

MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 11 April 2022 at Melksham Rugby Club, Oakfields, Eastern Way, Melksham at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Richard Wood (Committee Chair); John Glover (Chair of Council); David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council); Alan Baines (Vice Chair of Planning); Terry Chivers; Mark Harris & Mary Pile

Present via Zoom: Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Bowerhill Ward) (part of meeting).

Officers: Teresa Strange, Clerk and Lorraine McRandle (Parish Officer)

520/21 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping

Councillor Wood welcomed everyone to the new temporary meeting space prior to the move to The Campus.

Those present were advised where the fire escapes were and where to assemble in case of an emergency. It was also stated the patio doors would remain open to allow for ventilation as part of covid protocols.

521/21 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given

It was noted all members of the Planning Committee were present.

522/21 Declarations of Interest

a) To receive Declarations of Interest

The Committee acknowledged planning application PL/2022/02033: Shaw Court had been submitted by Councillor Patacchiola who is not a member of the Planning Committee. Those present noted they did not have a pecuniary interest in this application.

b) To consider for approval any Dispensation Requests received by the Clerk and not previously considered

None received.

c) To note standing Dispensations relating to planning applications

To note the Parish Council have a dispensation lodged with Wiltshire Council dealing with Section 106 agreements relating to planning applications within the parish.

523/21 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of business, where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The Clerk explained Members may wish to hold item 12(a)(iii) (or part of discussions) relating to the Pathfinder Way development, in closed session if necessary.

Resolved: To hold item 12(a)(iii) in closed session if necessary.

524/21 Public Participation

Whilst no members of public were present, Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Bowerhill Ward) joined the meeting at this point and reported on a meeting he and the Clerk had with Clara Davis, Schools Buildings and Places Planning Co-ordinator, Wiltshire Council regarding progress on Pathfinder Way School and education provision in general in the Melksham area. Also discussed at the meeting were expectations for developers to fund schools via Section 106 Agreements, as well as the type of primary school provision required for large sites.

Councillor Holder expressed his frustration at the process/timing of primary education provision in general.

525/21 To consider the following Planning Applications:

PL/2022/02033: Shaw Court, Bath Road, Shaw. Overhaul interior of existing domestic barn and workshop to create domestic workshop and study area.

Comments: No Objection.

PL/2022/02061: 12 Tangmere Close, Bowerhill. Erection of replacement fence.

It was noted this application had been submitted retrospectively, following a visit by Planning Enforcement.

It was noted when the new fence was originally erected it was adjacent to the kerb-line enclosing several access manholes for public services, which were then inaccessible to those service providers.

The Clerk explained a resident of Tangmere Close had mentioned covenants attached to properties in the Close and their concerns that the current fence was causing

visibility issues. The Clerk also noted that the Highways Officer had commented to say the fence appeared to be located within the highway and noted the applicant had not mentioned this in their application under the section on who owned the land covered by the application.

Comments: Members had no objection to this application, as long as the new fence is erected within the applicant's own land. If a new fence is to be erected behind the current fence, that the current fence is to be removed.

PL/2022/02228: 514a Shails Lane. Two storey side extension.

Comments: No Objection.

PL/2022/02410: Whitley Brow, 178 Top Lane. One detached dwelling including associated garage.

Councillor Baines noted the proposed dwelling appeared to be located on the site of existing buildings, including the stables. However, the site had a domestic curtilage extending into open countryside beyond the settlement boundary and therefore would be extending domestic use outside the settlement boundary.

Councillor Baines also noted previous plans had been submitted for two dwellings on land to the rear of 178 Top Lane, however, the dwellings then proposed were within the existing domestic curtilage, adjacent to the existing property.

Members queried whether the land to the rear of the proposed new dwelling would need change of use to domestic use, as it was understood the land may currently be classed as land for equestrian use.

Comments: The Parish Council object to this application as the proposed development site includes land within its domestic curtilage outside the settlement boundary and therefore is an extension of a development into open countryside.

A more modest proportioned dwelling would leave enough garden for a development within the settlement boundary.

