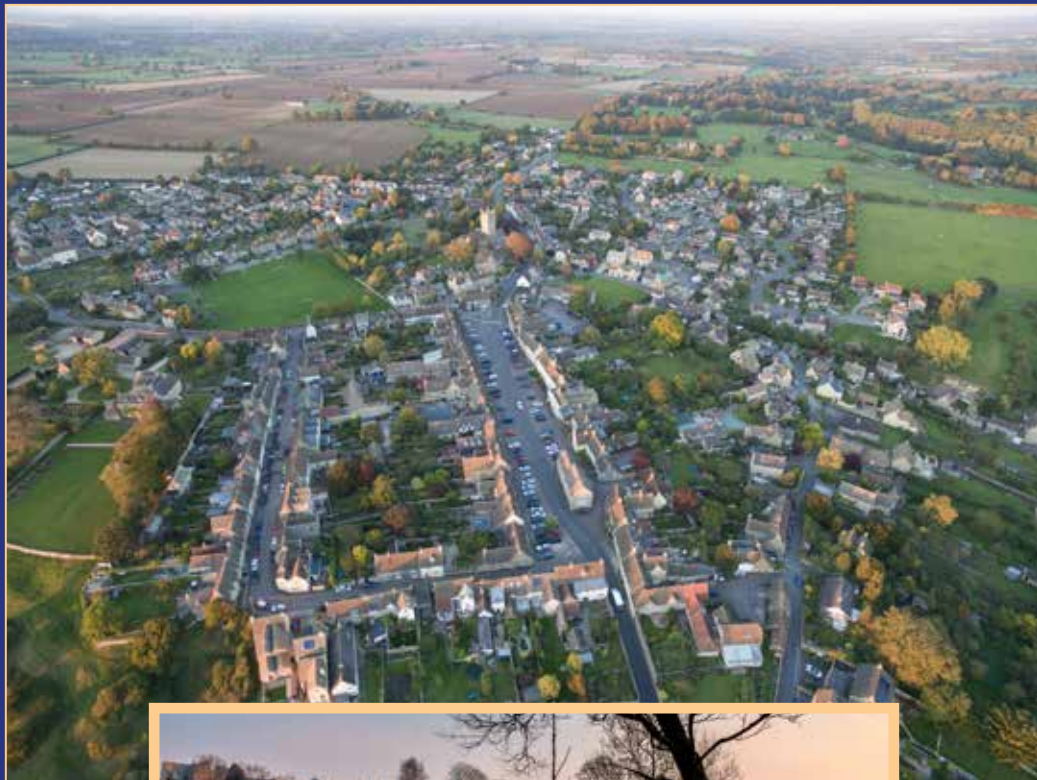




Sherston Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Final Report August 2018



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Appendix A: The neighbourhood planning process in Wiltshire

Appendix B: Review of relevant plans, policies and sustainability objectives

Appendix C: Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Appendix D: Community consultation events

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1. Introduction

This document is the scoping report for the sustainability appraisal, incorporating the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan.

This stage of sustainability appraisal involves compiling background information needed before a sustainability appraisal can be undertaken; it is often referred to as 'scoping'. It establishes an evidence base for ongoing appraisal work and culminates in a framework of sustainability objectives.

The original scoping report was prepared in January 2013 and sent out for consultation in February 2013. The formal six week consultation period expired in April 2013. Comments on the draft scoping report were received from Wiltshire Council, Natural England, English Heritage and one local individual. The scoping report was amended to take full account of the comments received.

The information contained within the amended report was subsequently used to assess the extent to which the emerging neighbourhood plan policies contribute towards sustainable development.

The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity with higher level planning policy, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has been subject to its own sustainability appraisal and this report has been informed by information contained within that assessment and associated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

1.1 Sherston Neighbourhood Plan

The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan (Sherston NP) covers the administrative area of Sherston Parish Council. It was one of six pilot neighbourhood plans in Wiltshire – collectively known as Front Runners. The funding for this project has been secured from the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Sherston Parish Council initiated the front runner application and as a qualifying body is leading this project with the support of Wiltshire Council. The Parish Council meeting on 28th June 2011 unanimously agreed an application to the Area Board for Sherston to be proposed as a Neighbourhood Planning Front Runner.

The project is led by Sherston Parish Council who oversees a Steering Group which includes local councillors, residents and other community stakeholders. The Steering Group first met in February 2012, and since that date work has been progressing the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan will potentially seek to allocate development sites, where appropriate, and establish any local policies that may be needed to complement those set out within Wiltshire Council's development plan.

The full extent of the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan Area is shown on Map 1 (Appendix E).

The Sherston NP objectives have been defined as follows:

Objective 1:

The Plan will support the provision of facilities considered important for a vibrant community by:

- Protecting those facilities already in place;
- Supporting the provision of a new enhanced GP surgery;
- Facilitating the provision of additional facilities for the elderly, pre-school, and young people living within the village.

Objective 2:

The Plan will ensure that all future development in the village:

- Respects the high quality of the local environment by employing the use of building materials in sympathy with the Cotswold AONB;
- Is of the highest quality of design – utilising wherever possible traditional styles and proportions;
- Safeguarding those parts of the settlement that have been identified as being worthy of protection from development by reason of their landscape quality, ecological importance, historic interest or local significance.

Objective 3:

The Plan will facilitate opportunities for new and existing businesses and social enterprise that benefit the community and support the delivery of advanced fibre connectivity to all parts of the parish by:

- Supporting the creation of new business premises in appropriate locations;
- Resisting the change of use of existing business premises to alternative uses (except where there is a clear benefit to the community from allowing such);
- Encouraging the providers of high speed and ultrafast broadband and other media services to deliver a level of service that will support the needs of local business and households throughout the plan area.

Objective 4:

The Plan will seek to provide for the housing needs of the community. It will do this through:

- Allowing an appropriate amount of development in selected locations – to include houses for sale on the open market, affordable social rented and shared equity housing, and sheltered elderly persons accommodation;
- Ensuring that all such development includes a mix of house types capable of meeting the identified local need;
- Considering the redevelopment of existing brown field development opportunities first;
- Supporting the provision of a replacement dwelling for the local vicar in an appropriate location.

Objective 5:

The Plan will seek to provide for the existing and future leisure, recreational, sporting, community and social needs of the village by:

- Ensuring that certain existing important open land and other green spaces within and adjoining the village are retained and/or enhanced – or that suitable replacement facilities are provided as part of any agreed redevelopment proposals;
- Ensuring that sufficient additional areas of open space are created within all new developments;
- Identifying and securing a site for the provision of additional burials within the village;
- Ensuring that existing sports and leisure facilities are retained and wherever possible enhanced.
- Supporting the provision of new build sports, leisure and recreational facilities in and around the village in appropriate locations.

Objective 6:

The Plan will facilitate measures for managing traffic in and around the village by:

- Ensuring that sufficient on-site parking is provided in all new developments - sufficient to meet current and likely future car ownership and use;

- Seeking to identify solutions to existing identified access and parking (drop off and pick up) problems associated with the Primary School;
- Encouraging measures which lead to a reduction in traffic volumes, movement and speed throughout the village and provide safer journeys for both pedestrians and motorists alike.
- Encouraging greater use of public transport, cycling and walking.

Objective 7:

The Plan will encourage the sympathetic management of the countryside surrounding the village so as to retain and/or enhance its high quality, improve biodiversity and provide other longer term benefits to the local community by:

- Considering the creation of a community wood and/or orchard;
- Identifying and safeguarding any sites identified in the locality that are considered to be of significant ecological or landscape quality.

Objective 8:

The Plan will encourage a move towards a low carbon economy which includes local food production and the generation of renewable energy by:

- Identifying additional land within the plan area for allotments;
- Encouraging the introduction of appropriate alternative energy sources (specifically solar, wood fuel, ground and air source heat systems) for use within existing and all new development within and around the village.

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Delivering sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the planning system and the purpose of sustainability appraisal is to promote the objectives of sustainable development within planning policy. This is done by appraising the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan from the outset and in doing so, helping to ensure that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in the preparation of the plan.

Sustainability appraisal helps to deliver the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. This strategy defines the goal of sustainable development as “to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations”. It sets out five guiding principles to achieve it:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting good governance
- using sound science responsibly.

Legal requirements

There is no legal requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal of a neighbourhood plan. This has been established through recent advice and guidance from Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). However, assessing the social, economic and environmental effects of a neighbourhood plan is good practice, can help improve its overall sustainability and ensure that a wider range of sustainability considerations inform its development.

There is a legal requirement to consider the need to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on plans which are determined likely to have significant environmental effects. This is in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the

environment”, also known as the SEA Directive. The SEA Directive was transposed in England through *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004*.

It was considered that, because of the likely content of the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan, including the consideration of development sites and the size of the geographical area that the plan covers, there was the likelihood of significant environmental effects. An SEA was therefore undertaken throughout the plan’s preparation.

The requirements of the SEA Directive that this report meets are outlined in Section 2.1 of this report and at the beginning of the following sections.

Joint assessment

Although the legal requirements for sustainability appraisal and SEA are separate and distinct, they have a high degree of overlap and guidance advises an integrated approach can be followed. Throughout this report therefore, where reference is made to sustainability appraisal, it relates to the combined process of sustainability appraisal and SEA.

1.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment

Habitats Regulations Assessment in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC is a further consideration in respect of the Sherston NP. HRA concerns Natura 2000 sites, which are areas protected for their nature conservation value; these areas consist of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites.

An HRA screening exercise will be undertaken in consultation with Natural England and ecologists at Wiltshire Council to establish if the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to any adverse effects on European Sites. This will take the HRA Report published alongside the Wiltshire Core Strategy Pre-Submission Document into consideration. Any HRA work will be conducted alongside the sustainability appraisal process to ensure the processes inform each other. However, any HRA work will be reported on separately as they are separate legal requirements.

