourhood Plan area were undertaken by two members of the AECOM Neighbourhood Planning team on Thursday 13th July 2017 and Tuesday 31st July 2018. The purpose of the site visits was to evaluate the sites 'on the ground' to support the site appraisals, in addition to gaining a better understanding of the context and nature of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

2.5 Task 4: Consolidation of results

Following the site visits, further desk-based research was carried out to validate the findings of the visit and to enable the results of the site appraisal to be consolidated.

Section 4 of this report present a summary of the site appraisals for each of the 32 sites considered in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with the completed pro-forma for each site available to view in **Appendix A**.

3. Indicative housing capacity

The indicative housing capacity for each of the sites has been calculated utilising the methodology outlined below.

In terms of housing density, the methodology assumes a density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) for all sites. This figure does not necessarily equate to the amount of land that is suitable for development, as, for larger sites, land needs to be allocated for non-housing uses, for example community facilities and open space (the net development area).

To address this, the methodology provides ratios to calculate the net housing density based on the size of sites. The approach is based on the notion that: the bigger the site, the more land that needs to be put over for non-housing uses. The ratios are provided below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Net Housing Density

| Area | Gross to net ratio standards | Net Housing Density |
|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Up to 0.4 ha | 90% | 30 |
| 0.4 ha to 2 ha | 80% | 30 |
| 2 ha to 10 ha | 75% | 30 |
| Over 10 ha | 50% | 30 |

The indicative numbers of dwellings for each site is shown in Table 3.2 below, and have been calculated by AECOM using the above methodology. It should be noted that these densities are for comparative purposes, and for a number of sites, the indicative number generated might not be achievable due to the presence of significant environmental constraints (i.e. its location within a flood zone, or topographical barriers). Those sites in Table 3.2 which are starred are those which have been calculated using the methodology. All other indicative numbers have been taken from the SHLAA. The SHLAA uses the 'suitable area' of the site to calculate their indicative number, rather than using the total area of the site – and is a more detailed approach. This is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Indicative number of dwellings for each site within the Neighbourhood Plan area

| Name | Size | Indicative Number of Dwellings |
|---|------|--------------------------------|
| Site 1: Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | 1.18 | 28 |
| Site 2: Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | 1.48 | 35 |
| Site 3: Land occupied by Cooper Tires | 2.26 | 51 |
| Site 4: Murray Walk | 3.31 | 74 |
| Site 5: Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm | 5.39 | 121 |
| Site 6: Land north of Sandridge Road | 6.16 | 138 |
| Site 7: Land east of New Road Farm | 5.58 | 125 |

| Name | Size | Indicative Number of Dwellings |
|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Site 8: Woodrow House Farm | 17.63 | 264 |
| Site 9: Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue | 12.41 | 186 |
| Site 10: Land between the Railway Line and Beanacre Road | 10.19 | 152 |
| Site 11: Land between the River Avon and Beanacre Road | 20.64 | 309 |
| Site 12: Middle Farm, Corsham Road | 1.60 | 38 |
| Site 13: Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane) | 0.65 | 15 |
| Site 14: Land south of Western Way | 7.70 | 173 |
| Site 15: Woolmore Farm Yard | 0.89* | 21 |
| Site 16: Merretts Yard, Snarlton Lane | 0.52* | 12 |
| Site 17: Whitley Farm | 1.33* | 31 |
| Site 18: Land north of Dunch Lane | 2.16 | 48 |
| Site 19: Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane | 0.58 | 13 |
| Site 20: Beanacre: Lacock Road | 1.62 | 38 |
| Site 21: Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane | 0.46 | 11 |
| Site 22: Berryfield, land at Semington Road | 9.64* | 216 |
| Site 23: Berryfield, land west of Semington Road | 20.01 | 300 |
| Site 24: Berryfield, land west of A350 | 13.49 | 202 |
| Site 25: Berryfield, land east of A350 | 8.26 | 185 |
| Site 26: Boundary Farm, Berryfield | 15.47 | 232 |
| Site 27: Land north of Berryfield | 8.01 | 180 |
| Site 28: Land to the rear of Woolmore Manor, Bowerhill | 1.22 | 29 |
| Site 29: Old Loves Farm, Bowerhill Lane | 1.97 | 47 |
| Site 30: Land at Snarlton Lane | 33.32 | 499 |
| Site 31: Land at Woodrow Road | 7.83 | 176 |
| Site 32: Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road | 29.53 | 443 |

Chapter 4 below presents a summary of the appraisal findings of the sites assessed in summer 2017; Chapter 5 subsequently presents a summary of the appraisal findings of the sites assessed in summer 2018.

4. Summary of site appraisals: sites considered in summer 2017

4.1 Site 1: Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park



4.1.1 Site Development Potential

'Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park' is approximately 1.18 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 28 dwellings. The site is currently undeveloped and is accessible from the existing highways network, via Bradford Road.

Topographically, the site is flat, with short views in and out towards the River Avon to the south, and businesses to the north and north east. Given its central location within the built-up area of Melksham, the site is within 400 m of the local town centre which contains a variety of shops, public transport links and open space facilities, including the King George V Park and Millennium Riverside Walk. The site is not constrained by significant landscape considerations or historic features.

4.1.2 Key Constraints

The whole of the site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, with land and properties in these zones having a high probability of flooding. As such, a flood risk assessment will need to be completed prior to any development on the site.

To access Bradford Road, access to the site would be through an existing garage to the north.

From an ecological perspective, there is deciduous woodland BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) priority habitat located directly at the southern boundary of the site. There is the possibility of bats roosting within any mature trees and the possibility of breeding birds nesting.

The site is within a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) where 48.8% of properties are not connected to the gas grid, shown on the 'non-gas map'⁸ for the UK. Used within Office for National Statistics datasets, LSOAs are geographical areas across the UK which are generated to be as consistent in population size as possible, with each LSOA typically containing a population of 1500 (on average).

4.1.3 Recommendations

The site currently comprises undeveloped land within the settlement boundary, located adjacent to a sub-station and existing businesses.

Whilst mixed-use development at this site would fit within the existing context of this built up part of Melksham, the site is also constrained by flood risk and biodiversity considerations.

⁸ Non-Gas Map (2018): 'Interactive Map Interface', [online] available to access via: <<https://www.nongasmap.org.uk/>>

Given these constraints, there may be potential for the land to be allocated as open space with a limited amount of development, perhaps in association with the redevelopment of 'Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park' (SHLAA reference 3334) for mixed uses.

4.2 Site 2: Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park



4.2.1 Site Development Potential

'Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park' is approximately 1.48 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 35 dwellings. The site is currently developed; containing small and medium sized businesses, and is accessible from the existing highways network via New Broughton Road located directly to the north-west of the site.

Topographically the site is flat, and is highly visible from the bridge over the River Avon and from approximately ten residential properties on New Broughton Road.

Given its central location within the built-up area of Melksham, the site is within 400 m of the local town centre which contains a variety of shops, public transport links and open space facilities, including the King George V Park and Millennium Riverside Walk. As the site is currently brownfield land, redevelopment of the site would not significantly increase the built-up area of Melksham.

4.2.2 Key Constraints

From a historical character perspective, the existing chimney on the north east corner of the site is a local landmark. Additionally, there are two Grade II listed buildings directly to the east of the site, including the bridge over the River Avon. Given the close proximity to the river, the site is also located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, with the land having a high probability of flooding.

At the southern boundary of the site there is a corridor of deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat, which is a potentially suitable habitat for bats and breeding birds.

The site is within a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) where 48.8% of properties are not connected to the gas grid,

4.2.3 Recommendations

Redevelopment of the site would lead to the potential loss of numerous small and medium sized businesses on the site. These would have to be relocated, potentially undermining the economic vitality of the area.

The site is within a flood risk area. It is however raised above the level of the River Avon, and no recent flooding events have occurred on the existing built up area of the site. Further studies would however need to be undertaken in conjunction with the provisions of the NPPF and the exception text.

However, if these constraints can be overcome, the site would be appropriate for mixed use development of high quality design, accompanied by green infrastructure provision. This provides a significant opportunity; such development has the potential to improve the setting of the area through enhancing the quality of the public realm, improving townscape character and opening up the north side of the river through green infrastructure enhancements.

4.3 Site 3: Land occupied by Cooper Tires



4.3.1 Site Development Potential

'Land occupied by Cooper Tires' is approximately 2.26 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 51 dwellings. The site is currently developed. There is existing access into the western section of the site via a turning from the A 3102 (Bath Road).