PL/2022/02571: 29 Kingfisher Drive. Proposed front extension.

Comments: No Objection.

Councillor Holder left the meeting at 7.45pm.

PL/2022/02735: Hilltop House, Shaw Hill, Shaw. Proposed timber outbuilding to front of dwelling.

Comments: Whilst having no objection, members ask that the existing hedge adjacent to the proposed outbuilding is retained in order to screen the building.

526/21 Revised Plans To comment on any revised plans received within the required timeframe (14 days)

PL/2021/08690: Land at Studley Farm, Atworth, Melksham. Installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure.

Comments: To reiterate previous comments made on 12 October 2021:

Whilst this site is not within the Parish, Members welcomed the opportunity to comment and raised the following:

- The impact this application would have on the area, given the concentration of solar farm facilities already in the area.
- Members noted the application included battery storage and were aware of concerns nationally regarding these, as a few had resulted in fires.
- It was noted an underground cable was proposed to be installed from the site to the National Grid sub station, which was assumed to be in Beanacre. Therefore, Members raised concern at the level of disruption this would cause whilst being installed and requested more detail on the route of the underground cable.

PL/2021/10453: 224 Bath Road, Shaw. Single storey side sun lounge extension & detached garage (Revised Plans)

Comments: No objection and to welcome the revision to the previous plans submitted.

527/21 Planning Enforcement: To note any new planning enforcement queries raised and updates on previous enforcement queries.

a) Dick Lovett, Portal Way. To note information from Andy Cadwallader Highway Engineer and the Landscape Maintenance Management Specification.

Following a query at a previous meeting at the removal of brambles from the boundary of the site and a concern vegetation was being removed from land not included within the planning application, officers had made investigations and clarified the piece of land was in fact within the planning application site.

With regard to the removal of vegetation on the boundary to the site, officers had looked at the Landscape Maintenance & Management Specification submitted as part of planning application PL/2021/03698 for variation of conditions 2, 9, 10, 11 and 13 and noted under point 3.6 regarding site boundaries, the report stated:

‘To the West and South, the site area is bounded by rough, substantially unmaintained road verges, much of which are currently heavily overgrown with brambles. Where possible these will be cleared prior to carrying out adjacent site works or installation of new boundary treatments where necessary. Clearance is likely to require both initial herbicide applications combined with cutting-back to stools and treatment with suitable stump/brushwood herbicide. Repeated cutting and treatment may prove necessary to achieve effective control, with allowance for at least two operations per annum.

The north-east boundary is formed by a closely adjacent, grown-out hedgerow of mixed species including elm regrowth, but also again comprising some bramble. In this situation control will involve initial cutting-back/trimming of any outgrowths, followed by further cutting when necessary to avoid obstruction/intrusion, once the boundary fencing is in place. A minimum of two operations per annum must be allowed.’

Members noted and welcomed the clarification.

The Clerk explained the Rights of Way Officer had visited the offices earlier in the day to explain Dick Lovett had applied to have the public Right of Way running between their new building and Herman Miller closed over a 5-day period shortly, in order to undertake sewerage connection works. A diversion would be in place during this period.

With regard to new enforcement enquires, the Clerk explained Planning Enforcement had been made aware of the following:

- Top Lane, Whitley. Removal of hedge.

- New Inn, Semington Road, Berryfield. Erection of wooden structure to the front of the building.
- Lancaster Road, Bowerhill. Erection of marquee type storage facility between two hangars, which can be seen from Portal Road.

It was asked if an update on these could be obtained as soon as possible.

The Clerk explained she had chased for an update on the removal of the hedge at Top Lane and the new wooden building to the front of the New Inn on several occasions, but to date had not received a response, but would continue to chase for an update on all three.

528/21 Planning Appeal: APP/Y3940/W/21/3285428: Semington Road

The Clerk explained there was no update from the Planning Inspector on the outcome of the appeal in early March and had noted unilateral Section 106 agreements had been uploaded to the planning portal, which was a concern.

