

Appendix 1.

BRIEFING NOTE FOR STEERING GROUP MEETING ON 10TH MAY 2016

At the last meeting held on 15th December 2015 the following decisions were made:

- **LAND USE ALLOCATIONS:**

1. **Site 10 (Vicarage) – site to be allocated for a mixture of housing (total 3 units) and burial space.** – All of the steering group were in favour for Site 10 to be included in the plan.
2. **Site 11 (Corner Green Lane) – site to be allocated for housing (total 4 units)** – All of the steering group in favour for Site 11 to be included in the plan.
3. **Site 1A (rear new school) – mixed use allocation comprising land set aside for: extension to primary school and/or for new build pre-school facility; new GP surgery; 10 elderly persons bungalows (total 10 units)**– The group all agreed that they are unable to make an informed decision on Site 1A/B until after the meeting on 17thDecember has taken place.
4. **Site 1A + (rear new school) – mixed use allocation as per 1A above plus an additional 10 houses on the immediately adjoining land (total 20 units) – with the rest of Site 1B set aside as a longer term reserve (for development beyond 2026) – As above.**
5. **Sites 1A and 1B combined – mixed use allocation as per 1A above plus (total 40 units): an area of Public Open Space; significant landscaping along the western site boundary; financial contributions towards improvements to existing sports facilities on Site 4.** (N.B. Sites 1A, 1B and 4 could comprise a single allocation – to ensure that the desired improvements to the sports facilities are linked to the new build housing development). – As above
6. **Site 6 (part fronting Sandpits Lane) – frontage only allocated for 10 houses** – The group have concerns regarding this site as mentioned previously, so at the meeting no decision was made.
7. **Site 14 (land off Knockdown Road) – mixed use allocation for 10 houses plus land set aside for the erection of a new village hall and GP surgery** – All of the group agreed not to include Site 14 in the plan, for the reasons given previously in the meeting.
8. **Site 3 (land to west of Football Field) – site allocated for future expansion of sports facilities** –The Steering Group agreed to seek to safeguard this land for future sports purposes.
9. **Site 4 – The Football Field, Knockdown Road** –Due to the covenant in place, the group resolved not to include Site 4 in the plan as a site for housing development; however will be included regarding the potential to improve facilities.

- **HOUSING NUMBERS:**

When the steering group met in 2014, the numbers being put forward by WC for a village like Sherston was 16. This was derived from a complicated method involving the draft core strategy and an analysis of village population size. WC now recommend that this figure be changed – to take into account the latest analysis of the residual housing requirement (116 dwellings) and the simple assumption that each of the five “Large Villages” in the Malmesbury Community Area is expected to deliver a similar number of dwellings – i.e. in the region of 23 homes. The big question is how many homes should we be planning for in the NP- 16, 20 or more?

JT mentioned when thinking of how many homes, the group will need to know the affordability of infrastructure for Site 1A/1B. This area of land is complex and expensive which will dictate how many homes could be built. It may not be economical to build small scale, however if the development was phased into two parts, the infrastructure could be put in place for the whole site, allowing for future development. Also we may need to consider how many private houses would be needed to deliver a new surgery?

After the meeting on 17th December and once WC have prepared plans, it may be clearer, realistically how many houses (max figure) could be built on sites 1A and 1B. WC currently believes that site 1A and possibly a bit of 1B is adequate for Sherston’s need at this present time.

Discussion then took place regarding how many new homes should be built, facilities and sustainability. A member of the public asked for the group when making a decision to consider the 2012 Housing Needs survey which results stated that there was a need for 20 new homes. KS informed the group that over the last 20 years since living in the village 80 homes have been built and they have still lost businesses such as a butcher, a bakers and a pub. RJ thinks there should be more affordable housing to enable young people to work and live in the village. Safeguarding employment is also very important. It seems the village does want to protect the assets, facilities and open spaces that it has, and policies can be put in plan to enable this.

Although no real estimate can be given at this stage, members of the steering group were asked to do an initial vote regarding how many new homes they would want to see in Sherston. They were to vote for either a low level (26) or a higher level (40).

- 8 members voted for high, 2 members voted for low, 1 abstention

This question will be revisited at the next meeting, once all information is available to the group.

- **UPDATE:**

It has taken just over four months to obtain clarification of the situation regarding Site 1 (Sites 1A and 1B combined). A meeting was held with all of the interested parties

(comprising representatives of Wiltshire Council, the GP Surgery and the landowners of Site 1) on 26th April 2016 – at the request of John Matthews.