Given its central location within the built-up area of Melksham, the site is within 400 m of the local town centre which contains a variety of shops, local schools, public transport links and open space facilities, including the King George V Park and Millennium Riverside Walk.

Topographically the site is flat, and is highly visible from both the riverside and from King George V Park on the far side of the river. As the site is currently brownfield land, redevelopment of the site would not increase the built-up area of Melksham, and offers significant potential for enhancements to the public realm.

4.3.2 Key Constraints

From a historical character perspective, there are two Grade II listed buildings directly to the west of the site, including the bridge over the River Avon. However, redevelopment of the site offers significant opportunities for enhancing the setting of these features.

Given the close proximity to the river, the site is also located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, with the land and property having a high probability of flooding.

At the southern boundary of the site there is a corridor of deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat, and is a potentially suitable habitat for bats and breeding birds.

The site is within a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) where 48.8% of properties are not connected to the gas grid,

4.3.3 Recommendations

The site is a high visible brownfield site which currently detracts from the quality of the townscape. Subject to the exception test in relation to existing flood risk, redevelopment of the site for mixed use development and green infrastructure uses therefore provides significant opportunities for enhancing the quality of the public realm at this accessible location; helping to deliver high quality housing and employment provision.

The site also offers significant opportunities for further enhancing and opening up the riverside area of this part of Melksham, linking with key existing and proposed green and blue infrastructure networks.

4.4 Site 4: Murray Walk



4.4.1 Site Development Potential

'Murray Walk' is approximately 3.31 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 74 dwellings. The site is currently undeveloped, and is used for agricultural purposes. There is existing access into the site from Lowbourne, via an existing double roundabout.

Given its central location within Melksham, the site is within 400 m of the town centre which contains a variety of shops and public transport links. In regards to open space, the King George V Park and Millennium Riverside Walk are located directly to the south west of the site. The site is not constrained by any historical environmental features.

Topographically the site is flat to gently sloping, and has short to medium views over the riverside area and properties on Bowmans Court and Murray Walk, and is visible from both the riverside and from King George V Park on the far side of the river. Development of the site would be an extension to the central-northern section of Melksham, although still within the built-up area of the settlement.

4.4.2 Key Constraints

From a landscape perspective, the site provides a green context to the area in the sense that it is close to the River Avon and it is intersected by Murray Walk, which is a key pedestrian and cycle link joining the Millennium Riverside Walk. Development at this location would have impacts on landscape character in this part of Melksham.

The northern and western boundaries of the site are directly adjacent to land located within Flood Zone 2 and 3. However, the site slopes up from these areas to the south, significantly reducing the flood risk.

From an ecological perspective, there are a number of possible mature trees along Murray Walk and within land extending towards the river which are potentially suitable for bats and breeding birds.

4.4.3 Recommendations

Development of the site would lead to impacts to biodiversity and significant landscape impacts given the current 'green context' the site offers to the riverside area and from key green infrastructure assets. Part of the site is also subject to flooding, although this is not a significant issue as the site slopes up from these areas.

The site has good access by walking and cycling and is accessible to existing services and facilities. The site is accessible from Lowbourne, where there is an existing double roundabout. This access would potentially need to be improved.

4.5 Site 5: Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm



4.5.1 Site Development Potential

'Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm' is approximately 5.39 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 121 dwellings. The site is currently undeveloped, and is used for agricultural purposes. The site is not constrained by historic environment constraints.

Topographically the site is flat and is screened on all boundaries by trees. As such, there are no medium or long distance views from the site, although the site is visible from some properties to the east at Townsend Farm.

4.5.2 Key Constraints

From an ecological perspective, there is deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat located directly beyond the north western corner of the site. This woodland habitat is potentially suited for bats, with connecting hedgerow providing suitable foraging grounds. Additionally, the ponds located to the west of the site might be suitable for Great Crested newts.

Whilst there is existing access into the eastern section of the site via a turning from Berryfield Lane, the current access into the site is not adequate for any proposed development, and Berryfield Lane is unsuitable for motorised traffic. At the northern boundary of the site, Western Way is a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the town centre, and existing crossing points of the road are poor.

Whilst the site has not recently been surveyed, given the presence of such land on adjoining land, the site is likely to comprise land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land.

In May 2017, application 17/01095/OUT for the development of 160 residential developments was refused permission.

4.5.3 Recommendations

The site is located outside of the existing settlement boundary of Melksham town, and whilst the site has not recently been surveyed, the site is likely to comprise land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Western Way is a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the town centre, and existing crossing points of the road are poor. Access to the site via Berryfield Lane is insufficient given the current unsuitability of the road for motorised traffic.

Access, safety and traffic issues therefore provide significant constraints to what is an otherwise relatively unconstrained site. As such the site is less appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.6 Site 6: Land north of Sandridge Road



4.6.1 Site Development Potential

'Land north of Sandridge Road' is approximately 6.16 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 138 dwellings. The site is currently undeveloped and is used for agricultural purposes. Agricultural land at this location has been classified as Grade 3b and is therefore only of moderate quality.

Development on the site comprises an extension of the north-eastern section of the built-up area of Melksham. However, the site is within 400 m of local shops along the A 3102 and Church Lane, and within close proximity to the Forest and Sandridge Primary School to the east.

In June 2017, planning application 17/01096/REM was approved with conditions in June 2017 on the reserved matters for the development of 100 dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, parking, landscaping and local area of play on SHLAA site 3103 (directly adjacent to the western boundary of the site). The site has good access from the highways network.

Topographically the site is flat, with only short views in and out of the site due to the screening from hedgerows and trees. The site is not constrained by flood issues or historic environmental features, although the Grade II listed 'Blackmore House' is located approximately 250 m to the east.

4.6.2 Key Constraints

From an ecological perspective, there is a small drainage ditch passing through the centre of the site, which is potentially home to protected species. Land immediately adjacent to the ditch is located within Flood Risk Zone 2.

4.6.3 Recommendations

The site is relatively unconstrained, and is relatively accessible to services and facilities and the road network. As such the site is appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.7 Site 7: Land west of New Road Farm



4.7.1 Site Development Potential

'Land west of New Road Farm' is approximately 5.58 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 125 dwellings. The site is currently undeveloped and is used for agricultural purposes. The agricultural land is classified as Grade 3b and is therefore only of moderate quality.

Development on the site would be an extension of the north-eastern section of the built-up area of Melksham. However, the site is within 400 m of local shops along the A 3102 and Church Lane, and within close proximity to the Forest and Sandridge Primary School to the east.

In June 2017, planning application 17/01096/REM was approved with conditions in June 2017 on the reserved matters for the development of 100 dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, parking, landscaping and local area of play on SHLAA site 3103 (directly adjacent to the western boundary of the site). Therefore, development has the potential to complement future development on 3103.

Topographically the site is flat, with only short views in and out of the site due to the screening from hedgerows and trees. The site is not constrained by flood issues and heritage features, although the Grade II listed 'Blackmore House' is located approximately 250 m to the south east.

4.7.2 Key Constraints

There is currently no direct access into the site from the existing highways network, with the north eastern section of the site almost reachable via New Road Farm. Extending the access from New Road is a potential issue, as this road is quite narrow, and currently comprises a 'rat run', connecting residents from south-east Melksham to the A350 north by avoiding the busy Western Way-Beanacre Road route. However development in tandem with neighbouring SHLAA site 3103 and 'Land north of Sandridge Road' (Site 6) could create suitable access routes.

From an ecological perspective, there is a small drainage ditch passing through the centre of the site, which is potentially home to protected species. Land immediately adjacent to the ditch is located within Flood Risk Zone 2.

4.7.3 Recommendations

The site is relatively unconstrained, and given the existing screening of the site, residential development is unlikely to lead to significant impacts on landscape or townscape character.

Although there are existing access issues into the site, development in tandem with neighbouring SHLAA site 3103 and 'Land north of Sandridge Road' (Site 6) could create suitable access routes. As such the site is appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.8 Site 8: Woodrow House Farm



4.8.1 Site Development Potential

'Woodrow House Farm' is approximately 17.63 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 264 dwellings. The site is currently undeveloped and is used for agricultural purposes, with cattle grazing in the north western field. The agricultural land is classified as Grade 3b and is therefore only of moderate land quality.

The site is within 800 m of local shops along the A 3102 and Church Lane, and is also within 800 m of the Forest and Sandridge Primary School to the east. Additionally, the northern section of the site is adjacent to Woodrow Road, part of the National Cycle Network Route 403

Topographically the site is flat, with views into the northern section of the site from residential properties on Woodrow Road. There are long views to the east of the site over patches of deciduous woodland on the hills surrounding Sandridge Park.