Members raised concern the outcome of the appeal seemed to be taking some time and noted if the appeal was upheld, this had huge implications for neighbourhood plans in general.

With regard to the Section 106 Agreements, Councillor Glover raised a concern the Parish Council had previously asked Wiltshire Council to be party to any Section 106 Agreements discussions in the Parish and therefore they seemed to have ignored the Council on this occasion.

Recommendation: To write to Wiltshire Council reminding them the Parish Council had lodged a request that they be party to any Section 106 discussions in the Parish prior to signing.

529/21 Melksham Canal Link Project

- To note correspondence from Councillor Colin Goodhind, Melksham Town Council regarding the Melksham Link and to consider a request for representatives from the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust to attend a future Neighbourhood Planning meeting to discuss their proposals for the Melksham Link.**

The Clerk explained, she had put this request on the agenda in order to get a steer from Members prior to the next Neighbourhood Plan meeting.

It noted it was unclear whether Councillor Goodhind's request had also been put before Melksham Town Council for a response and a steer from Members.

Councillor Pafford noted it would appear from the Canal Trust's perspective, unless 900 houses are built, the scheme would not be able to go ahead.

Councillor Baines raised a concern at the proposed route through Berryfield between the New Inn and properties to the front of Berryfield Park and the impact on residents during construction and once built. Properties would have a canal outside their front door and felt a better option for the canal, if it would to go ahead, would be to go around Berryfield.

As the current Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Councillor Wood felt it important the group had an opportunity to discuss their proposals with the steering group.

Recommendation: As long as the Town Council are in support, to invite representatives from the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust and Councillor Goodhind to a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting to present proposals for the Melksham Link.

530/21 Planning Policy

a) WALPA (Wiltshire Area Local Planning Alliance) Update

The Clerk explained following the publication of the latest 5-year land supply figures by Wiltshire Council, the response from WALPA had been emailed to the Planning Committee the previous week for information. They had urged councils to check the detailed scheduled on sites in the land supply calculation for any anomalies as it was very close to the required number and raised concerns about the statement that Wiltshire Council were now positively considering speculative applications. This had been investigated further, with an update under the 5-year land supply agenda item later in the meeting.

b) Priority for People Update from Workshop 9th February

The Clerk explained there had been no update since the workshop on 9th February. A meeting had been arranged with the Acting Deputy Town Clerk the following day to close down the current grant and to apply for a new one and would be questioning the costs for the Priority for People consultants from the current grant funding.

c) Neighbourhood Planning

i) To reflect on responses to planning applications for review of the Neighbourhood Plan

None to note.

ii) To note minutes of Steering Group meeting held on 16 March 2022 and agree additional reps for task groups

The draft minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 16 March had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The Clerk explained at the meeting that representatives had been sought to sit on the various task groups (Housing, Local Green Spaces, Heritage, Town Centre, Climate Issues, A350 Bypass and the Canal Link), with the Steering Group seeking additional representatives and therefore sought volunteers to sit on these groups.

With regard to the Housing Task Group, Councillor Baines, who had originally been involved with the Housing Task Group for the current neighbourhood plan agreed to be on this group and Councillor Harris had also expressed an interest, however was happy to step back if there were too many people on the group. It was understood Councillor Pat Aves from Melksham Town Council had also volunteered to be on the Housing Task Group.

The Clerk noted at a previous meeting a member of the public offered to join the Housing Task Group, however, they were not part of a group, but they might be useful in general on the Steering Group and noted there was no longer a community representative on the group and suggested they could be contacted to see if they were interested in joining the Steering Group and if interested put before the Steering Group for consideration, which those present supported.

The Clerk explained a meeting had been arranged with David Way, Senior Spatial Planning Officer, Wiltshire Council to discuss an approach for the housing group, but unfortunately this had been cancelled and a new one would be arranged shortly. The Clerk sought a steer from Members whether they wished the meeting to go ahead sooner rather than later, bearing in mind the Town Clerk was currently on annual leave for the next two weeks, against a short timeframe to undertake the review. Members felt it was important to move quickly and therefore, suggested a meeting be arranged for Wednesday, 20 April at 2.00pm. Councillor Harris asked if he could sit in on the meeting.