Those discussions can be summarised as follows:

- Purpose of meeting was to clarify the situation and to give everybody a better understanding of what was being discussed.
- WC have been in discussion with the owners of Site 1 for some considerable time. Desire to progress a mixed use development on the site including a new GP surgery and some affordable housing. Looking at ways of achieving (funding) this. WC preference is to await the outcome of the NP process- with this site hopefully being allocated for such a purpose. Once site allocated would expect matters to progress fairly quickly.
- WC have been exploring several different ways of facilitating the delivery of a new GP surgery. Turning out to be quite complicated. Considered several different options including: WC funding the entire project (with a leaseback arrangement) – initially favoured but no longer considered to be a viable option; Developer funding (with the building handed over to either WC or the Parish Council and leased back to the GP surgery) – which is the option currently being favoured. (N.B. The GPs are still investigating the possibility of obtaining a central government grant to fund construction – which initially seemed very unlikely but has come back into the frame following recent government announcements but the timescale for achieving this is quite short.)
- The landowners confirmed that they would (in principle) be willing to fund the construction of a new GP surgery – subject to clarification of the cost. This in part depends of the size of unit required. The GPs ideally would like a facility in excess of 500 sq. metres. WC have done some financial modelling on this basis and have estimated that the cost would be c £800,000 (i.e. £1600 per sq.metre). Landowners would prefer to fund it's construction rather than actually have to build it.
- It was pointed out that in addition to the GP surgery the village was seeking improvements to the existing sports facilities on the Football Ground – and in particular were looking to secure funding for the construction of replacement changing facilities. If the village is going to accept additional housing on Site 1 then it was considered reasonable to be seeking to secure funding for that work from a developer. This should be added to the equation. The landowners noted the suggestion – not ruled out but depends on the total cost package.
- WC (and no doubt ourselves) would prefer to see this as part of a package of proposals for Site 1 – including land set aside for expansion of the primary school, affordable housing etc. – incorporated in the NP. A Policy will need to be prepared for the NP that incorporates all of the desired elements – as a

mixed use proposal. Funding for any “community” elements would have to be achieved from any new build housing.

- The amount of housing required to achieve this was then discussed. WC are assuming about 45 dwellings on Site 1 – including any affordable housing. The amount of affordable housing required could potentially be adjusted (downwards) to acknowledge the fact that some other community benefits were being achieved. WC should be able to fund some of the affordable housing direct (i.e. some bungalows – numbers not yet fixed). N.B. The construction of affordable housing on a site still has some (albeit limited) value to a developer. The construction of a GP surgery – which is handed over to the community – would not.
- Discussions with the NHS have revealed that they would be willing to see the eventual closure of a surgery in Sherston with all such facilities being relocated to Malmesbury. Should a new surgery be delivered in Sherston however they would continue to support it and would pay for any leaseback arrangement (for a minimum of 25 years).
- WC are suggesting that any income derived from such a leaseback arrangement would initially come to them but after a period (to be agreed) this would revert to Sherston PC who would take over ownership – similar to the SOSCIC arrangement. Given that either WC or Sherston PC would own the building outright any income derived from the leaseback arrangement would only be required to fund maintenance and repair with any surplus benefiting the wider community.
- WC would waive any ransom strip payments (due payable by the landowners) in return for such an arrangement.
- It was suggested that a Working Group be set up – with representatives of all sides in attendance – to help progress the delivery of a mixed use package – should the NP be willing to take this idea forwards.
- It was suggested that the NP Steering Group might want to consider undertaking a viability assessment for the NP as a whole – to establish whether we can actually achieve all of the objectives we are seeking on the back of the level of development that is deemed acceptable. The Examiner may want to know that what is being sought is deliverable.
- The planning officer in attendance was asked to comment on the mixed use allocation idea and the sort of developments in the mix. She confirmed that given the status of Sherston as a “Large Village” there was nothing that particularly troubled her. The housing numbers were for the village to decide but need to be able to show that any sites/proposals being put forward are viable and deliverable. Policy could include trigger points to ensure delivery of certain facilities before completion of a given number of houses. Suggested that we forward copy of any draft policy to her for comments asap – so that WC can consider whether likely to be acceptable (lawful). (N.B. This has been done – in the form of a separate Briefing Note and Draft Policy – see below).

- Existence of ransom strip effectively precludes landowner from trying to “steal a march”. Need to await outcome of NP process before can reasonably progress. That said WC and the landowners will continue to discuss ideas and keep us in the loop.
- WC keen for us to progress the NP. Understand why there has been a delay – but would like us to move forwards now with all speed.