4.8.2 Key Constraints

Development of the site would have significant impacts on views from properties on Woodrow Road to the north, and would comprise a significant change to the built form and 'green' perspective to this part of Melksham. Development on the site would be separate from the built up part of Melksham without the development of Site 9.

The north eastern section of the site is located within Flood Zone 2 and 3, and will therefore require a flood risk assessment prior to development. The drainage ditch passing through the eastern section of the site presents a biodiversity constraint, as it might be suitable for protected species. Further constraints include the two Grade II listed buildings directly to the north of the site, at Woodrow Farm, and also the power line passing through the central section of the site.

4.8.3 Recommendations

Development on this site would be in contrast to existing land uses and would lead to impacts on landscape and townscape character in this part of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Development of the site would contrast with the existing settlement pattern of this part of Melksham, and, unless developed with Site 9, would be separate from the rest of the town.

Due to these factors, the site is not deemed to be appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.9 Site 9: Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue



4.9.1 Site Development Potential

'Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue' is approximately 12.41 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 186 dwellings. The site is flat, currently undeveloped and has been primarily utilised for agricultural purposes. The agricultural land is classified as Grade 3b and is therefore only of moderate quality.

Development on the site would be an extension of the north-eastern section of the built-up area of Melksham, but would be in keeping with the existing development pattern of this part of Melksham. The site is within 800 m of local shops along the A 3102 and Church Lane, and also within 800 m of the Forest and Sandridge Primary School to the east. Additionally, the northern section of the site is adjacent to Woodrow Road, part of the National Cycle Network Route 403.

4.9.2 Key Constraints

There are two Grade II listed buildings directly to the north east of the site. There is also a high voltage power line passing through the centre of the site (east to west). The site is within a Minerals Resource Zone.

There are views into the northern section of the site from residential properties on Woodrow Road and long views to the east to the hills surrounding Sandridge Park.

Although there are good access points into the north western section of the site, and through a possible extension of a road off Savernake Avenue into the eastern section, development on the site would increase the amount of traffic on Woodrow Road, currently part of the 'rat run' to the A 350 in the north.

4.9.3 Recommendations

The site may be appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan if constraints can be overcome, including the presence of the high voltage power line, and the impact on views from surrounding properties.

4.10 Site 10: Land between the Railway Line and Beanacre Road



4.10.1 Site Development Potential

'Land between the Railway Line and Beanacre Road' is approximately 10.19 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 152 dwellings. The site is currently agricultural land, and development of the site would extend the north western section of the town. Although the site is outside of the existing built-up area, it is within 400 m of local shops and transport links.

Topographically the site is flat, and views both in and out of the site are screened by trees. The site is not constrained by flood risk.

4.10.2 Key Constraints

Land within the site boundary is classified as Grade 3a, and is therefore of good quality for agricultural uses. It is one of only a few sites considered classified as land comprising the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.

From an ecological perspective, there is a green corridor connecting to deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat to the north of the site at Beanacre Manor, which is potentially suitable for bats and breeding birds.

There are a number of listed buildings to the north of the site associated with Beanacre Manor, although these are screened by deciduous woodland. Two further Grade II listed buildings are located next to the north western corner of the site.

Access to the site would likely be via the A350, which is currently heavily trafficked, and has the potential to lead to road safety issues. A high voltage power line crosses the site from west to east.

4.10.3 Recommendations

Development of the site would comprise a significant extension to the northern part of Melksham. Given its location along the A 350 (Beanacre Road), development would increase traffic and road safety issues on this busy corridor.

The ecological and agricultural constraints are particularly significant in the local context. Additional constraints include access issues and the high voltage power line passing through the site. As such it is considered that the site is not appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.11 Site 11: Land between the River Avon and Beanacre Road



4.11.1 Site Development Potential

'Land between the River Avon and Beanacre Road' is approximately 20.64 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 309 dwellings. Although the site is outside the existing built-up area, it is within 400 m of local shops and transport links.

Topographically the site is flat, and there are long views out into the surrounding areas. Development of the site would fit within the context of residential and commercial areas to the south, and access is good, with potential access points from Tamar Road and Trent Crescent to the south.

4.11.2 Key Constraints

Land within the north western part of the site is classified as Grade 3a, and is therefore of good quality for agricultural uses. Other than an area of land at the eastern boundary (which is Grade 3b), the rest of the site is classified as Grade 2 agricultural land. As such most of the site comprises land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land.

From an ecological perspective, there is deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat to the north west of the site at Beechfield House Hotel and the River Avon is adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. Protected species have the potential to be present in both areas.

Land towards the eastern boundary of the site (near to the River Avon) is within Flood Zone 2 and 3, and at high risk from flooding. Therefore, a flood risk assessment will be required on this section of the site prior to any development.

From a heritage perspective, there are two Grade II listed buildings located close to the north western corner of the site, associated with Beechfield House. A high voltage power line crosses the site from west to east, and a public footpath runs from north to south.

4.11.3 Recommendations

Whilst the site could deliver a significant number of houses, there are a number of constraints to development on the site, including relating to flood risk, biodiversity constraints and the presence of a high voltage power line. Development would also lead to the loss of significant areas of land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land. As such it is considered that the site is not appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.12 Site 12: Middle Farm, Corsham Road



4.12.1 Site Development Potential

'Middle Farm, Corsham Road' is approximately 1.60 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 38 dwellings. The site is currently utilised as agricultural land (arable crops), and development of the site would extend the north western corner of the town. Although the site is outside the existing built-up area of the town, it is within 400 m of Shaw Primary School and within 800 m of public transport links on Corsham Road.

Topographically the site is gently sloping from the north-west to the south-east, although the majority of the site is flat. There are short views into the site from the residential properties to the west, but these are screened by a hedgerow along the boundary. No flood risk zones are present on the site.

4.12.2 Key Constraints

The site is accessible from Corsham Road, however this has the potential to increase traffic and place additional pressures on the 'rat run' from Tops Lane and Westlands Lane, directly north of the site.

The land currently comprises productive agricultural land, although it is uncertain whether the land comprises the best and most versatile agricultural land. There is a public footpath along the northern boundary of the site, between the arable crop plantation and a species rich hedgerow of potential biodiversity importance. Although the footpath is poorly maintained, it is signposted from Corsham Road and links the villages of Whitley and Beanacre, past the electricity substation. The site is within a Minerals Resource Zone.

4.12.3 Recommendations

The site may be appropriate for taking forward as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. However there are a number of constraints which would need to be overcome to enable development, including potential impacts on the road network.

4.13 Site 13: Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane)



4.13.1 Site Development Potential

'Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane)' is approximately 0.65 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 15 dwellings. The site is currently undeveloped amenity grassland, and development of the site would extend the south western built up part of Whitley. The site is within 400 m of Shaw Primary School, public transport services stopping along Corsham Lane, and Whitley Golf Course.

Topographically the site is gently sloping from the north-west to the south-east, although the majority of the site is flat. The site is not constrained by flood risk issues.

Access would be via an extension to the track into the north-western section of the site, accessed via a turning from Corsham Road.

4.13.2 Key Constraints

Although there are no heritage assets directly on site, the spire of the Grade II* listed Christ Church to the south can be observed in the northern section of the site. Additionally, there are two Grade II listed buildings approximately 100m to the west of the site. There are direct views into the site from the four residential properties to the west, with some slight screening from the hedgerows that form the site boundaries.

From an ecological perspective, there is a row of semi-mature trees along the southern site boundary which might be suitable for bats. This corridor connects to adjacent tree corridors and hedgerows within the grounds of Whitley Golf Course and surrounding agricultural land to the east of the site.

Although the site is within close proximity to Shaw Primary School, any increase to the number of younger residents in the area could place pressures on the capacity of the school. Additionally, parents are currently utilising the banks and verges off Corsham Road as a pick-up and drop-off point. Development on the site would remove land contributing to the 'green-gap' between the villages of Whitley and Shaw, potentially impacting the village-scape.

4.13.3 Recommendations

The site is relatively unconstrained, with no significant landscape or biodiversity designations. The site is also located outside of the boundary of any flood risk zones, has good access, and is close to local public transport links into Melksham town centre. As such the site is considered as appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.14 Site 14: Land south of Western Way



4.14.1 Site Development Potential

'Land south of Western Way' is approximately 7.70 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 173 dwellings. The site is currently undeveloped Grade 3b agricultural land, and is therefore only of moderate quality. The site is not constrained by flood risk issues. Additionally, there are no heritage assets directly in or within the setting of the site.