With regard to the Heritage Task Group, Councillor Glover explained he had contacted the Melksham & District Historical Society to see if they could provide a representative and they had agreed to raise this at their upcoming AGM, but had not heard back.

With regard to the Town Centre task group, it was felt there did not need to be a representative from the parish council on this group and understood notes from all groups would be forwarded to the Steering Group for information.

With regard to the Canal Link task group, Councillor Harris had agreed to be on this group, as he was the parish council representative on the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust Group.

It was suggested a post could be put on Facebook seeking volunteers to join the various task groups, as well as write to them direct. The Clerk explained various posts had been put on Facebook, and groups directly contacted, however, they could try again and see what responses were received.

The Clerk suggested Lisa Ellis from the Wellhouse Manor Collection might be useful with her knowledge, in joining the Heritage Task Group, which Members agreed would be useful.

iii) To consider split of Place Studios invoices (2 x £500 excl VAT) between the Town Council and the Parish Council regarding the Planning Appeal relating to 20/07334/OUT: development of 50 dwellings on land to rear of Townsend Farm, Semington Road

The Clerk explained at a recent Neighbourhood Plan meeting the split of the two invoices from Place Studio for the work undertaken to defend the Neighbourhood Plan at the appeal hearing had been discussed. At the meeting whilst it was noted the funding split had been agreed as 30% Melksham Without with the Town Council paying the majority share of 70%, the Town Council had sought a reverse of the funding split on this occasion. At the meeting the parish council representatives felt a fairer split would be 50% each and it was agreed whilst the parish council would in the first instance pay the invoices, both Councils would go back to their respective councils on the appropriate split of costs.

Councillors Wood, Pafford and Glover who sit on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, suggested a 50% share between both councils was more appropriate, particularly given the costs were associated with defending the Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted the outcome of the appeal would affect what could happen to planning applications in both parishes in the future.

Councillor Baines felt strongly the costs should be split with the usual ratio of 30/70, with the Town Council paying the majority share, Councillor Chivers seconded this proposal, however, following a vote this proposal fell.

Councillor Wood proposed a 50/50 split between both Councils, which was seconded by Councillor Glover.

Recommendation: To recommend the two invoices of £500 excl VAT for work undertaken by Place to defend the Neighbourhood Plan at an appeal hearing be split 50/50 between Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council.

iv) To approve spending on Review work by Place Studio until grant funding available (share of £5,000 excl VAT)

At the steering group meeting the Neighbourhood Plan consultants had provided a quote to undertake the review work at a cost of £21,753, with both Councils previously agreeing to set aside £5,000 each towards the costs of the review, with the remainder coming from grant funding.

The Clerk explained at the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting on 16th March, it was unclear at that time whether grant funding from Locality would be available, since the meeting it was confirmed grant funding would be available. However, due to the need to progress the review quickly and given the Neighbourhood Plan only provided 2 years protection from speculative development, it was asked if approximately £5,000 between both Councils could be committed towards the costs of undertaking part of the work by Place up until May 2022 prior to receiving any grant funding from Locality.

Recommendation: To approve the Parish 30% share of £5,000 be committed towards the costs of undertaking part of the review up until May 2022, prior to receiving any grant funding from Locality.

d) Wiltshire Council 5-year Housing Land Supply and Housing Delivery Test. Briefing Note No 22-09. To note the current position is a 4.72-year supply using a base date of 1 April 2021

The Clerk explained Wiltshire Council had recently issued their Housing Land Supply figure of 4.72 years. It was noted Wiltshire Council proposed to restore the 5-year land supply as follows:

- Work positively with developers to take key strategic sites through the planning system.
- Continue supporting Neighbourhood Plans, identifying any suitable sites for housing.
- Positively consider speculative applications where there are no major policy obstacles material to the decision other than a site being outside settlement boundaries or unallocated.