1.4 Report Structure

This report is structured in the following way:

Chapter 2: Methodology

Chapter 3: Review of other plans, policies and sustainability objectives

Chapter 4: Baseline information

Chapter 5: Key sustainability and environmental issues and problems

Chapter 6: Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Chapter 7: Consultation requirements

Chapter 8: Next steps

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The methodology for the initial scoping stage of the sustainability appraisal was developed in accordance with the following guidance:

- *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive* (ODPM, 2005)
- Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Sustainability Appraisal online guidance at: <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=152450>

This report meets the scoping requirements of the SEA Directive which are as follows:

SEA Directive 2001/42/EC legal requirements:

Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

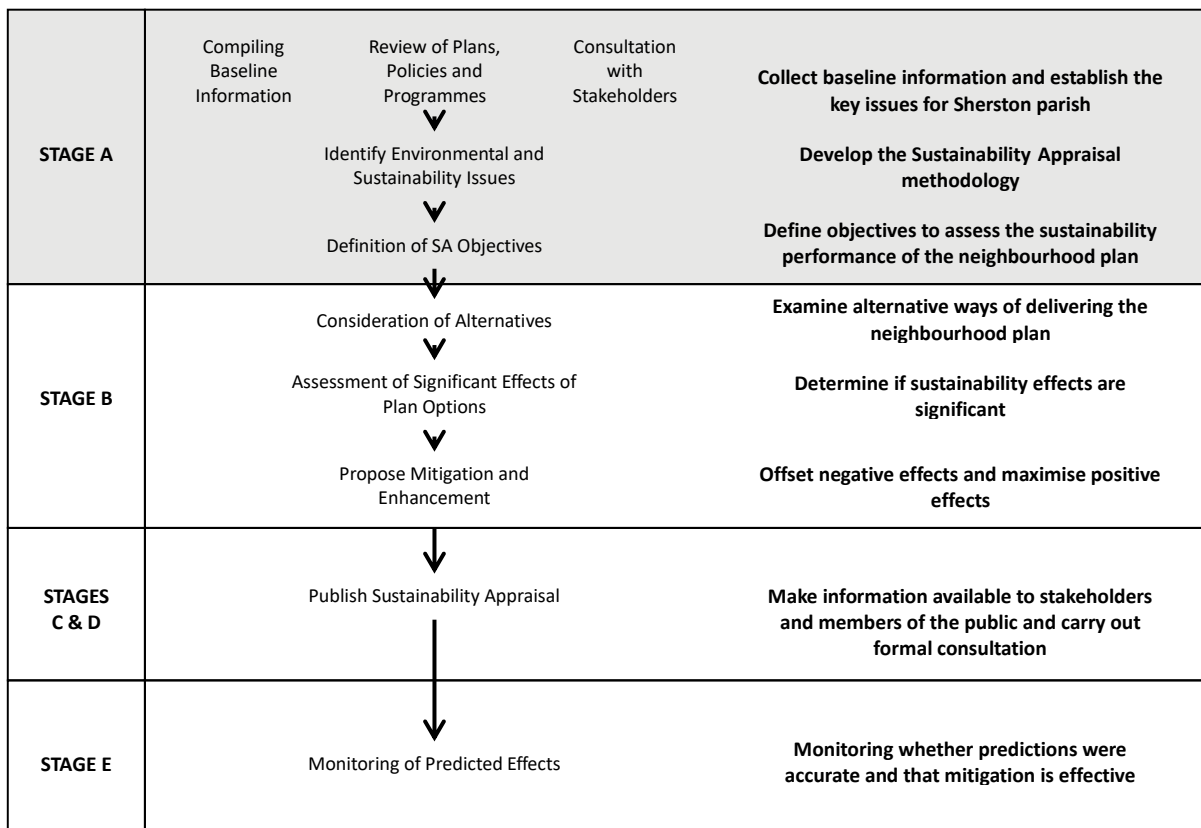
The Environmental Report shall include information on [inter alia]:

- the “relationship [of the plan or programme] with other relevant plans and programmes” (Annex I(a))
- “the environmental protection objectives, established at international, [European] Community or [national] level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation” (Annex I (e))
- “relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme” and “the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected” (Annex I (b), (c))
- “any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC” (Annex I (d))
- “The authorities ... which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes ... shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report” (Article 5.4 and 6.3).

2.2 Stages of the Sustainability Appraisal

The sustainability appraisal was carried out in a series of stages which are outlined in figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: The stages of sustainability appraisal and SEA



This scoping report includes the information relating to Stage A (highlighted) and this relates to Stage 1 of the neighbourhood planning process for Wiltshire, presented in the diagram in Appendix A. Further information on neighbourhood planning in Wiltshire can be found at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning.htm

The individual tasks within Stage A, which will meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, are further explained in Sections 3-7 of this report.

The information contained in this report was subsequently used in the assessment of the alternative options that were being considered to meet the objectives of the emerging Sherston NP. This related to Stage B of the process as described above. The Sustainability Appraisal itself is being published in tandem with the draft Sherston NP. (Stage C and D as described above).

2.3 Scope of the Sustainability Appraisal

The sustainability topics considered in this scoping report encompass those required by the SEA Directive but include wider social and economic considerations. These have been informed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the sustainability appraisal of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

The SEA Directive 2001/42/EC requires an assessment of:

“the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.”

In addition, topics have been included to ensure that those of particular relevance to the Sherston area have been considered. These topics are summarised in the table below, with a comparison of the topics required by the SEA Directive. The sustainability appraisal guidance also requires that any inter-relationships between topic areas are considered. Cross cutting matters have therefore been addressed within this report for each topic area. Cross cutting issues refer to where elements of one topic relate to elements of either one or a number of the other topic areas.

Figure 2.2: Sustainability topics included within the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal

SEA Directive required considerations	Sherston Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal topic areas	Sustainability theme
Biodiversity	1. Biodiversity Incorporating fauna and flora	Environmental
Fauna		
Flora		
Soil	2. Land and soil resources	
Water	3. Water resources and flood risk	
Air	4. Air quality and environmental pollution	
Climatic factors	5. Climatic factors	
Cultural heritage, Including architectural and Archaeological heritage	6. Historic environment Incorporating cultural heritage, architectural and archaeological heritage	
Landscape	7. Landscape	
Population	8. Population and housing	
Human health	9. Healthy communities	
	10. Inclusive communities	
	11. Education and skills	
	12. Transport	Economic
	13. Economy and enterprise	
Material assets	Material assets and infrastructure matters are discussed within other topic areas. For example, waste matters are discussed within the land and soil resources topic area and transport infrastructure is discussed within the transport topic area	Environmental Social Economic
Inter- Relationships	Important cross cutting matters are addressed in relation to each topic.	Environmental Social Economic

3. Task A1 - Identifying other plans, policies and sustainability objectives

SEA Directive requires consideration of:

“the relationship with other relevant plans and programmes”

“the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation”

Annex 1(a) and (e)

3.1 Introduction

The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan may be influenced in various ways by other plans or programmes, or by external environmental protection objectives such as those laid down in policies or legislation. Documenting these influences is an important part of the sustainability appraisal process as it ensures the neighbourhood planning work is consistent with up to date policy, is informed by sound information and also helps in the process of identifying environmental and sustainability issues.

The SEA Directive specifically requires environmental protection objectives established at international, European Community or national levels to be taken into account during the development of a plan.

3.2 Review of plans, policies and objectives relevant to Sherston

A comprehensive review of International, national, regional and local level documents have been undertaken by Wiltshire Council and documented in its Wiltshire Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report¹. There are also a number of documents that contain local-level information that are of specific relevance to the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan and which will need to be taken into account during its' development. These documents are all listed below:

- National Planning Policy Framework.
- Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted January 2015.
- North Wiltshire Local Plan – saved policies – adopted June 2006
- Joint Strategic Assessment for the Malmesbury Community Area 2011.
- Wiltshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2011 – 2026 Appendix 1: Community Area Delivery Schedules – Malmesbury
- Sherston - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Wiltshire Council).
- North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment – Whites 2004.
- Sherston Conservation Area Statement – NWDC 1999.
- Sherston Local Housing Needs Survey 2012 – Wiltshire Council
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009 – Wiltshire Council

Key aims, objectives and indicators have been identified from these documents and these have been incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal framework (see Section 6) and used to inform baseline data and the identification of key sustainability issues.

¹ Wiltshire Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Wiltshire Council, April 2010)

Appendix B contains a review of the various documents. These are summarised below:

1. National Planning Policy Framework:

The NPPF must be complied with in its entirety. However there are several elements which are particularly relevant when looking to achieve sustainable development in Sherston and a compliant Neighbourhood Plan: These are as follows:

- Delivering a choice of high quality homes of good design.
- Building and supporting the local economy, through retail and business development and supporting high quality communications infrastructure.
- Promoting healthy communities and sustainable transport.
- Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding.
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

2. Wiltshire Core Strategy:

This plan was adopted in January 2015. The purpose of the document is to outline Wiltshire Council's Strategy from 2006 to 2026 for the County of Wiltshire with regard to sustainability, health, economic vitality and provision of housing. The main aim of the Strategy is to state the way forward for all aspects of life in Wiltshire and as such lies under the National Planning Policy Framework and other EC and Government legislation. Additionally within the Wiltshire Core Strategy there is a specific strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area. The specific objectives for the Malmesbury Community Area relevant to Sherston are:

1. Provide appropriate levels of housing in the town and villages within the designated area (N.B. Sherston is identified as a Large Village for the purposes of the settlement strategy);
2. All development within the community area must conserve the designated landscape of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting, and where possible enhance its locally distinctive characteristics;
3. Future development will be carefully managed to ensure the high quality built environment including the important historic assets, such as any listed buildings and Conservation Areas, are protected. Future development should be of high quality design and well integrated with the existing built form and landscape setting of the settlement including using local materials where appropriate.

3. North Wiltshire Local Plan:

This document contains various planning policies that remain relevant to the consideration of development proposals throughout the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan area. This document covers the whole of the former North Wiltshire Council area. Many of the policies contained in this plan have now been superseded following the adoption of the Wiltshire Core Strategy in 2015. There are a number of "saved" policies in the NWLP however that are still relevant to the decision-making process. For example, it defines the current settlement boundary (village development boundary) for the village of Sherston and sets out more detailed policies for the management of land and buildings throughout the plan area.

It is envisaged that the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan, when adopted, will contain some policies that further supersede those contained within the NWLP. Some policies however will remain in place and will continue to be relevant to the decision-making process.

4. Joint Strategic Assessment for the Malmesbury Community Area:

This document sets out the strategic issues for the whole of the Malmesbury Community Area for the next three years based on data, information and knowledge about the Area.

This document covers the whole of the Malmesbury Community Area and has the most current local data available at this time, apart from specially commissioned survey work. This is necessary evidence which has to be considered for Plan proposals. There is a lot of background information contained within this document, but specific objectives, which this document can assist with are:

- Population and forecasted age range
- Health and wellbeing
- Housing
- Transport
- Environment

5. Wiltshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2011 – 2026:

This document provides an infrastructure delivery schedule for the entire Malmesbury Community Area and sets out the infrastructure requirements identified by service providers as being necessary to support development as outlined in the Pre-Submission Wiltshire Core Strategy Feb 2012. It provides some information and costings specifically for infrastructure in the designated Sherston NP area.

6. North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment:

This document gives a general overview of North Wiltshire. This is the most current landscape assessment for the area. Soil types and a description of the landscape are a guide to assessing landscape as evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan proposals.

7. Sherston Conservation Area Statement:

This document provides specific guidance in relation to the designated Sherston Conservation Area – which covers the historic core of the village and its immediate environs. It is based on a detailed analysis of the entire village and more particularly of the key areas that are considered to contribute to the character of the settlement. It incorporates specific proposals and recommendations for action – many of which are still relevant today.