Topographically the site is slightly sloping, with views onto Bowerhill Industrial Estate to the south and south east. Long, open views are constrained by the line of trees passing through the site. Access to the north western section of the site is currently possible from the existing highways network, via a turning from Western Way. This track would need to be lengthened and widened to create a two-way entrance point into the site and the junction improved with Western Way.

4.14.2 Key Constraints

Development of the site would extend the southern boundary of the built-up area of Melksham across Western Way. The site contributes to a green gap between Melksham and the village of Bowerhill. Whilst the approval of planning applications for up to 235 dwellings to the east of the site (16/01123/OUT), and 150 dwellings on land to the west of the site (16/00497/OUT) will remove land contributing to this green gap, and significantly changing the townscape and villagescape development at this location will further erode the separation of the settlements.

Significant residential development to the east and west of the site is likely to increase traffic along the Western Way, a key route through the Neighbourhood Plan area. This has the potential to impact on air quality. Additional development at this location is likely to increase these effects. There are also potential safety concerns as children will need to cross this road to reach the Aloeric Primary School to the north of the site.

From an ecological perspective, there is a row of semi-mature trees along the southern site boundary which might be suitable for protected species. This corridor connects to adjacent tree corridors and hedgerows, including a row of trees extending north/south through the centre of the site.

4.14.3 Recommendations

From a location perspective, Land South of Western Way has a key role in maintaining the green gap between the settlements of Melksham and Bowerhill, protecting their distinctive character. From a highways perspective, the other main constraint to development relates to future traffic issues and road safety issues. However, the approval of planning applications on land located directly to the east and west of the site is subject to a variety of conditions relating to highway improvements. As such, the site is potentially suitable to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, providing the outlined constraints are resolved.

4.15 Site 15: Woolmore Farm Yard



4.15.1 Site Development Potential

'Woolmore Farm Yard' is approximately 0.89 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 21 dwellings. The site currently comprises a number of disused buildings on brownfield land. The site is within the built-up area of Bowerhill, and development would complement the surrounding residential areas and be located near to the Melksham Oak Secondary School. The site is not constrained by flood risk issues.

Topographically the site is flat, with views into the site from the surrounding properties relatively screened.

Access to the site is achieved via a turning from Bath Road, with the current access considered as suitable for development purposes. Local shops, public transport links and a health centre facility within 400 m of the site boundary.

4.15.2 Key Constraints

From a heritage perspective, the Grade II* listed 'Woolmore Farmhouse' is located in the northern section of the site. There is also a cluster of listed buildings approximately 100 m north of the site. However, development of the site has significant potential to enhance the quality of the built environment in this location. Recommendations

Development at this location presents significant opportunities to enhance the setting of Woolmore Farmhouse and the wider setting of the townscape. The site is predominantly unconstrained, with good access to local amenities and facilities. As such the site is appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.16 Site 16: Merretts Yard, Snarlton Lane



4.16.1 Site Development Potential

'Merretts Yard, Snarlton Lane' is approximately 0.52 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver twelve dwellings. The site is currently mixed-use, but predominantly brownfield land containing a number of buildings utilised as a storage facility. There is a patch of unutilised non-previously developed land at the south western corner of the site.

The site is within the built-up area of Melksham, in the north eastern section of the town. The site is not constrained by flood risk issues and there are no heritage assets directly in or within the setting of the site. Furthermore, the site has limited ecological value, with the exceptions of some hedgerows and minor potential for brownfield biodiversity,

Topographically the site is flat and can be seen from properties on Snarlton Lane, and from the surrounding new build properties. The site is however relatively screened from Snarlton Lane itself. As such, there are no longer distance views out of the site. Development would complement the surrounding residential area and capitalise on the underutilised previously developed nature of the site.

4.16.2 Key Constraints

Access to the site is achieved via a turning from Snarlton Lane, which is a narrow lane, unsuited to significant traffic flows. Although the site is surrounded by a recent mixed-use development containing a variety of services and amenities, it is important to recognise that the site is further than 800 m away from key public transport links and local health care facilities.

4.16.3 Recommendations

Given the existing underutilised previously developed nature of the site, and location within a residential area with relatively few constraints, the site is appropriate for allocating through the Neighbourhood Plan as a residential allocation. Access issues will however need to be addressed through proposals.

4.17 Site 17: Whitley Farm



4.17.1 Site Development Potential

'Whitley Farm' is approximately 1.33 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 31 dwellings. The site is currently brownfield land containing a number of agricultural outbuildings. There is a patch of amenity grassland at the north eastern corner of the site, which comprises a garden area.

The site is located at the western boundary of Whitley. Topographically the site is predominantly flat, but gently slopes to the east.

There are two access points into the northern and eastern sections of the site, via First Lane. The current access considered as suitable for development purposes. . Development would complement the surrounding residential area and capitalise on the underutilised nature of the site.

4.17.2 Key Constraints

Although the site is not within a flood risk zone, there has been previous surface water flooding issues along First Lane.

There are short views into the site from the residential areas surrounding First Lane and there are long views out to the south and west of the site, over the surrounding agricultural land.

From a heritage perspective, there are three Grade II listed buildings within the locality of the site. Buildings on the site may be home to protected species.

4.17.3 Recommendations

The site has minor constraints to development, and development has the potential to be sympathetic to surrounding residential areas and capitalise on the underutilised nature of the site. Although there are three Grade II listed buildings within the locality of the site, development has the potential to enhance the setting of these historic features.

From a community perspective, the inclusion of any flood alleviation schemes, for example through sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) would help to address surface water flooding issues. As such, the site is considered appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.18 Site 18: Land north of Dunch Lane



4.18.1 Site Development Potential

'Land north of Dunch Lane' is approximately 2.16 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 48 dwellings. The site is currently used for agricultural purposes, and is accessible from the existing highways network via Northbrook Road. Development of the site would result in the extension of the western part of the built-up area of Melksham.

Topographically the site is slightly sloping. There is an existing access point into the south eastern section of the site via Northbrook Road, and the site is within 400 m of local shops located on Beanacre Road and a recreational area to the south.

4.18.2 Key Constraints

All of the land within the site boundary is classified as Grade 2 (excellent quality) agricultural land.

From a heritage perspective, there are views of the Grade II* listed Christ Church in the neighbouring village of Shaw, approximately 800 m to the north west of the site. The site is therefore within the setting of this nationally designated feature of historic environment interest.

There are views in from residential properties at the southern boundary of the site, along Dunch Lane and Northbrook Road.

The whole of the site is located within Flood Zone 3, and properties to the north of Dunch Lane have been known to flood. As such, the site would require a flood risk assessment prior to any development. Additionally, South Brook is located along the eastern boundary of the site, and is surrounded by a corridor of trees which extends north towards the deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat surrounding Beanacre Manor. Both the brook and the woodland habitat are potentially significant from an ecological perspective, with the potential for protected species to be present.

4.18.3 Recommendations

The site has a number of locally significant constraints which would provide a constraint for development, including relating to flood risk, biodiversity features, heritage assets and the quality of agricultural land. As such the site is not appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.19 Site 19: Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane



4.19.1 Site Development Potential

'Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane' is approximately 0.58 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver ten dwellings. This agricultural site is currently grazed by alpacas, and is accessible from the existing highway network via a turning from Chapel Lane. Development of the site would result in the northern expansion of the village of Beanacre.

Topographically the site is flat, and there are short views in from residential properties at the southern boundary of the site. There are long views to the north and north-west, over agricultural land.

The site is not constrained by flood risk issues. Additionally, there are no heritage assets directly in or within the setting of the site, with the nearest listed building approximately 100 m to the south of the site, and screened from view by hedgerows and existing residential properties.

4.19.2 Key Constraints

'Daniels Wood' is an ancient and semi-natural woodland habitat located within 400m to the north-west of the site. Although there are no trees directly on the site, the hedgerows along the eastern and western boundary of the site might provide suitable foraging grounds for bats roosting in the neighbouring woodland.

In terms of access, Chapel Lane is a narrow road with a number of 'pinch points' for road access. Additionally, it exits onto a corner section of the A350, one of the busiest routes through Melksham, with safety concerns relating to poor visibility where Chapel Lane joins the A350. As such, there are a number of accessibility issues at this location.