COPY BRIEFING NOTE SENT TO WC FOR COMMENTS – INCLUDING COPY OF DRAFT POLICY FOR SITE 1 FOR DISCUSSION AT MEETING ON 10TH MAY 2016.

Background:

- The land in question comprises all of Site 1 (which is currently owned by the Moody family) and all of Site 4 (which is the site of the existing primary village outdoor sports facilities – football/tennis/skateboard park – owned by Sherston Parish Council).
- The southern half of Site 1 (Site 1A) whilst currently owned and farmed by the Moody family is effectively controlled by Wiltshire Council – via a buy-back option. The northern half of Site 1 (Site 1B) is owned and farmed by the Moody family. The afore-mentioned buy-back arrangement with Wiltshire Council seemingly includes a requirement to maintain an agricultural access to this land through the southern half of the site.
- Wiltshire Council (and Sherston Parish Council) – following the carrying out of a significant amount of consultation with the local community - want to secure a mix of development on Site 1 including land set aside for: a new GP surgery; some affordable housing; the possible expansion of the Primary School and/or land for the erection of a pre-school facility.
- The Primary School is currently accessed solely off Knockdown Road. The roads around the school suffer from congestion and there is an existing on street parking problem at both school start and finish times. Any development on Site 1 should seek to ensure that this problem is not exacerbated – by providing pedestrian access through to the school from the site itself; by carrying out any necessary

improvements to the local road network; and by providing some off street parking for parents at peak hours on the development site. This could be by way of providing a dual use parking area linked to the GP surgery or by utilising part of the area proposed to be set aside for expanding the school over the longer term for parking purposes.

- Sherston Parish Council, through the Neighbourhood Plan, additionally wants to secure arrangements for the upgrading of the existing sports facilities on Site 4 – including primarily the erection of a new (replacement) building for use as changing rooms with a small related social area. There is an existing protected agricultural right of way running along the western edge of Site 4 – which provides access to Site 1B – which the Parish Council would like to see removed. This right of way is controlled by the owners of Site 1. This would enable improvements to be carried out to the sports facilities and open up the possibility over the longer term of linking Site 4 to Site 3 to facilitate a further expansion of the available sports facilities.
- There is a need to provide for some new housing in the village. The minimum number of dwellings expected being about 25 units in total. If the village is going to consider/accept a higher number of units during the plan period then it is considered reasonable to seek some form of planning gain – in the form of achieving some of the primary objectives that have been identified via the NP process (notably the delivery of a new GP surgery and replacement changing rooms).
- The southern half of Site 1 (Site 1A) has already been identified as the preferred location for the mix of facilities noted above through the Neighbourhood Plan process (i.e. the new GP surgery; the potential school expansion; affordable housing).
- The northern half of the site (Site 1B) was originally discounted from consideration as a potential development site because it was considered to have a potential adverse landscape impact – at least when compared to the previously preferred site at Easton Town (Site 17) and the earlier identified development potential on Site 4 (which is owned by the Parish Council). Site 17 has now been withdrawn by the landowners from consideration and Site 4 is now known to be affected by a restrictive covenant which effectively precludes its development from anything other than sports/recreational facilities. This has necessitated a reconsideration of the development options.

- As a result of that reconsideration, the northern half of Site 1 (Site 1B) has now been identified as the preferred alternative location for any new build housing development – but only if it helps to deliver the mix of land uses noted above.
- A further factor that has had to be taken into account when considering the development potential of the various option sites has of course been the question of viability (or deliverability) of any or all of the elements on the “shopping list” that were identified through the Neighbourhood Plan process (i.e. as per the agreed objectives). There is little point, for example, in identifying/safeguarding land for a specific purpose in the NP if it is unrealistic to expect that such development can/will take place during the plan period.
- One of the key objectives of the emerging NP has been to try and identify a site for a proposed new GP surgery. But having identified such a site how sure can one be that the site so identified will actually be used for such a purpose. This has been the subject of lengthy discussions with Wiltshire Council and the landowners in respect of Site 1. The conclusion reached is that the only way to ensure that a new surgery is actually constructed during the plan period on the proposed allocated site is to place a restriction on the amount of other (housing) development that can take place on the site before the new GP surgery is constructed and brought into use.
- Funding for a new GP surgery – to ensure that it can be built during the plan period - has been the subject of those similar lengthy discussions with Wiltshire Council, the landowners and the GP practice. The funding options considered include: the GP’s themselves funding the entire project; Wiltshire Council (or possibly Sherston Parish Council) funding the project – and leasing the building back to the GP practice; NHS funding the project – via grant aid; and /or the building being funded by the developer of the adjoining land – which would then be handed over to either Wiltshire Council or Sherston Parish Council and leased back to the GP practice. All of the above options are being considered – all of which it should be noted are based on the assumption that Wiltshire Council will make land available for such a purpose at limited or no cost (on Site 1A).
- The most likely option currently being considered is one where the developer of the rest of Site 1 would either directly construct or alternatively fully fund the construction of a purpose-built surgery by a third party which would then be handed over to Wiltshire Council (or Sherston Parish Council) and leased back to the GP practice. None