8. Sherston Housing Needs Survey:

This was a survey of the housing needs of the entire Parish undertaken by Wiltshire Council specifically to help inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

9. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment:

Wiltshire Council has undertaken a Strategic Housing Land Assessment – seeking to identify potential sites for development in the locality. The information obtained from this assessment will be examined, together with any new sites that are put forward during the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

10. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment:

This report summarises information on the application of the Sequential Test, a broad scale assessment of flood risk for potential strategic developments, flood risk management measures for consideration for new developments, recommendations for flood risk policy and site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) guidance.

4. Task A2: Baseline information

4.1 Introduction

SEA Directive requires consideration of:

“the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without the implementation of the plan or programme” and “the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected” **(Annex 1(b) and (c))**

Baseline identifies what is currently happening in Sherston and the likely future state of the area if current trends were to continue. It provides the basis for predicting and monitoring environmental and sustainability effects of the neighbourhood plan and helps to identify problems and alternative ways of dealing with them.

A practical approach to the collection of baseline information is essential as there will be opportunities to update the sustainability appraisal scoping work as further consultation is undertaken. Gaps in data may be identified and if so they will be identified in this report. Stakeholders will have an important role to play in this process; local people, developers, advisors and statutory consultees will provide information and feedback which will inform the neighbourhood plan as it progresses.

This section of the report outlines a summary of the environmental and sustainability baseline information for Sherston set out by sustainability topic as discussed in Section 2. This information will provide the basis for understanding what the key sustainability issues are in the NP area and it will influence the type of environmental and sustainability objectives that are chosen for the ongoing assessment of the neighbourhood plan.

Background to the Sherston NP area:

The Parish of Sherston is situated in the northwest corner of Wiltshire, about 5 miles to the west of Malmesbury and close to the boundary with Gloucestershire. The village itself is an historic settlement, first mentioned by Ethelred Ealdorman of Mercia in the 9th Century and is considered to be one of the earliest boroughs in the country.

The original settlement at Sherston is considered likely to have been defended by earthworks – a section of which still remain north of Manor Farm – which are now a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Sherston was a place of some significance during the Saxon and Norman periods and there is evidence of a battle taking place nearby in 1016 between the Danes (Cnut) and the Saxons (Eadmund Ironside).

Sherston provides a good example of a small compact purpose-built market town, laid out alongside a smaller settlement to serve local needs.

The modern layout of the village preserves to a large extent the form of the original borough, centred around the wide High Street which once served as a market place.

The village has expanded considerably over the last 60 years, with various “modern” phases of development taking place just after the war, in the 1970’s and again in the early 2000’s. Indeed, some 80 new houses have been constructed in the village since the turn of the millennium.

To have a working and sustainable community is vital to residents and whilst many still work in the village there has been a significant reduction in businesses in recent years. This is particularly true of retail outlets which have halved in number to seven since 1980. The largest employer, Stretchline Mill, has reduced its workforce from 100 to 35 within the last five years.

The village has two main shops, including a thriving Post Office/Stores that operate out of premises that have been converted from a former Victorian School. It has two pubs. It has an inadequate bus service. It has a new and thriving school. Nevertheless, shops have closed and until recently commercial premises in the High Street have generally been converted to residential use once they fall out of use - the most recent being the butcher's shop. The main exception to this rule being the decision by the Parish Council in 2011, with the backing of the entire community, to purchase a redundant Victorian School on the High Street and to convert this into a range of business units – all of which are now fully let.

The Parish of Sherston covers an area of approximately 1712 hectares and has a population in excess of 1420 persons (Office of National Statistics 2001 Census). In addition to the village itself, the Parish contains two smaller hamlets (Willesley and Pinkney) together with a large amount of agricultural land.

4.2 Baseline Details:

a. Biodiversity

General -The Sherston NP area is considered to be rich in biodiversity e.g. bats, grass snakes, slow worms, kingfishers, woodpeckers, many differing types of finches, birds of prey, wrens, deer, badgers, hedgehogs, foxes, different types of shrew and voles, water rats, field rats and mice, ancient hedgerows with a wide variety of hedgerow plants, oak trees and other kinds of trees many protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The following protected species and habitats will need to be given particular attention: Brown trout; Freshwater white clawed crayfish; Great crested newts; Brook lamprey; plus Lowland calcareous grassland; Deciduous woodland; and Traditional Orchards.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan adequate local level understanding and action may not be enabled to help to ensure protection and enhancement.

SSSI – There are no identified SSSI’s within the Sherston NP area.

COUNTY WILDLIFE SITES - Much of our richest biodiversity is to be found in the riparian meadows and banks along the tributaries of the Sherston Avon, large sections of which are now designated County Wildlife Sites by Wiltshire Council (see Map 2 at Appendix E).

There are two other designated sites at:

- Lord's Wood – situated about a mile to the south of the village (an area of ancient woodland); and

- Vancelette's Farm – situated just to the south of Willesley (an area of unimproved grassland).

County Wildlife Sites are defined as:

" areas of land of recognised value for wildlife, which fall outside the legal protection given to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Wiltshire Wildlife Sites Project identifies, designates and monitors County Wildlife Sites and, to date, over 1,500 such sites in have been designated in Wiltshire. The sites are selected against a robust set of habitat and species criteria. These sites provide a vital network of threatened habitats such as chalk grassland, ancient woodland, hay meadows and wetlands, and act as reservoirs of declining animal and plant species."

There are also two identified Local Wildlife Sites at:

- Carriers Farm Meadows – situated about half a mile to the west of the village;
- New Farm Meadows – situated to the south of the village.

It is not anticipated that development will adversely impact on any of the designated County Wildlife Sites or Local Wildlife Sites.

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES – there are no designated local nature reserves within the Sherston NP area.

The Neighbourhood Plan will look at the designated area as a whole to ensure this aspect is carefully considered and irreparable loss avoided.

b. Land and soil resources

LANDFILL/ WASTE SITES - There are no identified landfill or waste sites within the Sherston NP Area. It is not anticipated that these will be needed in the future, given that waste collection is centralised by Wiltshire Council.

'GREENFIELD' SITES/ AONB – Most of the Sherston NP Area is 'greenfield' with little 'brownfield' land available to be redeveloped. It is inevitable therefore that some future development will have to be built on 'greenfield' sites.

If this does prove necessary, great care will have to be taken to minimise the potential impact on the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (which covers about 70% of the Sherston NP Area) and any wildlife habitats. Consideration should be given to identifying places and willing landowners where compensatory works could perhaps be undertaken so as to ensure that there is no net loss in biodiversity.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan local level understanding, detail and delivery of any non- strategic objectives may not be achieved.

AGRICULTURAL LAND QUALITY ⁵ – The land falling outside of the built-up area of the village of Sherston is largely made up of open fields, with a significant amount given over to grazing and some arable. Whilst the land lying immediately to the east and north-east of the village is designated as Grade 1 land, the majority of the area is designated Grade 3 agricultural land. Some areas mainly following along the length of the River Avon and in the extreme south of the NP Area are designated Grade 4. See Map 3 at Appendix E.

The area shown designated as Grade1 agricultural land will need to be protected from inappropriate further development.

Agricultural land is classified on the following basis:

Grade 1 - excellent quality agricultural land

Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.

Grade 2 - very good quality agricultural land

Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land in the grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1.

Grade 3 - good to moderate quality agricultural land

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

Subgrade 3a - good quality agricultural land

Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

Subgrade 3b - moderate quality agricultural land

Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.

Grade 4 - poor quality agricultural land

Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (e.g. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan the significance of this issue may not be fully appreciated. It is considered unlikely however that any of the development options that may be considered will impact on the highest quality agricultural land.

ALLOTMENTS – There is one existing allotment site within the Sherston NP area situated off Knockdown Road close to its junction with Green Lane. It is understood that this is fully occupied with a waiting list for vacant sites. Should this site be considered suitable for future development adequate alternative equivalent facilities will need to be provided in a location accessible to the allotment users.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan this issue is unlikely to be fully considered at the local level.

SOIL RESOURCES – SOIL TYPES

The Plan area is covered by three soil series (Reference <http://www.landis.org.uk/>). Sherston village and its immediate surroundings is underlain by the Elmton 2 series, described as *shallow well drained brashy calcareous fine loamy soils over limestone*. The well-drained nature of these soils makes them suitable for both building and agriculture, and all the Grade 1 agricultural land is this type. South of the river is the

Sherborne series, described as *shallow well drained brashy calcareous clayey soils over limestone*. This is similar to Elmton 2, but with a little more clay. It is still considered a free-draining and permeable soil, however. These soils have considerable water storage capacity, are not very prone to flooding, and retain water from wet periods and release it to the river in dry conditions. It is important for sustainability that these functions are preserved. On the other hand, these soils do not retain pollutants well, and transfer them readily to groundwater and thence to the river. On the periphery of the Plan area, generally on the flat plateau areas, is the Evesham 1 series, described as *slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils*. These are seasonally waterlogged soils with little water storage capacity, are prone to flooding, and not very suitable for building development.

SOIL RESOURCES - GEOLOGY







The geological profile of the Sherston NP Area may be seen on Map 4 below - which is taken from the British Geological survey.²

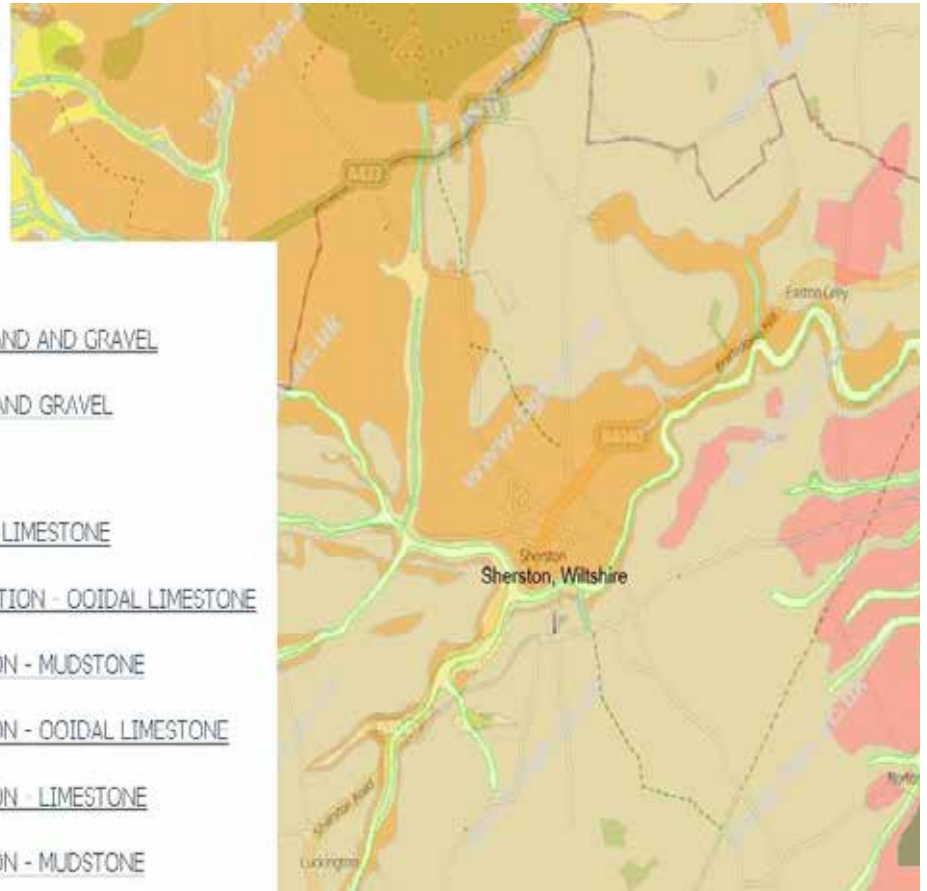
Contains British Geological Survey materials.
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Superficial deposits