With regard to the third point, the Clerk explained there had been some ambiguity when read in the office and therefore contacted Georgina Clampit-Dix at Wiltshire Council for clarification, who confirmed they would positively consider speculative applications, even if outside the settlement boundary, which was a concern.

It was noted it did not mention Neighbourhood Plans and whether these would be taken into consideration.

Councillor Glover felt the Neighbourhood Plan could be held up against this document, particularly as the Neighbourhood Plan review was gaining weight.

The Clerk explained WALPA had issued a response to the document the previous week who had advised Councils to check the housing figures already completed for their parish and the Clerk confirmed the housing figures for Melksham appeared to be correct and suggested others may wish to double check the figures were correct. WALPA had also raised concerns at how Wiltshire Council proposed to restore the housing figure to a 5-year land supply and the disappointing response to James Gray MP who had raised concerns about Neighbourhood Plans against a lack of 5-year land supply, with the Minister for Levelling Up.

Members expressed frustration that Melksham had already delivered over and above their housing allocation in the current Core Strategy up to 2026 and that Wiltshire Council looked at Wiltshire as a whole when looking at housing land supply, rather than the individual housing market areas (HMAs).

The Clerk confirmed Melksham's figures were as follows:

- 394 (Melksham & Bowerhill)
- 65 (Melksham Community Area)
- 459 in total

Recommendation: To write to Georgina Clampit-Dix copying in all Wiltshire Councillors for the Neighbourhood Plan Area, as well as all parishes in Wiltshire with a Neighbourhood Plan, stating the concern there is no mention of neighbourhood plans within the 5 Year Land Supply Statement. Therefore, wish to ensure the third bullet point on how Wiltshire Council propose to restore the 5-year land supply does not override neighbourhood plans and still hold weight.

531/21 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (Standing Item)

a) To note update on ongoing and new S106 Agreements

i) Update on Footpath to rear of Melksham Oak School

Correspondence had been received from the Rights of Way Officer stating the route of the existing track from East of Melksham to Woolmore Farm would come out onto the A365.

The Clerk explained the Rights of Way Officer had visited the office that day and explained the topographical survey had been completed and was awaiting the results. Unfortunately, no monies had been set aside in a Section 106 Agreement for a crossing, however, it was hoped funding could be found from elsewhere by Wiltshire Council.

ii) Bowood View

• To receive update on upgrading of stiles to kissing Gates

Correspondence had been received from the Rights of Way Officer explaining the land owner had given permission for the stiles (5/6no.) to be replaced with kissing gates.

The Clerk explained the volunteers from the local Ramblers Group were upgrading the stiles the following day with the Rights of Way Officer having sought permission to use the parish council's allotment car park. It was understood if there were any monies left over from the 106 Agreement from Bowood View for Rights of Ways, the Rights of Way Officer would look to see where else in the area this funding could be spent.

• To consider installation of interpretation boards to be funded via the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, match funded by the parish council and/or the Area Board

The Clerk explained correspondence had been received from Paul Lenaerts, Wilts & Berks Canal Trust regarding the installation of interpretation boards for Bowood View.

The Clerk explained Paul was on the Berryfield Village Hall Art Project Working Group. Originally it had been suggested by the Wiltshire Council Archeology Officer that as a planning condition the developers should provide historic canal interpretation boards, unfortunately, this had not got

carried forward and therefore there was no obligation for Bellway to do these.

The Clerk explained both Paul and Marilyn from the Canal Trust were keen interpretation boards be installed with a suggestion they be erected along the historic line of the canal with Bowood View which could be funded via the Canal Trust with match funding sought from both the parish council and the Area Board.

Members noted some funding could be sought from the adjacent development for 144 dwellings for interpretation boards on their site.

Recommendation: In principle, happy the Canal Trust investigate the costs involved in producing and erecting two canal interpretation boards.

iii) Pathfinder Way. Update on Play Area, Street works, Public Art, School

The Clerk explained Taylor Wimpey had clarified they had inspected the play area every week for the last 18 months and that it is insured. A recent email from the site manager had been received to say the play area had had its annual inspection completed a couple of months ago and everything had been done. The Clerk stated she had undertaken a site visit on receipt of that email and took photos of the various outstanding actions which had been highlighted some time ago, in order to forward to Wiltshire Council for them to action.