The site is located outside of the built-up area of Melksham town and away from local shops and amenities, local schools and health centre facilities. However, there is a bus stop with regular services into the town centre located within 400 m of the site, located on the A350.

Although the site is not constrained by flood risk issues, it is important to note that there is currently no mains drainage available within Beanacre, presenting an additional constraint to development.

4.19.3 Recommendations

The main constraint to development relates to access issues, the absence of any mains drainage, and its location away from the main built-up area of Melksham. However the site is relatively accessible by public transport. The site may though be appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, if these constraints can be resolved.

4.20 Site 20: Beanacre: Lacock Road



4.20.1 Site Development Potential

'Beanacre: Lacock Road' is approximately 1.62 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 38 dwellings. This site is currently utilised for agricultural purposes, and development of the site would result in the northern expansion of the village of Beanacre. Topographically the site gently slopes towards the south, but is predominantly flat.

The site is not constrained by the water environment, and is outside of the boundary of any flood risk zones. Additionally, there are no heritage assets directly in or within the setting of the site, with the nearest listed building approximately 150 m to the south west of the site, and screened from view by hedgerow and existing residential properties.

4.20.2 Key Constraints

Although there has not been a detailed agricultural land classification assessment undertaken at the site, there is the potential that the land will be of good quality, due to the presence of arable crops.

There are short views in from residential properties at the southern boundary of the site, and longer views to the north over agricultural land. Development would have impacts on landscape and villagescape character at this location.

There is currently no access onto the site. A gated entrance exists towards the south eastern corner which could provide an access point, although a reconfiguration of the access point would be required. Additionally, there are power lines passing through the site.

The site is located outside of the built-up area of Melksham, away from local shops and amenities, local schools and health centre facilities. However, there is a bus stop with regular services into the town centre located within 400m of the site, along the A350.

Although the site is not constrained by flood risk issues, it is important to note that there is currently no mains drainage available within Beanacre, presenting an additional constraint to development.

4.20.3 Recommendations

The main constraints to development surround access issues, its location away from the main built-up area of Melksham, the loss of agricultural land, the absence of any mains drainage and the likely changes to the villagescape of Beanacre.

Given the number of potential constraints, it is recommended that the site is not taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.21 Site 21: Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane



4.21.1 Site Development Potential

'Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane' is approximately 0.46 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver eleven dwellings. This former agricultural site is currently accessible from the existing highway network via a turning from Chapel Lane. Development of the site would result in the northern expansion of the village of Beanacre.

Topographically the site is flat, and there are short views in from residential properties at the southern boundary of the site. There are long views to the north and north-east, across the surrounding agricultural land. Long views to the west are screened by a hedgerow.

The site is not constrained by the water environment, and is outside of the boundary of any flood risk zones. Additionally, there are no heritage assets directly in or within the setting of the site, with the nearest listed building approximately 100 m to the south of the site, and screened from view by hedgerow and existing residential properties.

4.21.2 Key Constraints

In terms of access, Chapel Lane is a narrow road with a number of 'pinch points' for road access. Additionally, it exits onto a corner section of the A350, one of the busiest routes through Melksham, with safety concerns relating to poor visibility where Chapel Lane joins the A350. As such, there are a number of accessibility issues at this location.

The site is located outside of the built-up area of Melksham town and away from local shops and amenities, local schools and health centre facilities. However, there is a bus stop with regular services into the town centre located within 400 m of the site, located on the A350.

Hedgerows along the eastern and western boundary of the site provide important linkages to woodland areas to the north and west of the site.

Although the site is not constrained by flood risk issues, it is important to note that there is currently no mains drainage available within Beanacre, presenting an additional constraint to development.

4.21.3 Recommendations

Constraints to development include associated with access issues, the absence of any mains drainage, and the site's location away from the key services and facilities in Melksham town. However the site is relatively accessible by public transport. As such the site may be appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5. Summary of site appraisals: sites considered in summer 2018

5.1 Site 22: Berryfield, land at Semington Road



5.1.1 Site Development Potential

'Berryfield, land at Semington Road' is approximately 9.64 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 216 dwellings. The site is predominantly agricultural land, with a lane passing through its centre and providing access to the sewage treatment works which is adjacent to the northern site boundary.

Topographically, the site is flat, with views in and out of the site screened by trees along its northern and eastern boundaries. Access into the site is possible from the A350, with bus stops located along Semington Road. There are also a variety of businesses located to the south of the site, including a coffee shop and a restaurant.

From a historic environment perspective, the site does not contain and is not within proximity to a designated heritage asset. Additionally, the site is not constrained by flood risk issues as it is located within Flood Risk Zone 1. Furthermore, the site is not within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development which may be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.1.2 Key Constraints

Although the site is not within proximity to any protected ecological sites, the mature trees located along the site boundaries could potentially support protected species. Nonetheless, these could be retained through development.

In regards to the location of the site, development would reduce the 'green gap' between the distinct settlement area of Bowerhill and Berryfield. However, planning application 17/12514/REM for 150 dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, parking, landscaping and a play park was approved with conditions in May 2018.

5.1.3 Recommendations

Although the site is relatively unconstrained, the planning approval for 150 dwellings through application 17/12514/REM is a significant barrier. As such, the site is considered to be unsuitable to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.2 Site 23: Berryfield, land west of Semington Road, south of Berryfield Lane



5.2.1 Site Development Potential

Situated outside of the existing built up areas of Melksham, 'Berryfield, land west of Semington Road, south of Berryfield Lane' is approximately 20.01 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 300 dwellings.

Topographically, the site is both flat and accessible from the local road network via Semington Road. There are businesses located to the east of the site, including a coffee shop, restaurant and local sports centre.

The site is not constrained by flood risk issues, located entirely within Flood Risk Zone 1. Additionally, the site is not within proximity to any protected ecological sites and does not fall within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development which may be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.2.2 Key Constraints

From a landscape and visual perspective, development of the entire site would significantly change the local character, reducing the 'green gap' between the distinct settlement areas of Berryfield (north of site) and Semington (south of site). There are long views out across the agricultural land to the west, with views into the site from residential properties located along Semington Road.

Although the site is currently used for agricultural purposes, the land is classified as 'Grade 3b' agricultural land and is not the 'Best and Most Versatile'.

There is a Grade II listed building located directly to the south of the site, and another located adjacent to the south eastern corner of the site. Development has the potential to impact upon the setting of these nationally designated heritage assets.

The site is within a LSOA where 39.8% of properties are not connected to the gas grid, as shown on the 'Non-Gas Map' for the UK.

5.2.3 Recommendations

The main constraints to development concern the landscape and visual sensitivities, its distance from the town centre, and the potential impacts to the setting of nationally designated heritage assets in proximity to the site. Additionally, development of the entire site would be unsympathetic to the rural character of the surrounding landscape.

Nonetheless, as the site is predominantly flat, connected to the local road network and not within a flood risk area, it is potentially suitable for development. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site would be appropriate for small scale development of high quality design, accompanied by green infrastructure provision.

5.3 Site 24: Berryfield, land west of A350



5.3.1 Site Development Potential

'Berryfield, land west of A350' is approximately 13.49 ha in size, and has the potential to deliver 202 dwellings. Located within proximity to the distinct settlement area of Bowerhill, the site has relatively good access to local services and facilities.

The site is within 400m to the Kennet and Avon Canal footpath, Route 403 of the National Cycle Network, and a bus stop located along High Street. Therefore, development would enable future users of the site to access sustainable methods of travel. However, access into the site from the existing road network is limited to a single lane from High Street.

Land to the north of the site is occupied by the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Charitable Trust, with planning application 15/10766/OUT approved with conditions in February 2016 for new administrative office spaces, operational offices, multifunctional training facilities, a helipad and approach strip, storage facilities and vehicle wash facilities.

5.3.2 Key Constraints

The site is within a LSOA where 39.8% of properties are not connected to the gas grid.

There are two Grade II listed buildings located to the north west of the site. Development has the potential to impact upon the setting of these nationally designated heritage assets.

The surrounding landscape is predominantly rural, with the site located outside of the built-up area of Melksham town. Therefore, development of the entire site could significantly impact the character of the local landscape and townscape. However, it is important to note that the site is well screened from view, which would reduce the visual impacts from development.

Although the site is not within proximity to any protected ecological sites, the mature trees located along the site boundaries could potentially support protected species. Nonetheless, these could be retained through development.

5.3.3 Recommendations

Landscape sensitivities, heritage issues and access concerns provide constraints to what is otherwise a relatively unconstrained site. Although the site is outside of the built-up area of Melksham, it is within proximity to services in Bowerhill and is relatively accessible via the public transport network.

Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable to take forward for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design.

5.4 Site 25: Berryfield, land east of A350



5.4.1 Site Development Potential

'Berryfield, land east of A350' is approximately 8.26 ha in size and has the potential to deliver 185 dwellings. Located within proximity to the distinct settlement area of Bowerhill, the site has relatively good access to local shops and amenities.

From a historic environment perspective, the site does not contain and is not within proximity to a designated heritage asset. Additionally, the site is not constrained by flood risk issues as it is located within Flood Risk Zone 1. Furthermore, the site is not within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development likely to be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The site is within proximity to local footpaths and cycle routes, with bus stops located along High Street and Semington Road (east of site). Development could encourage future users of the site to use alternative methods of travel. Access into the site from the existing road network is limited to a single lane from the A350.

5.4.2 Key Constraints

In regards to utilities and existing infrastructure, the site is within a LSOA where 39.8% of properties are not connected to the gas grid, as shown on the 'No Gas Map' for the UK. Additionally, there are power lines passing through the southern half of the site (east to west direction).

Although the land to the north east and north west contains commercial and industrial units, the surrounding landscape is predominantly rural in character. Development of the entire site could significantly alter the local townscape, particularly as the site is outside of the built-up areas of Melksham. However, the trees located along the site boundaries provide sufficient visual screening.

Along the northern boundary of the site, there is an area of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat which could potentially support populations of protected species. Similarly, the semi-mature trees located along the remaining site boundaries provide corridors for wildlife, and should therefore be retained through development.

Access into the site from the existing road network is limited to a single lane from the A350.

5.4.3 Recommendations

The main constraints to development include the access concerns, the potential impacts to landscape and townscape character, and the locally important priority habitats which provide corridors for wildlife. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered as being potentially suitable to take forward for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design.

5.5 Site 26: Boundary Farm, Berryfield



5.5.1 Site Development Potential

'Boundary Farm, Berryfield' is approximately 15.47 ha in size and has the potential to deliver 232 dwellings. The site is currently used for agricultural purposes, with the River Avon located approximately 100m from its north western boundary.

The land gently slopes in places but is largely flat, with access into the southern section of the site possible via Berryfield Lane. Located within proximity to Melksham town centre, the site has relatively good access to local services and facilities. Additionally, the local bus network is accessible to the east of the site, with stops situated along Semington Road and King Street.

In regards to the historic environment, the site does not contain and is not within proximity to a designed heritage asset. The Melksham Conservation Area is approximately 200m to the north east. Furthermore, the site is not within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development likely to be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.5.2 Key Constraints

From a townscape perspective, the site is located to the western side of the bypass – outside of the existing built-up area of Melksham. Although development would be contingent with the residential areas to the north east of the site, it would also significantly contrast the surrounding landscape character which is predominantly rural agricultural land.

A detailed agricultural land classification assessment has been completed for the site, with Grade 2 land located within the south western section and Grade 3a land located in the north western section. Therefore, the entire of the site contains land which is considered to be the Best and Most Versatile for agricultural purposes.

Although the site is predominantly within Flood Risk Zone 1, land adjacent to the western site boundary is at high risk of fluvial flooding from the River Avon.

There is an area of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat located close to the eastern site boundary which could potentially support populations of protected species. However, this ecologically important area could be retained through development.

In terms of utilities and existing infrastructure, the site is within a LSOA where 39.8% of properties are not connected to the gas grid. There are power lines passing across the site (north to south direction).

Although access into the site from the existing road network is possible, Berryfield Lane is a small track with limited passing points. Therefore, the road is currently unsuited for frequent use.

5.5.3 Recommendations

Although the Land at 'Boundary Farm, Berryfield' is within proximity to Melksham Town Centre, the site is heavily constrained. In particular, development would result in the loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, and significantly alter the character of the landscape and townscape. Access issues provide an additional constraint and therefore, the site is considered unsuitable to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.6 Site 27: Land north of Berryfield



5.6.1 Site Development Potential

'Land north of Berryfield' is approximately 8.01 ha in size and has the potential to deliver 180 dwellings. The site is a mixture of agricultural fields and farm buildings. A detailed land classification assessment has not been completed for the site.

Existing access into the site is via Berryfield Lane, with a single lane track extending into the western section of the site and connecting to the farm buildings. Melksham town centre is within walking distance from the site, with a variety of local shops located along King Street and High Street.

From an ecological perspective, the site does not overlap with the boundaries of any protected sites, and is not within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development which is likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan. Additionally, the site does not contain and is not within proximity to a designated heritage asset. Furthermore, the site is not constrained by flood risk issues as it is located within Flood Risk Zone 1.

5.6.2 Key Constraints

The site is within a LSOA where 39.8% of properties are not connected to the gas grid.

Although development of the site would be contingent with the residential properties to the east, along Semington Road, the site would remain separate from the existing built-up areas of Melksham. Development could also negatively impact the local townscape character, reducing the 'green gap' between the town and the locally distinctive settlement area of Berryfield.

5.6.3 Recommendations

Landscape and townscape concerns provide constraints to what is otherwise a relatively unconstrained site. In particular, the existing developed areas of the site would be suitable for small-scale regeneration. The agricultural areas of the site are potentially suitable to take forward through the Neighbourhood Plan, providing the development is sensitive to its setting within the landscape, incorporates green infrastructure provisions and establishes appropriate access.

5.7 Site 28: Land to the rear of Woolmore Manor, Bowerhill



5.7.1 Site Development Potential

'Land to the rear of Woolmore Manor, Bowerhill' is approximately 1.22 ha in size and has the potential to deliver 29 dwellings. The site is currently unused Grade 3b agricultural land, and is therefore not classified as the Best and Most Versatile land.

The site is within proximity to residential properties along Bath Road, and is within walking distance from the local shops and facilities along Falcon Way in the distinct settlement area of Bowerhill.

Topographically, the site is predominantly flat and is within an area at low risk of flooding.

5.7.2 Key Constraints

Ecologically, the semi-mature trees located along the western and northern site boundaries could potentially support populations of protected species. However, these features could be retained through development. There is also an area of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat located to the north of the site.

In regards to historic environment considerations, the site is situated within the setting of the Grade II* listed 'Woolmore Manor' – a nationally designated heritage asset. The Manor is highly visible from both the surrounding landscape and from the site itself, particularly from users of the local footpath which passes through the southern section of the site.

The site is also not currently accessible from the existing road network. Access could be established through Woolmore Farm Yard (see Site 15 of this assessment), however this could increase traffic congestion and road safety issues along Bath Road.

It is important to note that the decision notice for planning application '18/04477/REM' is expected in October 2018. If approved, 213 dwellings will be built on land directly to the west of this site, increasing the number of vehicles using the local road network around Bowerhill.

5.7.3 Recommendations

Development could significantly impact upon the setting of the Grade II* listed 'Woolmore Manor', whilst also precluding views of this nationally designated heritage asset from the footpath passing through the site. Ecological and access issues provide further constraints. As such the site is not appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.8 Site 29: Old Loves Farm, Bowerhill Lane



5.8.1 Site Development Potential

'Old Loves Farm, Bowerhill Lane' is approximately 1.97 ha and has the potential to deliver 47 dwellings. The site is located directly adjacent to the distinct settlement area of Bowerhill, within walking distance from Hornchurch Road playground, Melksham Oak Community School and a variety of shops located along Falcon Way.

Topographically, the site is predominantly flat and is within an area at low risk of flooding.

The site is currently used for agricultural purposes, and is connected to Old Loves Farm. A detailed agricultural land classification has not been completed on site and therefore, it is currently not possible to determine whether the land is the Best and Most Versatile. Additionally, the site is not within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.8.2 Key Constraints

The hedgerows located alongside the site boundaries could potentially support populations of protected species, whilst also providing corridors for wildlife between locally important ecological sites – including to areas of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat to the south west and south east.

In regards to historic environment considerations, the site is situated within the setting of the Grade II listed 'Old Loves Farmhouse', which is located on land directly to the north of the site. Poorly designed development could potentially negatively impact upon the setting of this nationally designated heritage asset. Furthermore,, there are direct views into the site from neighbouring residential properties, including from 'Old Loves Farmhouse'. However, views out of the site are largely screened.

In terms of the planning history, application '16/09948/FUL' for a detached house and garage on land directly to the south of the site (at Little Bowerhill Farm) was refused based on the likely adverse drainage, visual, heritage and highways impacts which, cumulatively, would have significantly outweighed the benefits of developing a new dwelling within the 'open countryside'.