of the other options that have to date been considered have as yet proven realistic or viable. It should be noted that the landowners of Site 1 have indicated that they would be willing to fund the construction of a purpose built GP surgery – on the assumption that the rest of Site 1 is allocated for a mixed use development (including the erection of up to 45 dwellings). This being the case the Steering Group has opted to include reference to such in the proposed Policy.

- As noted above, a further objective identified through the NP process has been to seek to secure improvements to the existing sports facilities on Site 4. Initially it was thought that by proposing the redevelopment of Site 4 for housing development this would secure funding for a significant replacement sports/leisure facility elsewhere in the locality. (Part of Site 6 was identified for such a purpose – but only on the assumption that Site 4 would be redeveloped). More recently it was realised that the level of demand for a new build all-purpose sports facility was relatively limited and that in the short term a more modest solution comprising the erection of replacement changing rooms should suffice. Over the longer term it was considered that it may well be possible in fact to expand the existing sports field onto some adjoining land (site 3) – which is now the subject of a separate safeguarding Policy in this plan.
- It is considered that the funding for the proposed new/replacement changing rooms should if possible be secured from the developer of the largest proposed development site in the emerging NP – i.e. Site 1. It is proposed therefore to seek to secure the construction of these proposed replacement changing facilities as part of the comprehensive development of Sites 1 and 4.
- Consideration is therefore being given to the allocation of Sites 1A, 1B and 4 as a single “allocation” – to ensure that the mix of development desired by the Parish Council and Wiltshire Council can be delivered. Site 4 has been specifically included in the proposed allocation so as to ensure that the funding for the proposed desired improvements to the sports facilities on this site are funded by the proposed housing development on Sites 1A and 1B.
- It is considered that with the provision of additional landscaping (particularly along the western site boundary) it should be possible to mitigate any potential adverse landscape impact on Site 1B – and thus overcome any possible concerns about landscape impact (as identified in the SEA and Sustainability Appraisal).

- The funding for the erection of the proposed new GP surgery and changing room facility is expected to be derived entirely from this development.

PROPOSAL 4

Sites 1 and 4 West of Knockdown Road

Approximately 4 ha of land situated to the west of Knockdown Road, as identified on the proposals map, is proposed for a mixed use development to include the following:

- **The retention and enhancement of the existing sports field (c.1.3 hectares) situated at the northern end of the site – including the erection of a new building for use as changing room/club facilities (to be funded by the rest of the development within this proposed allocation).**
- **Sufficient land for the erection of a new enhanced GP surgery with associated parking (to be funded by the rest of the development within this proposed allocation).**
- **The provision of public parking spaces to serve the existing primary school.**
- **Sufficient land to allow for the future expansion of the existing Sherston C of E Primary School and/or a site suitable for the erection of a pre-school facility.**
- **Up to 10 affordable dwellings (for occupation by the elderly and/or first time buyers) together with the provision of additional affordable housing as required by Core Strategy Policy 43.**
- **A maximum of 45 dwellings on the site (including any affordable housing).**
- **Strategic landscaping and open space to retain and reinforce existing hedgerows, and to establish new areas of substantial planting and landscaping so as to provide a visual boundary to the development particularly when viewed from the west and south.**

Development will be subject to the following requirements:

- 1. Surface water management that can achieve less than current greenfield rates of run-off and decreases flood risks.**
- 2. The carrying out of all necessary improvements to the local highway network to secure safe access to the development.**
- 3. The provision of footpath links to both the proposed new surgery site and existing primary school as well as to the existing playing fields to the north.**
- 4. The construction of a purpose-built GP surgery on the site by the developer in advance of the occupation of ten new build houses.**
- 5. The construction of a proposed new (replacement) changing room facility on the sports field by the developer prior to the occupation of the 40th new build dwelling on the site.**
- 6. A design and layout that preserves the character of the settlement and surrounding AONB.**

All aspects of development will take place in accordance with a masterplan for the site which is to be approved by the Council prior to the commencement of any development.