-  ALLUVIUM - CLAY, SILT, SAND AND GRAVEL
-  HEAD - CLAY, SILT, SAND AND GRAVEL

Bedrock geology

-  CORNERASH FORMATION - LIMESTONE
-  CHALFIELD OOLITE FORMATION - OOIDAL LIMESTONE
-  FULLER'S EARTH FORMATION - MUDSTONE
-  FOREST MARBLE FORMATION - OOIDAL LIMESTONE
-  FOREST MARBLE FORMATION - LIMESTONE
-  FOREST MARBLE FORMATION - MUDSTONE



SOIL RESOURCES - QUARRIES There is one existing active quarry within the Sherston NP Area, at Knockdown Quarry, a short distance to the north of Sherston village – which provides natural stone for building projects (stone-walling and roof tiles etc.). Many of the older buildings within the Sherston NP Area are all constructed of local Cotswold stone.

The Sherston NP Plan will not be dealing with any issues arising from the existence of this quarry. Such matters are dealt with by Wiltshire Council through their Minerals Plan.

² Reference

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/mapViewers/home.html>

c. **Water resources and flood risk**

WATER RESOURCES – The Sherston NP area is situated above an aquifer that supplies water locally and to other parts of the south west. Fresh water supplies are provided by Bristol Water.

It is considered that the limited scale of development envisaged in the Sherston NP area during the plan period is unlikely to adversely impact on water supply but it will be necessary to consult with Bristol Water as the plan evolves to ensure that this is the case.

Any additional demand on water resources from new development should however be carefully managed to ensure it does not result in a detrimental impact on river flows.

FLOOD RISK – This is an important issue, particularly in the light of recent events, as some parts of the Sherston NP Area are likely to be at risk from flooding. The village itself is immediately abutted by two tributaries of the River Avon, both of which have experienced flooding in the last few years. Those properties immediately adjoining the river on Brook Hill and Thomsons Hill are considered likely to be at greatest risk.

The areas likely to be at greatest risk from flooding are shown on Map 2 at Appendix E. As can be seen, the majority of the Sherston NP area lies outside of any areas identified as being at risk from flooding – the exception being those areas situated immediately adjoining the River Avon and a small area in the south of the NP Area.

Great care will need to be taken to ensure that any future development promoted through the Sherston NP Plan avoids those areas identified as being at specific risk and does not in itself lead to increased run-off exacerbating the existing known problems. Sustainable drainage techniques should be utilised in all cases.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan this issue is unlikely to be fully considered at a local level. Decisions to allocate non-strategic development sites through a neighbourhood plan are more likely to consider the full potential flood-risk issues associated with every site under consideration.

WATER POLLUTION - The quality of water in the UK is governed by the EU Water Framework Directive and its translation into national regulations.³ These are being implemented by the Environment Agency by means of Catchment Management Plans. Neighbourhood plans need to be compatible with these large-scale plans, and if possible assist in achieving their objectives.

GROUNDWATER – As noted above, the rocks underlying the Plan area contain an important aquifer which supplies drinking water not only locally but to other parts of SW England. The entire Plan area constitutes a Groundwater Protection Zone indicating the potential for activities to contaminate this groundwater. Currently the groundwater is classified as having “good” chemical status under the EU Water Framework Directive (there are only two categories, “good” and “poor”). However, nitrate concentrations are high due to agricultural activities and discharges from septic tanks, and the Plan area is also classified as “probably at risk” of groundwater contamination, which would mean additional treatment before it is safe to drink. In an attempt to reduce this risk, about 80% of the Plan area (the exception being the SE corner) is designated a “nitrate vulnerable zone” in which there are restrictions on the amounts and timings of agricultural nitrogen fertiliser application. In terms of future development, it should be noted that parts of the Sherston NP area do not have access to a public sewerage network, and a substantial number of properties in the

³ Reference

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/37793.aspx>

Village are not connected to the sewage treatment works (STW). The implications of future development must necessarily be examined so as to ensure that there is adequate capacity in the Sherston STW. Wessex Water will be consulted about this matter. Where a connection to the STW is not economically possible, development opportunities may be limited, and any septic tank systems or small-scale treatment works need to be carefully designed and well-maintained.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan this issue is unlikely to be fully considered at a local level.

SURFACE WATER - Surface water quality is also controlled by the Water Framework Directive and implemented through Catchment Management Plans.⁴ The ecological status of the River Avon passing through the Sherston NP area is “moderate”. This is the second highest of the 5 classes of surface water ecological quality, and would meet the requirements of the Directive. The chemical status is classified as “does not require assessment”. However, the Environment Agency’s monitoring of the river near The Grove shows that though the dissolved oxygen and ammonia concentrations are rated “good” or “very good”, the nitrate and phosphate concentrations are high enough for ecological effects on the river to be occurring. The chemical criteria are currently being revised, and it is possible that some action under the Catchment Management Plan would be triggered to reduce them. In the Sherston NP, these actions would be similar to those for protecting groundwater, but some of the actions proposed for increasing biodiversity (e.g. community woodlands) could also have a positive effect on water quality.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan this issue is unlikely to be fully considered at a local level.

d. Air quality and other potential environmental pollution

AIR QUALITY – As a relatively small populated area surrounded by open country and distant from major roads, the local air quality in Sherston is likely to be good.

Space and water heating in Sherston is largely achieved using fossil fuels – oil, wood and some coal. There is no piped gas supply to Sherston (although bottled gas is used). All of these fuels are sources of CO₂ and the particulate emissions from such have the potential to cause health effects if population density becomes too great. Coal fires also produce sulphur dioxide. (Over-use of garden bonfires can also adversely affect air quality. Wiltshire Council should be encouraged to continue to collect garden waste for recycling and to discourage house owners from burning it.)

Electrification would reduce reliance on these fuels. The Government, through the Department of energy and Climate Change (DECC) has made a commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions and to promote electrification of heating to achieve these reductions (although there is no specific CO₂ reduction target).

Issues of climate change and air quality would be addressed by a move to more electrified space and water heating. There is the potential for solar photo-voltaics and solar thermal (direct water heating) solutions in new development in appropriate locations. The installation of solar panels on existing (older) properties may be more problematic – particularly if it affected the character/ conservation value of an existing property or locality. The installation of solar panels on dwellings of high conservation value will inevitably need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, although, in general, this could be supported where appropriate.

⁴ Reference

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/124941.aspx>

There are no particular issues in the Sherston NP Area, with respect to manufacturing or commercial pollution of any sort and there is no evidence of any serious traffic congestion. That said, there will be an increasing trend of more emissions and air pollution, with greater car usage as a result of further development, unless the Neighbourhood Plan addresses the issue of the positioning of sites close to amenities and also encouragement of more sustainable methods of transport.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan this issue is unlikely to be fully considered at a local level.

LIGHT POLLUTION – Sherston has been a pilot of a new Wiltshire Council-led scheme to trial turning off street lighting during the night time in non-essential areas to help reduce light pollution.

OTHER POLLUTION – There are no particular issues with any other kind of pollution.

e. Climatic factors

The change in climatic factors in recent years has not appeared to have had much of a significant influence except perhaps with regard to rainfall, of which there have recently been prolonged spells. Exceptional amounts and prolonged periods of rainfall have affected areas prone to flooding, raising river levels and the increasing the volume of surface water. Anecdotally this is starting to affect some Sherston properties i.e. flooded gardens and outbuildings and other areas of low-lying land. This appears to be an increasing trend.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Topic Paper No.1 Climate Change deals with this as follows:

Precipitation

Annual precipitation stays roughly the same

Decreases in summer mean precipitation by between 1 % and 15 %

Increase in winter mean precipitation by between 2 % and 10 %

Increase in precipitation on the wettest winter day by between 2 % and 11 %

Theme Impact

Built Environment

Increased need for cooling of buildings in summer but less demand for heating in warmer winters. Practical technologies are needed for passive cooling of buildings, to avoid more releases of greenhouse gases in powering cooling plants.

Reduced summer rainfall and more frequent droughts will put pressure on water supplies. Increased use of existing water efficient and rainwater harvesting technologies is therefore, needed to reduce water consumption in buildings especially in summer.

Wetter winters and heavier rainfall will exacerbate problems with damp and leaks in older buildings, as well as increasing the risk of flooding.

Increased solar radiation may provide more opportunity for solar heating in winter and cooling in summer.

Housing will be at increased risk from flooding and will need to be resilient to heavy rainfall and storms.

Housing will need to be able to cope with increased temperature and become more water efficient to reduce reliance on an increasingly scarce water supply.

Buildings on clay are vulnerable to subsidence and ground movement from clay drying and shrinking during drought.

The changing climate is likely to have an effect on residents' behaviour and expectations – for example, the demand for outdoor space may grow. The design of buildings and housing developments will need to take this into

account if the quality of life for residents is to be sustained and improved.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan, a co-ordinated and sensitive shaping of non-strategic development opportunities would be difficult to achieve. This may result in greater climate change impacts from development that is not co-ordinated to achieve maximum sustainability benefits.

f. Historic environment

HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT –

The Sherston Conservation Area Statement, together with other published literature on the history of the village (notably *Sherston: The City of White Walls* by Cilla Liddington) provides clear evidence of a richly historic environment. Many of the older buildings throughout the NP Area are listed including most of the buildings in the historic core of the village.

The Sherston Conservation Area Statement identifies and references much of the historic centre of the village and will continue to be used as a guide to the preservation of the character and buildings of this area.

There are other non-designated historic buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area, both inside and beyond the existing settlement limits which will have to be looked at individually should there be a desire to develop the actual buildings and/or impinge on their settings.