From a townscape perspective, development of the site would establish a new residential area on land to the east of Bowerhill, Lane outside of the existing built-up areas of the settlement. The landscape to the east of Bowerhill Lane is mainly rural agricultural land which is set within open countryside. Therefore, development would potentially be unsympathetic to its existing character. It is also important to note that access into the site via Bowerhill Lane is restricted to a single lane with limited passing points, and is unsuited for frequent use by vehicles.

5.8.3 Recommendations

Whilst the site is within close proximity to local services and facilities in Bowerhill, there are significant constraints to development including relating to landscape and townscape character, the setting of heritage assets and the suitability of the existing access. As planning application '16/09948/FUL for a dwelling and garage on land directly to the south of the site was rejected on similar grounds, it is considered that this site is not appropriate to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.9 Site 30: Land at Snarlton Lane



5.9.1 Site Development Potential

'Land at Snarlton Lane' is approximately 33.32 ha and has the potential to deliver 499 dwellings. Development of this scale would be a significant contrast to the rural nature of the land at present.

Currently used for agricultural purposes, the site forms part of Snarlton Farm which is located on land to the east of the Melksham Bypass (Eastern Way). Land to the west of the bypass has seen significant expansion in recent years, with over 800 homes delivered through planning applications 'W12/00906/REM', 'W/10/01790/REM' and 'W/04/01895/OUTES'.

The site is not constrained by historic environment considerations.

5.9.2 Key Constraints

From a landscape perspective, development would contrast the rural character of the open countryside to the north, east and south of Melksham, a potentially set precedence for future development on agricultural land located to the east of the Bypass.

Ecologically, there is a woodland corridor containing some semi-mature trees which passes through the centre of the site (east to west direction). The corridor borders Clackersbrook, with land approximately 25m either side of this watercourse located within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. Both the watercourse and woodland corridor could potentially support protected species.

The north western section of the site contains Grade 3a agricultural land, which is classified as the Best and Most Versatile for agricultural uses.

Access into the site is not currently possible from the existing road network, with Snarlton Lane in privately owned. Access could potentially be established from the Bypass; however this could increase traffic congestion and road safety issues for the residential community directly to the west of the site.

5.9.3 Recommendations

Flood risk concerns, ecological sensitivities, access issues and the quality of the agricultural land are significant constraints to development. Additionally, development would set precedence for future expansion of Melksham on land to the east of the Bypass, changing the character of the townscape and impacting upon the rural setting of the surrounding landscape to the north, east and south of the site. As such, it is considered that the site is unsuitable to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.10 Site 31: Land at Woodrow Road



5.10.1 Site Development Potential

'Land at Woodrow Road' is approximately 7.83 ha in size and has the potential to deliver 176 dwellings.

Topographically, the site is predominantly flat and is accessible via the existing road network via a turning from Woodrow Road, although this is currently a single lane which has no passing points and poor sight lines. The site is classified as Grade 3b land and is therefore not considered to be the Best and Most Versatile for agricultural uses.

The site has a low ecological value, and is not within proximity to any locally or nationally protected sites. In particular, the site does not overlap with a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.10.2 Key Constraints

In terms of the planning history of the site, application '16/05644/OUT' for the development of up to 77 dwellings was refused in March 2017 due to the fact that the site is located outside of the existing settlement area of Melksham. The decision notice goes on to state that development would have resulted in the loss of open countryside which would cause a degree of harm through the erosion of the rural aspect and approach to Melksham.

Although the site does not contain and is not within the setting of any nationally designated heritage assets, it is important to note that comments from Wiltshire Council Archaeology on planning application '16/05644/OUT' states that the Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record shows medieval settlement remains at the eastern part of the site, and further field boundaries and ridge and furrow across the rest of the site. This is particularly significant from a local heritage perspective.

In terms of visual impacts, the landscape is highly visible from the surrounding countryside, with long views out over the agricultural fields located to the north and west of the site. Residential properties located along Woodrow Road (eastern boundary) and Meadow Road (southern boundary) also have direct views into the site. Development would contrast the predominantly rural character of the surrounding landscape, whilst also setting precedence for an expansion of the built-up area of Melksham on greenfield land to the north of the town.

Although the entirety of the site is at currently at low risk of flooding, it is important to note that a tributary of the River Avon is located approximately 100m to the west of the site, and the land surrounding the tributary is within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. Any future expansion in the built footprint of this area of Melksham could increase surface run-off into the tributary and exacerbate local flood risk issues downstream.

5.10.3 Recommendations

Whilst the site is within proximity to local services and facilities in Melksham town, there are significant constraints to development including relating to landscape and townscape character, the disturbance of locally significant features of archaeological interest, the suitability of the existing access into the site, and its visibility from surrounding areas. As planning application '16/05644/OUT' for 77 residential dwellings was rejected on similar grounds, it is considered that this site is not appropriate to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.11 Site 32: Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road



5.11.1 Site Development Potential

'Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road' is approximately 29.53 ha in size and has the potential to deliver 443 dwellings. The site has good accessibility to the public transport network, and is within walking distance from Melksham train station and bus stops located along Bath Road – north of the site.

Topographically, the site is predominantly flat and is a mixture of agricultural land and farm buildings. A detailed agricultural land classification has not been undertaken for the majority of land within the site boundary.

The site is not constrained by historic environment considerations, and also does not overlap with a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the type of development likely to be proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.11.2 Key Constraints

The site is within a LSOA where 74.1% of properties are not connected to the gas grid, shown on the 'non-gas map' for the UK. Therefore, development could be limited in terms of the options for energy generation.

Ecologically, there is a woodland corridor containing some semi-mature trees which passes through the eastern half of the site (east to west direction). The corridor borders South Brook, with land approximately 100m either side of this watercourse located within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. Both the watercourse and woodland corridor could potentially support protected species. There are further flood risk concerns in the south western section of the site, as another tributary of the River Avon navigates alongside this site boundary.

Land within the north western section of the site is classified as Grade 2, and is therefore some of the Best and Most Versatile land for agricultural purposes.

In terms of visual impacts, the landscape is highly visible from the surrounding countryside, with long views out over the agricultural fields located to the south west, west and north west. There is a local footpath passing directly through the site which enables residents and visitors to Melksham to access these views and experience the rural character of the landscape that surrounds the built-up areas of the town.

5.11.3 Recommendations

The majority of the site has a number of locally significant concerns which would provide a constraint for development, including relating to landscape character and visual amenity value, flood risk issues, agricultural land quality and ecological considerations.

However, providing the constraints can be overcome, the existing developed areas of the site could be suitable for small-scale regeneration of a high quality design, which includes provisions for green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Conclusions and recommendations

This site assessment has considered the 32 sites in the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan area put forward for consideration for inclusion in the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. These have been evaluated utilising the consistent criteria presented in the pro-forma developed by AECOM.

6.2 Housing sites to take forward for the purposes of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Following the completion of the site assessment, it is considered that ten sites are most appropriate for further consideration by the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for taking forward for housing through the Neighbourhood Plan. This is due to the capacity of the sites to deliver housing, their location, and the limited number of constraints present at the sites (see Table 6.1).

In addition to these sites, a further twelve sites are potentially suitable for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan (see **Table 5.1**). These sites however have constraints, including relating to environmental constraints and accessibility issues, that would need to be addressed through further investigation, as well as appropriate design and layout of development.