It was noted Councillor Holder had also expressed frustration there had been no movement since issues had been brought to Wiltshire Council's attention in October last year.

The Clerk explained there was no update on street works or public art.

The Clerk provided an updated on her and Councillor Holder's recent meeting with Clara Davies, Schools Buildings and Places Planning Co-ordinator, Wiltshire Council. Discussion included an update on school places currently available in Melksham in general, progress on Pathfinder Way Primary School and secondary education provision in Melksham.

The Clerk stated she had raised concern at the distance some children were expected to travel to access primary education where places were available.

With specific regard to the timing of the Pathfinder Place school, the Clerk had been advised that the trigger for more housing to be allowed on the site of the school if only a single form entry was initially built, was 10 years from the land transfer, and to date the transfer had not taken place.

b) To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers

None to note.

c) Contact with developers

(i) Gleeson/Origin 3 Re potential development East of Melksham (land to rear of Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Road). To receive notes of Pre-App meeting held on 24 March 2022.

The notes of the pre app meeting with Gleeson/Origin 3 held on 24 March had been circulated to the Planning Committee prior to the meeting and were included in the minutes, in line with the Council's Pre-App policy:

Those present were Councillor Richard Wood (Chair of Planning); Councillor David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council); Councillor Alan Baines (Vice Chair Planning); Councillor Mark Harris; Teresa Strange, Clerk; Lorraine McRandle, Parish Officer. From Melksham Town Council were Councillor Graham Ellis (for part of the meeting) and Patsy Clover, Acting Deputy Town Clerk. Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder was also in attendance.

On behalf of the developers were: Jonathan Orton, Managing Director, Origin 3; Clare Danks, Associate Urban Design, Origin 3; Stephanie Massie, Principal Planner, Origin3; Zoe Knott, Planning Manager, Gleeson Land; Imogen Nicholson, Principal Consultant, i-transport.

'Councillor Richard Wood reminded everyone the meeting was being held with representatives of the Parish Council's Planning Committee and not the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, in order to listen to proposals by Gleeson. Gleeson were looking to develop a site East of Melksham at Blackmore Farm and in line with developer meeting protocol in the adopted Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, a representative from the Town Council had also been invited with Councillor Graham Ellis in attendance, along with an officer from the Town Council, Patsy Clover.

The meeting was reminded that the Parish Council had met with the developers previously in April 2019 to discuss proposals for the site.

Jonathan asked if a written response would be received by the Council on proposals for the site.

The Clerk clarified whilst a written response on the views of the Council would not be made, the notes from the meeting would be presented to the Planning Committee for their information.

Jonathan explained Gleeson were a land promotion company and were assisting in promoting the site through the planning process. During the last three years technical consultants had been appointed to look at the site and what constraints and opportunities there were with regard to a future residential land use for the site. It was hoped to submit plans shortly with a public consultation event taking place in due course.

Jonathan explained Gleeson had a wider land area interest down to Eight Acre Plantation (SHEELA Site No 3552), however at present were only promoting a smaller section of the site (30 hectares), as they did not wish to prejudice the outcome of potential bypass proposals. They would also be liaising with Highways to make sure any proposals could be accommodated. An outline plan would be submitted to establish the principle of a mainly residential scheme on the site shortly.

Jonathan explained Gleeson had made a response to the Local Plan Review and 'Call for sites' and had read both Councils' responses to the Local Plan which were both comprehensive and insightful, particularly thoughts on the emerging plan. In the Local Plan there was a requirement for new homes in Melksham just shy of 4,000, with a lot already delivered to date, with a residual requirement for the plan period of 2,500.

Wiltshire Council's current housing land supply figure published in December 2020 indicated the current land supply for the County was under 5 years, however, whilst it was acknowledged this information was out of date, he was not aware of new data available.