The hamlet of Willesley, which is situated at the northern end of the Parish is designated as a Conservation Area.

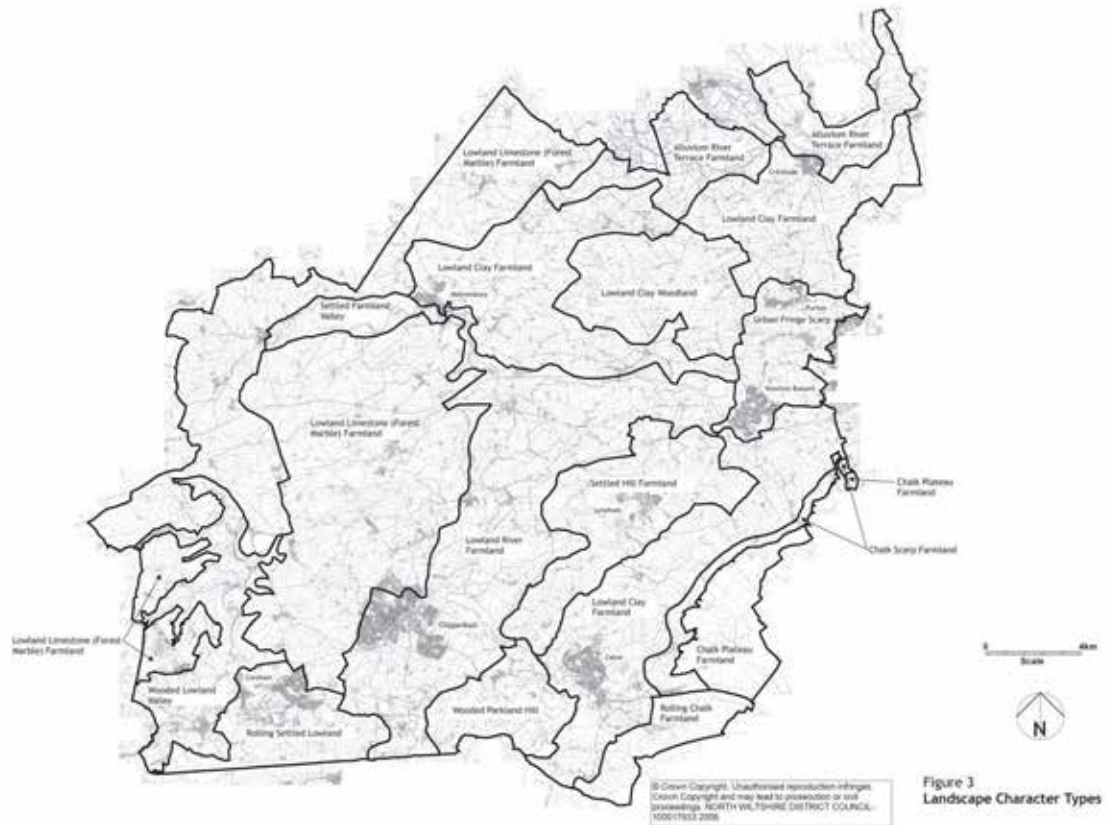
The existing national and local level designations and assessments provide a sound level of protection that could be further enhanced through Neighbourhood Plan policies.

ARCHAEOLOGY- As noted above, Sherston is an ancient settlement and one of the oldest chartered boroughs in England. Archaeology is likely to be an important factor when considering future development in certain parts of the NP Area (notably within the village of Sherston itself and/or on land immediately surrounding the village). There is one scheduled Ancient Monument falling within the Sherston NP Area and this comprises the remains of earthworks on the land adjoining Manor Farm at the north-western end of the village (see map 5 at Appendix E).

This existing national designation and assessments provide a sound level of protection that could be further enhanced through Neighbourhood Plan policies.

g. Landscapes

Map 6 below shows the various landscape character sub-divisions identified by White Consultants in 2004 for North Wiltshire Council. The Sherston NP area lies within an area predominantly described as “Lowland Limestone Forest Marble Farmland”, although part of the area is described as a “Settled Farmland Valley”.



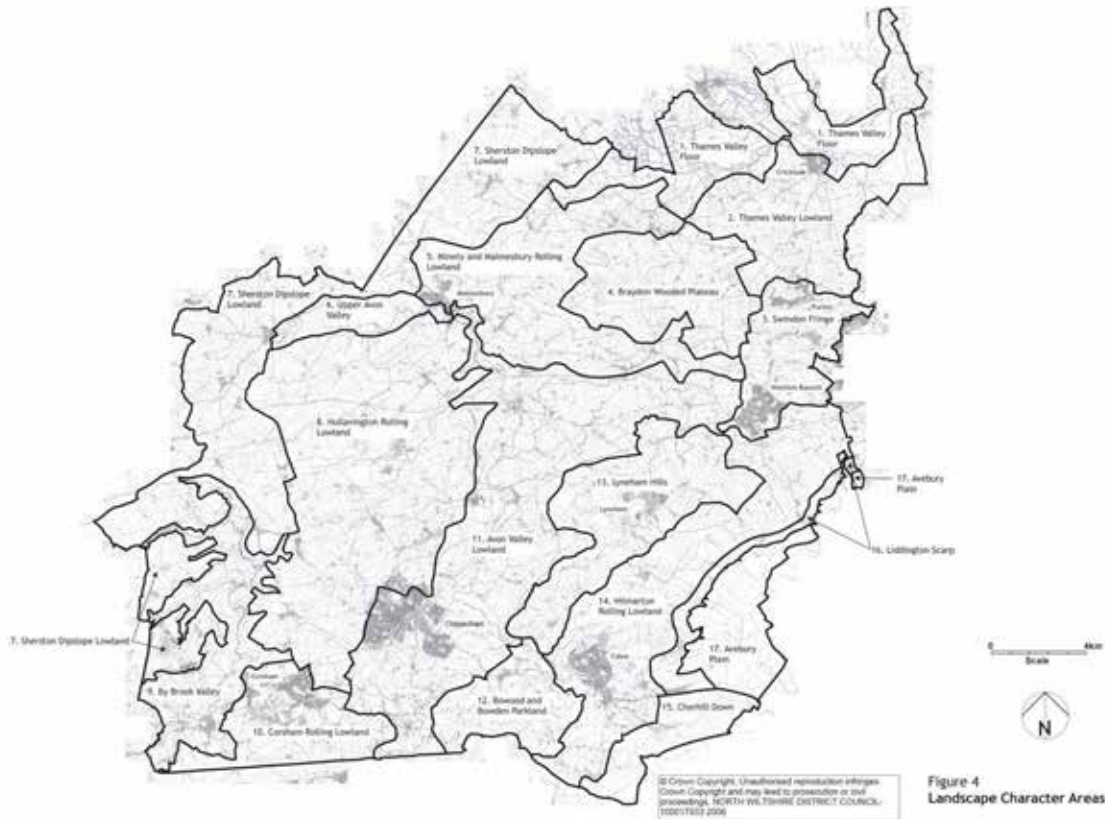
Map 6.

Two zones identified covering the Sherston NP Area:

Settled Farmland Valley: Distinct valley, enclosed in places, focussed on valley floor and river course. Mixed farming and scattered rural settlement.

Lowland Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland: Gently undulating lowland farmland underlain by limestone. Open landscape with broad low hills and shallow river valleys. Limestone walls boundaries in places and stone built settlements.

Map 7 below shows the various Landscape Character Areas as subsequently defined by White Consultants in 2004. As can be seen, the Sherston NP area falls into three distinct character areas as defined in this exercise. These are:



Map 7

- **The Upper Avon Valley (Area 6)**
- **The Sherston Dipslope Lowland (Area 7)**
- **The Hullavington Rolling Lowland (Area 8)**

Character Area 6 Upper Avon Valley

This small area lies to the west of Malmesbury, focused on the Sherston branch of the River Avon. The river here runs eastwards on a convoluted course, in a valley which is in places steep sided, and in other locations more open and shallow. The topography lies at between 85-110m AOD, and sits on a complex geology of Kellaways Clay, Cornbrash, Forest Marble and alluvial deposits.

This area is characterised by fertile soils, particularly on the shelly limestone of the Cornbrash, with rich grazing meadows and clean water from the river. Field patterns vary, from the small and irregular medieval fields especially in the steeper western area, to large fields which have been created to suit arable agriculture in the shallower valley areas. The wetter areas beside the river are more commonly permanent pasture.

Small blocks of woodland and copses are also a feature of the area, in particular on the steeper slopes. They comprise both deciduous woodland dominated by oak with hazel coppice as well as softwood plantations. Mature oak trees are also a feature of the agricultural land, some in hedgerows and some singly in larger fields. Adjacent to the river and tributaries, there are also characteristic groups of mature willow and lines of alder. In places in winter, the orange colour of the stems of Crack

willow stands out brightly, and complement the lighter brown of the ploughed fields. The river and bank side is also an important habitat for wildlife. Settlement also reflects the status and fertility of the area, with a number of fine estate buildings and large farmsteads. Sherston village, at the western edge of the area, also acts as a major village closely associated with the market town of Malmesbury to the east. Building materials are predominantly limestone from the Cotswolds, for both houses and the dry or bonded boundary and field walls. Buildings include the use of undressed stone to walls, ashlar quoins, lintels and mullions, and stone slates. In some farms, however, new barns and other modern buildings in unsympathetic materials detract from the rural character.

Main characteristics

The main characteristics of this part of the NP area can be defined as follows:

- Steep and intimate or more open, shallower valley.
- Complex geology and resulting variation in fertility and agriculture, from riverside meadows to arable.
- Variation in field sizes and shapes, from small irregular medieval, to larger fields enclosed or amalgamated in the modern period.
- Important river ecology.
- Small blocks of woodland and copses, both deciduous and coniferous.
- Mature oaks on drier land, and willow and alder by stream-sides.
- Bright winter colours of crack willow and soils on the cornbrash.
- Fine stone buildings and use of undressed limestone to walls, ashlar quoins, lintels and mullions, and stone slates.
- Dry stone walls as field boundaries.
- Quiet and unspoilt character, with a strong sense of time depth.

Management guidelines

The overall objectives for this area are to protect its rich historical and ecological heritage, and to conserve and enhance its distinctive and unspoilt character. The diversity of the area's landscape features, relating to the topography, rivers and different forms of agriculture, combined with the mature trees and fine stone buildings, creates a distinctive area of high landscape quality.

Good practice in the management of both agricultural systems and built form will be a priority in this area. Particular care will be needed in areas of historical or archaeological significance.

Biodiversity should be protected and enhanced particularly relating to the river corridor and woodland.