Table 5.1: Suitability of sites for the purposes of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|---|------|--|
| Site 1: Greenfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | | Potentially Development may not appropriate due to undeveloped nature of the land and flood risk and biodiversity constraints. It may however be appropriate for a limited level of development and open space provision in association with the redevelopment of Site 2. |
| Site 2: Brownfield Land at Avonside Enterprise Park | | Potentially Redevelopment of the site would lead to the potential loss of small to medium businesses. However, if the constraints can be overcome, the site would be appropriate for mixed use development of high quality design, accompanied by green infrastructure provision. |
| Site 3: Land occupied by Cooper Tires | | Yes Mixed use development presents significant opportunities to further enhance the quality of the public realm and local distinctiveness and opening up north side of the river in this part of Melksham. This would link with key existing and proposed green and blue infrastructure networks. |
| Site 4: Murray Walk | | Potentially The site has good access by walking and cycling and is accessible to existing services and facilities. Development of the site would lead to impacts to biodiversity and significant landscape impacts given the current 'green context' of the site. |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|---|------|---|
| Site 5: Land West of Semington Road, to the rear of Townsend Farm | | Potentially Whilst in many respects the site is relatively unconstrained, it is located outside of the settlement boundary for Melksham Town. Due to its location, the site has significant access and safety issues for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. These issues would need to be overcome before development takes place. |
| Site 6: Land north of Sandridge Road | | Yes The site is relatively unconstrained, and is relatively accessible to services and facilities and the road network. As such the site is appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. |
| Site 7: Land east of New Road Farm | | Yes The site is relatively unconstrained, and is relatively accessible to services and facilities and the road network. As such the site is appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. |
| Site 8: Woodrow House Farm | | No Development on this site would be in contrast to the surrounding agricultural land, and would therefore not fit well with the townscape. Due to the number of potential constraints present, there might be potential for the land to be allocated as an open space, perhaps as part of any redevelopment of the 'Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue' (SHLAA reference 1027) and Land east of New Road Farm (SHLAA reference 3479). |
| Site 9: Land to the rear of Savernake Avenue | | Potentially The site may be appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan if constraints can be overcome, including the presence of the high voltage power line, and the impact on views from surrounding properties. |
| Site 10: Land between the Railway Line and Beanacre Road | | No Development of the site would increase traffic and road safety issues on the busy A350 corridor and ecological and agricultural land quality constraints are particularly significant in the local context. |
| Site 11: Land between the River Avon and Beanacre Road | | No Whilst the site could deliver a significant number of dwellings, there are a number of constraints to development on the site, including relating to flood risk, biodiversity constraints and the presence of a high voltage power line. Development would also lead to the loss of significant areas of land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land. |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|--|------|---|
| Site 12: Middle Farm, Corsham Road | | Potentially The site may be appropriate for taking forward as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. However there are a number of constraints which would need to be overcome to enable development, including potential impacts on the road network. |
| Site 13: Land east of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane) | | Yes The site is relatively unconstrained, with no significant landscape or biodiversity designations. The site is also located outside of the boundary of any flood risk zones, has good access, and is close to local public transport links into Melksham town centre. |
| Site 14: Land south of Western Way | | Potentially The site has a key role in maintaining the green gap between Melksham and Bowerhill, Other main constraints to development relate to future traffic issues and road safety issues, which would need to be overcome to enable development. |
| Site 15: Woolmore Farm Yard | | Yes Development at this location presents significant opportunities to enhance the setting of Woolmore Farmhouse and the wider setting of the townscape. The site is predominantly unconstrained, with good access to local amenities and facilities. |
| Site 16: Merretts Yard, Snarlton Lane | | Yes Given the existing underutilised previously developed nature of the site, and location within a residential area with relatively few constraints, the site is appropriate for allocating through the Neighbourhood Plan as a residential allocation. |
| Site 17: Whitley Farm | | Yes The site has minor constraints, but development presents the opportunity to enhance the setting of the villagescape and heritage assets in this location, and potentially alleviate surface water flood risk. |
| Site 18: Land north of Dunch Lane | | No The site has a number of locally significant constraints which would provide a constraint for development, including relating to flood risk, biodiversity features, heritage assets and the quality of agricultural land. |
| Site 19: Beanacre: Land west of Chapel Lane | | Potentially The main constraints to development surround the access issues, its location away from the main built-up area of Melksham, possible changes to the village-scape, and the potential ecological importance of the site. Nonetheless, it is potentially suitable for development if the constraints can be resolved. |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|--|------|--|
| Site 20: Beanacre: Lacock Road | | No The site has access issues, is located away from the main built-up area of Melksham, will lead to the loss of productive agricultural land, and lead to likely changes to the villagescape of Beanacre. |
| Site 21: Beanacre: Land east of Chapel Lane | | Potentially The main constraints to development surround the access issues, its location away from the main built-up area of Melksham, possible changes to the village-scape, and the potential ecological importance of the site. Nonetheless, it is potentially suitable for development if the constraints can be resolved. |
| Site 22: Berryfield, Land at Semington Road | | No Although the site is relatively unconstrained, the planning approval for 150 dwellings through application 17/12514/REM is a significant limitation. As such, the site is considered to be unsuitable to take forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. |
| Site 23: Berryfield, Land west of Semington Road, south of Berryfield Lane | | Potentially The main constraints to development concern the landscape and visual sensitivities, its distance from the town centre, and the potential impacts to the setting of nationally designated heritage assets. However, if the constraints can be overcome, the site would be appropriate for small scale development of high quality design, accompanied by green infrastructure provision. |
| Site 24: Berryfield, land west of A350 | | Yes Landscape sensitivities, heritage issues and access concerns provide constraints to what is otherwise a relatively unconstrained site. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable to take forward for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design. |
| Site 25: Berryfield, land east of A350 | | Yes The main constraints to development include the access concerns, the potential impacts to landscape and townscape character, and the locally important priority habitats. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable to take forward for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design. |
| Site 26: Boundary Farm, Berryfield | | No The site is limited by landscape and townscape sensitivities, access issues and the quality of agricultural land, all of which are considered as locally significant constraints to future development. |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|--|------|--|
| Site 27: Land north of Berryfield | | <p>Yes Landscape and townscape concerns provide constraints to what is otherwise a relatively unconstrained site. In particular, the existing developed areas of the site would be suitable for small-scale regeneration</p> <p>Potentially The agricultural areas of the site could be suitable to take forward through, providing the development is sensitive to its setting within the landscape, incorporates green infrastructure provisions and establishes appropriate access.</p> |
| Site 28: Land to the rear of Woolmore Manor, Bowerhill | | <p>No Development could significantly impact upon the setting of the Grade II* listed 'Woolmore Manor', whilst also precluding views of this nationally designated heritage asset from the footpath passing through the site. Ecological and access issues provide further constraints. Therefore, the site is considered unsuitable to take forward.</p> |
| Site 29: Old Loves Farm, Bowerhill Lane | | <p>No There are significant constraints to development including relating to landscape and townscape character, the setting of heritage assets and the suitability of the existing access. As planning application '16/09948/FUL for a dwelling and garage on land directly to the south of the site was rejected on similar grounds, it is considered that this site is unsuitable for development.</p> |
| Site 30: Land at Snarlton Lane | | <p>No Flood risk concerns, ecological sensitivities, access issues and the quality of the agricultural land are significant constraints to development. Development would set precedence for future expansion of Melksham to the east of the Bypass, impacting upon landscape and townscape character.</p> |
| Site 31: Land at Woodrow Road | | <p>No The main constraints to development concern the impacts to landscape and townscape character, the disturbance of locally significant features of archaeological interest, the suitability of the existing access into the site, and its visibility from surrounding areas. As planning application '16/05644/OUT' was rejected on similar grounds, the site is considered unsuitable to take forward.</p> |

| Name | Size | Appropriate for taking forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan? |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| Site 32: Roundhouse Farm, Bath Road | | <p>No There are a number of locally significant constraints which would provide a constraint for development on the greenfield areas of the site, including relating to landscape character and visual amenity value, flood risk issues, agricultural land quality and ecological considerations.</p> <p>Potentially However, providing the constraints can be overcome, the existing developed areas of the site could be suitable for small-scale regeneration of a high quality design, which includes provisions for green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage.</p> |

If site allocations are included in the Neighbourhood Plan, it is recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group discuss site viability with Wiltshire Council. Viability appraisals for individual sites may already exist. If not, it is possible to use the Council's existing viability evidence (such as an Affordable Housing Viability Study or Community Infrastructure Viability Study) to test the viability of sites proposed for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. This can be achieved by 'matching' site typologies used in existing reports, with sites proposed by the Neighbourhood Steering Group to give an indication of whether a site is viable for development and therefore likely to be delivered. Likewise, the developer should be contacted to ensure that the site remains deliverable.

Overall it is recommended that the policy approaches proposed by the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to address the potential constraints highlighted in this report and through the strategic environmental assessment process currently being undertaken for the plan. This can include targeted site-specific Neighbourhood Plan policies to address the elements raised relating to environmental constraints and accessibility.

6.3 Next steps

Sites to be taken forward for the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered and chosen by the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on the basis of:

- The findings of this site assessment;
- Responses received during consultation on proposed sites;
- The scope for the sites to meet identified infrastructure needs of the community;
- Viability studies; and
- The extent to which the sites support the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan.

This process will be incorporated within the next stages of development for the Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with engagement with landowners, Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council, and other stakeholders.

Appendix A Completed site appraisal pro-forma