Jonathan explained that in their opinion there was an emerging policy which continued to identify Melksham as a key settlement for growth in both housing and employment going forward. Therefore, he believed the emerging policy was justification in talking to the parish council about this site and along with a lack of 5-year land supply, they were indicators the timing was appropriate to advance plans for the site to outline planning stage.

Jonathan noted as part of the Local Plan Review, a Site Selection Report was published in 2021, which included Gleeson's site, as well as the wider area adjacent to the site. Whilst it was appreciated Wiltshire Council were still in the process of selecting sites to go forward in the Local Plan, he felt the site was an appropriate site to go forward, given the lack of constraints and

ability for the site to connect to the wider Melksham area. There was an opportunity to bring forward a well-planned and sustainable settlement to address the housing needs identified for Melksham.

Jonathan explained he was aware of work done with AECOM as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process regarding the SHELAA sites and the comments in their report and those made in response to the Local Plan by both Councils regarding the site.

Jonathan explained conversations had been held with Catesby who were promoting the site to the South of the site and there was a willingness to engage to talk about what was happening on their boundary to ensure sensible connections, rather than working in isolation.

Clare explained a Pre-App proposal was submitted to Wiltshire Council in May 2021 and responses had been received back on proposals and a suite of technical advice had already been obtained.

Proposals for the site included:

- 650 homes
- Primary School to be sited in the middle of the site.
- Community Hub
- Two access points off of Sandridge Common
- Site structured around retaining the existing tree boundaries.
- Open space area in middle of site to include play area and an area for teenager play/formal recreation.
- Open space will include opportunity to extend accessibility with GI from Eastern side of Melksham and improve connectivity onto PROWs.
- Open space underneath pylons with an opportunity to enhance biodiversity.
- Housing site set around retained assets.
- SUDs basin, wetland water retention areas on Southern part of site.

They initially had plans for their full land interest, however, with the understanding of a potential bypass they felt it was appropriate to look at a smaller site area so as not to cause a conflict. Therefore, since meeting the Parish Council in 2019 the plans have been refined.

Constraints for the site include:

- Existing overhead powerlines to the top right of the site.
- Blackmore House is listed; therefore, a Heritage Assessment has been done.

- Existing neighbours and impact on amenity.
- Existing hedgerow and trees (some large oaks). Various surveys have been undertaken. It was noted some trees were failing, but have biological value.
- Site includes two Public Rights of Way.
- A tributary of Clackers Brook with no fluvial flooding, but does have a surface water gathering zone which the EA have identified.

The proposals highlighted two potential alignments of a possible A350 bypass adjacent to the site. With the second alignment looked at just before Christmas which has been published by Wiltshire Council.

With regard to transport/highways, Imogen explained the two site access points off of Sandridge Common to the site. Connectivity with regards to the Public Rights of Way with other existing developments. The need for consideration to be given to a potential bypass and the impact this would have on the development. Also looking at providing bus services for the site.

Councillor Glover asked if the buses would be able to negotiate through the site, which Imogen agreed would be looked at.

Councillor Baines explained with regard to bus routing, a bus operator would want to go through a site rather than in and back out and questioned why there was no connection with the roundabout on Eastern Way, which is part of an existing bus route.

Imogen explained the land to connect the site to Eastern Way was under different ownership, therefore, it was not possible to provide a connection to the site from here.

Jonathan explained the parcels of land to the West of this site were being promoted independently and had been involved in the 'call for sites' process by Wiltshire Council for future housing sites. However, they would ensure connectivity from the site to these sites, if they were to be developed in the future.

Councillor Wood sought clarification on why two entrances were proposed a short distance from each other on Sandridge Common.

Imogen explained both junctions would be 'T' junctions, with adequate visibility splays, it was anticipated the distance between the two junctions would not cause any safety concerns.

Councillor Wood noted junction B on the plans did not serve many dwellings.

Imogen explained whilst it did not serve many dwellings, a second access road had been provided for emergency vehicles, in case there were any issues with junctions being obstructed for any reason.