Management strategy: actions

The following actions are recommended to help realise the overall objectives for the area:

Short term

- Conserve hedgerows and mature trees, including planting new trees in existing hedges and planting specimen trees in field corners.
- Enhance the wetland character in riverside and meadow areas, by planting willows and alders along watercourses in informal groups and broken lines.
- Discourage hedgerow loss and field amalgamation.
- Encourage woodland management to provide continuity of cover while optimising ecological value.
- Conserve and enhance the valley floor watercourse corridor optimising ecological value.
- Prepare guidelines for the management of landscape features of historical significance and the protection of sites of archaeological value.
- Discourage new development particularly in the valley floor.

Long term

- Ensure agricultural buildings reflect the character and scale of the landscape in their location and design.

Landscape sensitivity

The area is within the Cotswold AONB which is an indication of its value. Its character is distinctly rural, tranquil and unspoilt, with a strong sense of time depth and man's shaping of the landscape. Whilst there is some diversity in landscape elements, the area has a strong coherence with the river as a unifying feature. Some of the riverside locations have an enclosed and intimate feel, whilst the more open areas allow wider views and a better sense of the continuity of the valley.

The landscape is rich in features which contribute to its maturity, especially the mature trees, diversity in riverside character, stone walls and small woodlands. These could be lost through intention or neglect, especially if the agricultural future for pasture in particular become more uncertain. The distinctive riverside and wetland features could easily be lost in future generations if not actively conserved and enhanced. The archaeological and ecological heritage of the area is also very strong, and requires pro-active measures to conserve this resource.

Only sensitively designed small-scale single, infill or restoration development, appropriately associated with existing built form, could be successfully accommodated without adverse landscape impacts.

Character Area 7 Sherston Dipslope Lowlands

This area lies on gently undulating land underlain by the Forest Marble limestone. The land rises from an average of around 90m to 125m AOD towards the Cotswolds in the west, with some localised higher ground. There are a number of shallow river valleys and associated alluvial soils, and some dry valleys especially towards the south. Some of the river valleys have locally steeper and more enclosed valley forms. Towards the south of the area the area becomes segmented, divided by steep valleys.

The area has a number of prehistoric remains, including two long mounds with possible chambered tombs lying a few hundred metres apart near Luckington. Roman occupation is also evident, with the Fosse Way running through the area towards Cirencester.

It is in most places a fairly open landscape of large fields with low hedges or dry stone walls. There are broad panoramas and distant views to the hills and large woodlands to the west, although in places the landscape is more intimate and views are contained by hedgerows and mature trees. Some field boundaries west of Sherston include great numbers of stately veteran oak trees, some of which are ancient pollards. Close to the rivers, groups of mature willows are also a feature.

Agriculture is a mix of permanent pasture and arable, with a field pattern that varies from an irregular medieval layout, especially close to villages, to the more regular shaped and more recently enclosed larger fields.

Woodland cover varies, with many areas quite bare except for shelterbelts, although there are a number of small woodlands in the north of the area, and large parkland woods to the immediate west of the District boundary, including the Westonbirt Arboretum.

The area includes unimproved limestone grassland characterised by upright brome and tor grass, which in the wider area of the Cotswolds is a nationally significant resource. The limestone grasslands are rich in plants and invertebrates, particularly butterflies. Many of these grassland areas are fragmented and no larger than 1 ha in extent, and as a result, are ecologically isolated.

Settlement on the area is confined to dispersed small villages, hamlets and farmsteads. The villages are mainly located adjacent to the Avon and its tributaries, and include some fine stone buildings in the local stone. The Oolitic limestone is most notably used for the finely crafted stone slates for roofing.

A number of important footpaths cross the area, including the Macmillan Way. This is a network of routes linking the south coast, Bristol Channel and North Sea coast of England, taking in the Cotswolds. It also forms part of the Cross Cotswold Pathway, an 86-mile walk linking public transport interchanges at Banbury and Bath.

The main characteristics of the area can be defined as follows:

- Gently undulating, broad low hills and shallow river valleys.
- Locally steeper and more enclosed valley forms.
- Rich heritage of human settlement and archaeological sites.
- Broad panoramas and distant views.
- Continuity of hedgerows and veteran oak trees.
- Dry stone walls as field boundaries and in relation to larger properties and village houses.
- Variation in field sizes and shapes, from small irregular medieval, to larger fields enclosed or amalgamated in the modern period.
- Variation in woodland cover, with many areas devoid of woodland cover, and other areas with small woods or copses.
- Small areas of unimproved calcareous grassland.
- Dispersed settlement and few villages.
- Fine stone buildings and use of undressed limestone to walls, ashlar quoins, lintels and mullions, and stone slates.
- Long distance footpaths.

Management guidelines

The overall objectives for the area are to enhance the character of the area through strengthening the landscape elements which contribute to its distinctiveness, and conserve the ecological heritage and unspoilt character. The diversity of the area's landscape features, relating to the topography, broad views, mature trees, dry stone walls and fine stone buildings, will require care and good stewardship.

The veteran hedgerow trees are features of high local significance, and a programme of long term replanting should be established.

Good practice in the management of both agricultural systems and built form will be a priority in this area.

Management strategy: actions

The following actions are recommended to help realise the overall objectives for the area:

Short term

- Conserve hedgerows and mature trees, including planting new trees in existing hedges and planting specimen trees in field corners.
- Enhance biodiversity through good practice in woodland management and by encouraging farming practice which supports good environmental management.

- Encourage wetland habitat creation and planting of willow and alder by waterside areas in enclosed river valleys.
- Ensure development reinforces the locally distinctive character and respects the vernacular. The use of traditional building materials including limestone are important in this area.
- Discourage development in the rural hinterland.

Landscape sensitivity

The area is within the Cotswold AONB which is an indication of its value. It has a distinctive character at the edge of the Cotswolds, with its gently rolling hills and remoteness, matched by mature landscape features such as veteran trees and old dry stone walls. Although settlement is dispersed, there are some fine stone villages and intimate valley landscapes associated with the upper reaches of tributaries of the Avon.

The area is generally tranquil and has little through traffic. In this sense there may be relatively few members of the public regularly viewing the area, but these may include visitors and local people for whom the unspoilt nature of the landscape is an important resource and of national significance as part of the AONB.

The sensitivity of the landscape to change is predominantly an issue of agricultural management. The use of the area for sheep grazing in particular may be uncertain. This affects the pasture and on-going management of hedgerows and dry stone walls for stock control.

The remoteness and openness of much of this area means that only small-scale, sensitively designed development, appropriately associated with existing built form, could be successfully accommodated without adverse landscape impacts.

Character Area 8 Hullavington Rolling Lowland

This large area lies between Malmesbury in the north and Chippenham in the south. It is a rural area of gently rolling hills and shallow valleys, based on a number of geological formations, predominantly Forest Marble limestone, Oxford Clay and Cornbrash. The landform rises from approximately 60mAOD in the east of the area close to the Avon valley, to over 120m with some localised high points of up to 139m AOD.

This diverse geology gives rise to an area of mixed soil conditions, from predominantly pasture on the clay, to arable on the better soils of the Cornbrash. Field patterns are a mix of medium to large sizes, with a pattern of irregular medieval boundary shapes to more regular shapes from later enclosures. There are a number of villages within the area, but few other settlements and a dispersed pattern of farms. Woodlands and generally intact hedgerows with mature trees further contribute to the patchwork of fields in this gentle landscape.

The area has evidence of a succession of occupation with evidence of prehistoric settlement in the area such as the Neolithic chambered long barrow at Lanhill and an early Bronze Age bowl barrow at Barrow Farm. This part of Wiltshire is likely to have been Romanized from the latter part of the 1st century A.D. with the large Roman settlement at Easton Grey to the north, and a number of villas in the vicinity.

The Domesday Book records that considerable lands in the area were owned by the bishop of Glastonbury, and included much woodland, which was much reduced shortly afterwards. The bounds of the royal forests of Chippenham and Melksham were declared in 1228, lying to the west of Chippenham, but the woodlands were largely felled and enclosed in the early 17th century. A number of small and medium sized woodlands remain, however, both to the north of the M4 and west of Chippenham.

Limestone from the Cotswolds is the predominant building material, for both houses and the stone walls which are common in villages. Dry stone walls are also evident but not common as field boundaries.

In many places there are wide views over the area, where agriculture is the dominant and shaping force in the landscape, which in places has been to the detriment of local distinctiveness, for example in the loss of distinctive features of habitats associated with waterside environments.

Main characteristics

The main characteristics of the area can be defined as follows:

- Rolling or lowland hills between 60-120m AOD, on Forest Marble limestone, Oxford Clay and Cornbrash.
- Patchwork of irregular, medium sized fields, mainly pasture, and larger more recent enclosures used for arable, especially on the richer soils.
- Continuous hedges with many mature oaks.
- Medium sized woodlands and deciduous copses.
- Fine stone villages with muted colours and dispersed farms.
- Use of undressed limestone to walls, ashlar quoins, lintels and mullions, and stone slates.

Management guidelines

The overall objectives for the area are to conserve and enhance its pastoral character, and to ensure that any new development respects the grain of the dispersed settlement in the area and the vernacular building materials.

The continuity of hedgerows is important in shaping the character of the area, and should be encouraged through appropriate land management programmes. River valleys should be enhanced by encouraging habitat creation and planting of riverside trees.

The use of limestone in buildings and free standing walls should be supported, both in helping conserve existing features, and in the appropriate use of materials in new construction.

Management strategy: actions

The following actions are recommended to help realise the overall objectives for the area:

Short term

- Conserve hedgerows and mature trees, including planting new trees in existing hedges and planting specimen trees in field corners.
- Encourage woodland management to provide continuity of cover while optimising ecological value.
- Enhance the wetland character in riverside locations by planting willows along water courses in informal groups and broken lines, and by encouraging landowners to help in the creation of more diverse waterside habitats.
- Ensure development reinforces the locally distinctive character and respects the vernacular. The use of traditional building materials including limestone are important in this area.

Landscape sensitivity

The landscape retains many features which are of local value, especially the woodlands, mature trees and continuous hedgerows. These could be lost through intention or neglect, especially if agricultural futures for pastureland in particular become more uncertain. The riverside and wetland areas, however, have lost much of their visual and ecological diversity.

The whole area has an essentially tranquil and pastoral character within which only small scale, sensitively designed development, appropriately associated with existing built form, could be successfully accommodated without adverse landscape impacts.

If the Neighbourhood Plan were not in place, then development could proceed in a piecemeal fashion to the detriment of the feel and setting of the village ; therefore there is a strong need to influence this development via an overall strategy within the Plan. Without the Neighbourhood Plan, irreparable spoiling of the overall landscape character of the area might occur.

National Character Area Profiles: The Cotswolds

Natural England published a series of guidance documents in 2014 entitled “National Character Area Profiles”. NCA profiles are guidance documents which “can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change. Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area’s characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.”

The details contained in the NCA Profile for the Cotswolds provide useful background information and guidance albeit at a much broader level than that contained in the above-mentioned Report prepared by White Consultants. It nevertheless is a useful source of background information which reinforces much of what is noted in this Scoping Report.

h. Population and housing

Statistics available for Population and Housing are quoted in the Joint Strategic Assessment 2011. However the assessment covers the whole of the Malmesbury Community Area and not specifically for the Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area. Nonetheless these figures are the most accurate available at this time. From previous mid-year estimates the population of the Parish of Sherston is around the 1500 mark, but this baseline information will require confirmation.

“Total population, 2010 of the Malmesbury Community Area is 18,750 with a population density of 76 people per km²... The Area’s population is set to increase by 1,810 persons between 2010 and 2026, an increase of 9.7% The under 16 years of age population is projected to decrease from 3,500 to 3,410 persons, whilst the working age population, aged 16 to 64 for males and 16 to 59 for females, is projected to see a larger decrease from 11,090 persons to 10,450 persons”.

⁵ Reference <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/malmesbury-area-board-isa.pdf> Passages with quotations marks are taken from this publication.

“With a significant 720 person projected decrease in the sub-retirement age population, Malmesbury Community Area’s projected 9.7% total population increase over the period mid-year 2010 to mid-year 2026 will be entirely (139.8%) accounted for by the retirement age population. This poses Malmesbury Community Area with an extremely significant ‘ageing population’ challenge”.⁵

This trend for an increase in the ageing population will need to be a consideration when looking at future development.

In the Malmesbury Community Area *“the average house price, all types and sizes is £309,026”, but the “Percentage of private sector dwellings failing the ‘Decent Homes’ standard is 33%.”*

“The main Registered Social Landlord in the Malmesbury Community Area is Greensquare (Westlea), which with other social landlords manages approximately 10.6% of the 8,272 dwellings in the Malmesbury Community Area and which was formed through the Large-Scale Voluntary Transfer of social housing stock from the former District Council... Demand for affordable housing in Malmesbury Community Area is low compared to the demand in other parts of Wiltshire, but in quarter four of 2010/11 there were still 263 households on the housing register seeking affordable housing in the area. In 2010/11, 14 new units of affordable housing were delivered in Malmesbury Community Area and work had begun on a further 19”.

The highest demand is for one bedroom properties (138 households) and the next highest for two-bedroom homes (89 households) with a projected need of 37 extra care units. The most desired parish for households on the register in the Malmesbury Community Area is Malmesbury itself”.

A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in 2012 throughout the Sherston NP Area for Wiltshire Council. The principle findings of this survey were:

- There is a population of 1420 according to the 2001 census, comprised of 610 households. ONS predictions for 2011 suggest a population of 1510 in 680 households.
- The area is predominately rural in character and has a high quality environment, being located within the Cotswolds Area of Natural Beauty. The parish includes not only the village of Sherston but also the hamlets of Pinkney and Willesley.
- There is some out commuting from the parish, particularly to Bath, Bristol, Chippenham, Malmesbury and Swindon, and the area has some dormitory functions. Sherston village provides a hub of services to a number of neighbouring parishes including Easton Grey, Norton, Foxley, Luckington, Alderton and Sopworth, as well as Didmarton and Westonbirt in Gloucestershire. Sherston is fortunate to have a proportionately high level of local jobs available which support and justify its local services.
- Sherston parish has embraced significant change within recent years including a new primary school, some 80 additional dwellings (a 15% increase in the housing stock) that include 14 affordable units, the acquisition in April 2011 of the Old School building for commercial and community use as well as the leasing of a community wood. The Parish Council has been at the forefront of these developments which have included a high level of consultation with all residents through public meetings, exhibitions and referenda.
- The Survey concentrated on examining the Housing Needs of those households that are unable to afford accommodation on the open market. At the time of the survey there were twenty eight households on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register seeking affordable accommodation in Sherston parish: three

of these households are also reported in the recommendations of this report as being in need of affordable housing. The remaining households on the Register are seeking properties with between one and three bedrooms.

- The following minimum need was identified over the next three years for affordable housing in the Parish based on the responses to the survey:

Subsidised Rented Housing

- 3 x one bed homes for singles/couples (1 x single level unit)
- 8 x two bed homes for families (1 x single level unit)
- 3 x three bed homes for families

Shared/Low Cost Home Ownership

- 3 x two bed homes for families (1 x single-level unit)
- 2 x four bed homes for families

Sheltered Housing for older people

- 1 x two bed sheltered shared ownership home for a single/couple

Supported Housing

- None

These requirements and trends must be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan. The requirement for 40% of new dwellings to be affordable housing (as per current development plan policy) will not necessarily provide enough provision of the correct type of housing. There is also a clear indication here of the size and type of affordable housing required. If there was no Neighbourhood Plan in place, then it is unlikely that this shortfall would be addressed in a significant way through for example being able to specify what kind of development takes place.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan, the delivery of affordable housing will remain an on-going issue and one that may not happen without policies to identify, secure and deliver suitable land to meet an identified need.

i. Healthy communities

The main health care facility within the Sherston NP area comprises the Tolsey Surgery which is situated on the High Street in the centre of the village. This facility provides both GP and nursing services to a wider catchment area than the parish. There is no dentist in the Sherston NP Area.

The nearest alternative medical facilities are to be found in Malmesbury, where there is also a Children's' Clinic and several visiting clinics from Royal United Hospital Bath and Great Western Hospital Swindon, which are the two major hospitals in the Area. Two smaller hospitals are more closely located in Tetbury and Cirencester, both of which are in Gloucestershire.

The Joint Strategic Assessment for the wider Malmesbury Community Area 2011, provides the following statistics:

“Respondents to the 2009 Wiltshire Household Survey were asked how good their health was in general. The percentage of people saying they were in good or very good health in the Malmesbury Community Area was 85%, compared to the Wiltshire value of 78%. According to this measure, Malmesbury Community Area has the highest percentage of people reporting to be in good health out of the 20 community areas (in Wiltshire)”⁶

⁶ Reference <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/malmesbury-area-board-jsa.pdf> Passages with quotation marks are taken from this publication.

The assessment continues with an outline of comparisons, which are informative and underline the need to continue to provide sufficient opportunities for exercise and facilities to promote wellbeing in the area. Also it is essential to ensure that health infrastructure, such as doctors surgeries, health visitors, clinics and dentists has enough capacity or increases sufficiently to meet the demand of people living in new housing developments in the area. This should be looked at through the Neighbourhood Plan and taken account of when planning new developments.

It is also worth noting the statistical comparison to other parts of Wiltshire to identify if any particular medical provision might need to be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan. The following from the Joint Strategic Assessment for the Malmesbury Community Area 2011 states "*Cardiovascular Disease and cancer are major causes of mortality and make up around 60% of all deaths in Wiltshire each year*". There were 142 deaths per year from cardiovascular disease per 100,000 people and 152 deaths per year from cancers per 100,000 in the Malmesbury Community Area in 2007-09. The rates for Malmesbury Community Area are not statistically significantly different to those for Wiltshire for this time period.

That said, Malmesbury Community Area has the third highest rate of admission to hospital for cancer out of all 20 Community Areas 2010/11, being 2,697 admissions per 100,000 people, which is statistically significantly higher than the Wiltshire rate of 1,813 per 100,000. However, Malmesbury Community Area has the fourth lowest rate of admissions to hospital for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease 68 admissions per 100,000 people recorded for 2010/11.

Alcohol-related admissions to hospital for 2010/11, were the lowest in Wiltshire being between 1050 and 1100, as against the Wiltshire average of 1636.

"Obesity is linked to a range of poor health outcomes and is often determined early in life. Therefore, reducing the levels of obesity in Reception year is a key factor to improving health. 4.6% of children in Reception year in Malmesbury Community Area were found to be obese by the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) between 2007/08 to 2009/10. This is statistically significantly lower than the Wiltshire figure of 8.4%, being the third smallest in the County. It equates to 1 in 22 local children in Reception School Year being obese".

"People in the most deprived 20% of Malmesbury Community Area can expect to live 1.4 years less than people in the least deprived 20% of Malmesbury Community Area. This gap is smaller than the Wiltshire gap of 2.9 years. Many major conditions are strongly correlated to deprivation as are the lifestyles that contribute to them... According to the 2010 Income Index of Deprivation, it is estimated that 1,196 people living in the Malmesbury Community Area were considered to be deprived in 2010."

Without a Neighbourhood Plan, the potential identification and safeguarding of land for an enhanced GP surgery with associated facilities may not happen.

j. Inclusive communities

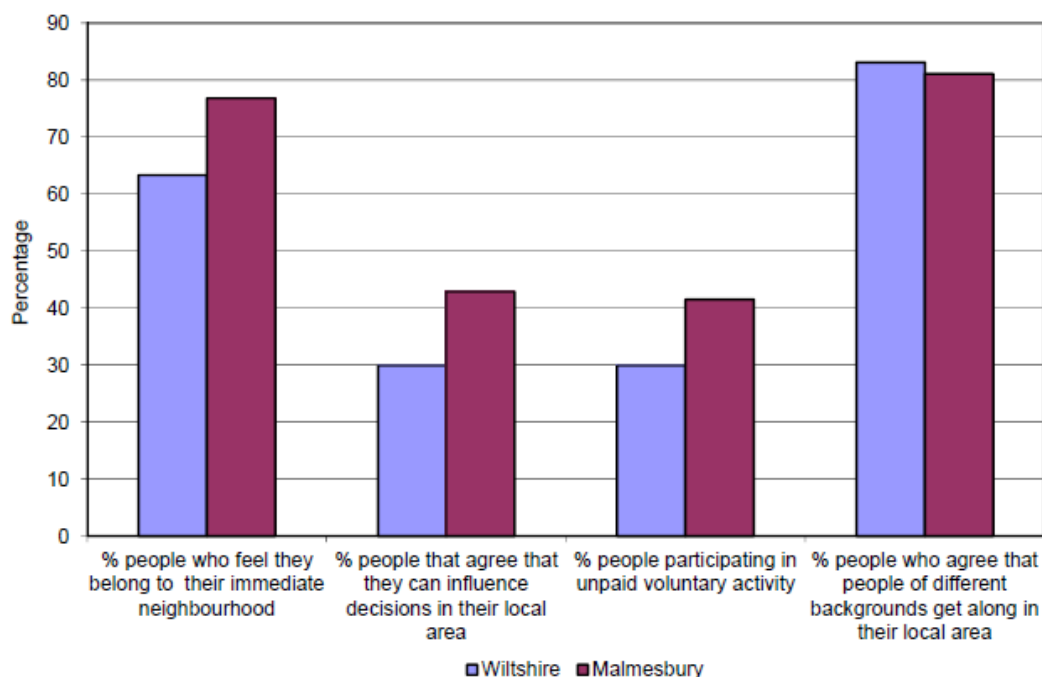
From the Joint Strategic Assessment for the Malmesbury Community Area.