Councillor Glover sought clarification on whether the proposed primary school would have adequate parking provision, particularly as children from other areas may want to go to this school.

Imogen explained the school would be one form entry with circa 210 pupils, it was anticipated 202 pupils would be generated from the site and therefore, they would largely fill the school, with only a small number of children coming from elsewhere. It was anticipated most would walk or cycle to the school given its proximity to residential dwellings. A traffic impact study would be undertaken as part of the application.

Councillor Glover commented that most schools tended to be built after housing had been occupied and therefore children from the development would more than likely attend a different school.

Jonathan explained the scheme had been in gestation for three years and looked at in detail. The timeline for the scheme was as follows:

12 April 2022	Planned leaflet drop to more than 560 properties within the vicinity
14 April 2022	Advert in Melksham News
26 April 2022	Public consultation event at the Assembly Hall. A web page will also be available for people to submit comments, which will form part of the planning application.
Summer 2022	Submission of planning application

The meeting was opened up for questions.

Patsy sought clarification on the size of the land available for the proposed primary school and whether there was scope in the future for the school to be expanded and also sought clarification on the size of the land set aside for the community hub.

Zoe explained 1.8 hectares of land was available for the primary school, which allowed for two form entry.

With regard to the community hub, Councillor Wood sought clarification on what was meant by a community hub.

Clare explained the land was set aside for a community i.e., village hall type facility. There was no identified provision for a shop. However, with regard to land use, the application would include a

broad land use mix for the site, which could include a shop, if one was interested in the site. It was clarified 0.2 hectares was available for mixed use.

Patsy noted 0.17 hectares was the size of the site for the community centre south of East of Melksham.

The Clerk asked where it was envisaged secondary school children from the development would go and where residents would also go for GP services.

Zoe explained Wiltshire Council were asking for Section 106 payments towards one secondary school as a hub.

With regard to GP services, would be looking at human health as part of the application, which considers the number of GPs in the area and what is needed. As stated previously, the use of the community hub is flexible, therefore if a need for a GP service is identified, there is an opportunity they can move to this site. However, they were aware that there is a problem in general with GPs wanting to move into rural areas, such as Wiltshire. However, a room could be made available in the community hub for physio etc. At present only a financial contribution towards GP provision for 'off site' was envisaged, unless anything changes.

Councillor Glover sought advice, as previously learnt from experience, if the Parish Council do not ask questions at Pre-App stage, it is often too late to ask for things to be included on a development.

The Clerk stated that at the public consultation stage there would be an opportunity for the Council to make their comments then.

Jonathan explained they would be happy to meet the Parish Council again further in the planning process to talk through proposals if requested.

Zoe agreed to send all consultation documents to the Clerk for information.

Councillor Baines suggested it would be useful to have a list of properties included in the leaflet drop, particularly as some of the residents in the Sandridge area do not get Melksham Independent News and therefore may not be aware of proposals.

The Clerk clarified the notes of the meeting would be available at the next Planning meeting on 11 April for Members' information.'

The Clerk explained public consultation leaflets were currently being distributed advertising a public consultation event between 2.00pm and 7.00pm at the Assembly Hall on 26 April. Gleeson had extended an invitation to the parish council to meet between 1.00-2.00pm prior to the public consultation event. A dedicated website would also be available at www.landatblackmorefarm.co.uk for people to make comments between 22 April and 6 May 2022.

The Clerk sought a steer whether Members wished to accept the invitation and to invite the Wiltshire Councillor for the area, as well as representatives from the Town Council. The Clerk also asked if Members wished the developers to be invited to a meeting prior to the Council making their response as part of the public consultation.

Members felt it was not necessary to invite Gleeson to a Planning meeting, having already heard the proposals at the pre app meeting on 24 March.

Recommendation: Not to take up the offer of meeting Gleeson prior to the public consultation event on 26 April, but for Members to attend the public consultation event to listen to residents' views.

Meeting finished at 9.00pm

Signed
Chair, Full Council 25 April 2022