"In the Malmesbury Community Area, the percentages of the population who: feel that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood; participate in volunteering ; and feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area, are significantly higher than the Wiltshire averages. However, the

percentage of individuals who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together is (slightly) lower than average.”⁷

This is shown in the following table from the Household Survey 2009:

⁷ Reference <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/malmesbury-area-board-isa.pdf>



Source: Household Survey 2009

ETHNICITY - There are no current data available on the ethnic mix in the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan Area. As an estimate it could be said that only a very small percentage of the population is of an Asian or Caribbean ethnic background. The vast majority of the population in the designated area is of white European ethnicity.

Inclusivity of people from different backgrounds has not really been tested in the Sherston NP Area, due to the very small percentage of people who are actually of different ethnic origin. It is unlikely to be an issue either now or in the future as “81.1% of people said that they agree that people of different backgrounds get on well together” (see preceding table “Social Capital and Community Cohesion, Household Survey 2009”).

The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to impact on this issue.

ELDERLY PEOPLE AND THOSE WITH A LOW OR RESTRICTED INCOME - The two parts of the Malmesbury Community Area where inclusivity may be a problem is with the increasingly ageing population (including those with disabilities or vulnerabilities) and those of low or restricted incomes. Fuel poverty coupled with lack of private and public transport could mean that people from these two sectors do not take part in the usual community events that others do and do not have access to the same facilities that others do. There are no current data on this to refer to apart from that reported in the Joint Strategic Assessment for Malmesbury. The Neighbourhood Plan could look at housing mix with this in mind and encourage mixed housing to encourage small street communities to grow and as a consequence include and support the less mobile and more vulnerable in the community.

If the Neighbourhood Plan was not in place and any need for mixed and affordable housing was not considered, then it could be that the community would be considerably less inclusive.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan the needs of the local community in this regard are unlikely to be met.

VOLUNTEERING AND FEELING OF BELONGING – The Household Survey 2009 shows that the percentage of people in the Malmesbury Community Area volunteer (unpaid) is significantly higher at 41.5% than Wiltshire as a whole at 29.9% and approx 25% in England. Also the percentage of those who feel they belong to their community is also significantly higher at 76.8 % for the Malmesbury Community Area and 63.3% for Wiltshire. It can be argued that both these high percentages indicate an integrated and socially healthy community.

The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to maintain what is clearly a strong sense of community in the Sherston NP Area.

k. Education and skills

There is one pre-school in the Sherston NP Area: the Busy Hands Pre-School which operates out of the Sherston Village Hall close to the centre of the village. There is also one primary school in Sherston: the Sherston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School which is to be found off Knockdown Road on the northern edge of the village. This is housed in a modern purpose-built building set in attractive grounds. The nearest secondary school is at Malmesbury, about 5 miles to the east. Children from Sherston and the surrounding area are bussed daily to this school.

The level of teaching at the Primary School as appraised by Ofsted in 2011 has been rated as “good” and for the Pre-school as “outstanding”. The ‘schooling’ geographic area does not precisely match with the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Children from outside of the designated area travel in to Sherston to attend both the Primary and Pre-school. There is currently adequate capacity in both the Primary School and Preschool to accommodate local needs but this situation could change if significant further development were to take place.

There is of course the alternative dilemma that if village schools are not well attended then there is the possibility they may close. Further development in the village may be considered necessary or appropriate should this situation be of concern.

With the available background information and with projected birth rate numbers and potential housing development figures to children ratios (100:31), the Neighbourhood Plan should be able to estimate a fairly accurate prediction of schooling needs over the plan period.

There is an absence of data regarding the teaching of “skills” beyond and/or outside of the normal education system. Local business does provide an opportunity for those aged 16 and above to learn a skill and seek gainful employment. Further research may be needed to establish whether this can be expanded.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan there would be no opportunity to consider the future educational needs of pre-school and primary school children or those seeking to access a range of local employment opportunities to enhance their skills and make them more employable after secondary education.

I. Transport

CARS - The Sherston NP Area is essentially rural and as such there is a definite need for car transport for work, social and other purposes. Given the paucity of public transport serving this area it is inevitable that many households rely on the motor car - with many local households now possessing two or more cars – for providing access to a wider range of services and facilities elsewhere (notably shopping, work and medical facilities).

The Neighbourhood Plan will provide a cohesive view of all types of transport and particularly traffic and parking options for solutions to some of the issues. If the Neighbourhood Plan is not in place then it is unlikely that piecemeal planning and development will achieve the same result.

BUSES – Infrequent bus services run through Sherston and the rest of the designated area. These services are estimated to be used by relatively few people in comparison with car usage. There is no service at all on Sundays. Secondary School children (daily), some older children and the elderly do make use the local bus services. Apart from the Secondary School journeys, and a number of other dedicated school bus services, these numbers are estimated to be very small. The following chart from the Joint Strategic Assessment is for the Malmesbury Community Area as a whole, but is indicative of the situation.⁸

Indicator	Malmesbury Community Area	Wiltshire	England
School travel			
Mode share for travel to school by car/taxi (ages 5-10)	40%	41%	38.1%
Mode share for travel to school by car/taxi (ages 11-15)	12%	21%	20.5%
Carriageway maintenance			
Proportion of principal roads requiring maintenance †	16%	6%	n/a
Proportion of non-principal classified roads requiring maintenance †	12%	7%	n/a
Bus services			
Proportion of rural addresses within 800m of buses running hourly or better on weekdays 0900-1700 §	22%	47%	n/a
Passengers per hour boarding or alighting at Malmesbury Cross Hayes ‡	16-29		
Bus punctuality: proportion of buses no more than 5 minutes late.	87%	81%	Not comparable with national indicator.

¶ Pupil-level survey January 2010, via DfT publication. Includes car-share

† Wiltshire Council condition survey data 2010/11

§ Electronic timetable data for October 2010

‡ Weekdays. Average per hour includes peak and off-peak times. Range of counts on different days. Data provides a rough guide only of bus use.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be unable to directly influence the provision of bus services but could help to provide a locally responsive approach to sustainable travel patterns.

⁸ Reference <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/malmesbury-area-board-jsa.pdf>

COMMUNITY BUS – This bus is well used locally especially by the elderly, disabled and more vulnerable people in our community.

SCHOOL BUSES – These are essential for the transport of young people to and from Malmesbury School.

CYCLING – Whilst anecdotally there is a lot of interest in cycling in the Designated Area, there are in fact no cycle paths. Cyclists have to make use of the local rural road network – much of which is narrow and potentially dangerous. Cycling to and from the Sherston Primary School is not currently promoted due to the lack of safe cycle paths and the proximity to roads with high levels of traffic. Cycling Proficiency classes are held at Sherston CE Primary School to encourage safe cycling in the area.

TAXI SERVICES – There are no taxi services situated within the Sherston NP Area. Local residents are therefore reliant on services currently provided elsewhere in the locality (notably in Malmesbury or Tetbury).

TRAINS – the main line from Cardiff to London passes through the Parish but there are no existing halts on the line. The former stations at Hullavington and Badminton could provide useful east west connections if re-opened at some date in the future, both of which would be closer than Chippenham and Kemble.

The nearest mainline station to Sherston is about 9 miles away at Chippenham for journeys to Bath, Bristol and the South West one way and Swindon, Reading, Slough and London Paddington in the other direction. Alternatively, Kemble is approx 12 miles away. This serves the route to Gloucestershire one way and to London Paddington Station the other. The journey to London Paddington Station can take as little as 1 hour 10 minutes.

GENERAL - The Neighbourhood Plan will help to provide a locally responsive approach to sustainable travel patterns.

m. Economy and enterprise

There is no specific data for the designated Sherston NP Area on Economy and Enterprise. However the Malmesbury Community Area figures from the Joint Strategic Assessment for the whole of the Malmesbury Community Area do give a guide as to the trends – see Table below.

Employment and unemployment (Jul 2011 – Jun 2012)

	North Wiltshire (numbers)	North Wiltshire (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
All people				
Economically active [†]	64,200	79.4	78.7	76.6
In employment [†]	60,600	74.8	73.6	70.3
Employees [†]	53,500	66.5	62	60.3
Self employed [†]	6,600	8	11.2	9.5
Unemployed (model-based) [§]	3,700	5.8	6.2	8.1
Males				
Economically active [†]	35,100	86.2	84.2	82.8
In employment [†]	32,700	80.2	78.1	75.5
Employees [†]	27,900	69.1	62.4	61.7
Self employed [†]	4,600	11.1	15.4	13.4
Unemployed [§]	#	#	7.1	8.6
Females				
Economically active [†]	29,100	72.6	73.1	70.4
In employment [†]	27,800	69.4	69.2	65.1
Employees [†]	25,600	63.8	61.7	59
Self employed [†]	#	#	7.1	5.7
Unemployed [§]	#	#	5.2	7.4

Source: ONS annual population survey

#Sample size too small for reliable estimate ([see definitions](#))

[†]numbers are for those aged 16 and over, % are for those aged 16-64

[§]numbers and % are for those aged 16 and over. % is a proportion of economically active

As a rural part of Wiltshire there is a large amount of farm land in the area, although proportionally farming does not provide a great deal of direct employment. It is considered that in the Sherston NP Area there is a wide mix of small businesses, many of which are situated in converted farm or other buildings throughout the NP area. The largest individual manufacturer is the Stretchline Mill situated on the outskirts of the village – albeit this has significantly reduced in scale in recent years. A recent initiative by the Parish Council led to the purchase of the redundant Victorian School situated in the heart of the village and its conversion into 5 additional small business units (employing c 25 persons in total).

It is understood that in addition there is a fair proportion of home-working in the area.

Without a Neighbourhood Plan there would be no opportunity to consider the potential to provide for the future employment needs of the local community with a view to ensuring that it becomes ever more sustainable.

5. Task A3 - Key sustainability and environmental issues and problems

5.1 Introduction

SEA Directive requires consideration of:

“any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC (**Annex 1(d)**)

This stage of the scoping report is concerned with identifying the key environmental and sustainability issues in the Sherston NP Area. These issues may be defined as both problems and opportunities and this leads on from evidence related to the baseline information in the previous section. Identifying these issues aids the understanding of matters which need addressing within the neighbourhood plan.

Many current issues have been identified during the early development of the neighbourhood plan and through local knowledge and consultation with local people and stakeholders. In addition, many of the sustainability and environmental issues identified in the Wiltshire sustainability appraisal are also relevant to **Sherston** and where this is the case, they have been included here.

5.2 Key issues and problems

Figure 3.1: Sherston neighbourhood area key sustainability issues

Sustainability topic	Issue/problem	Source
Maintenance and enhancement of the high quality natural environment and biodiversity	A key positive feature of the area is its rich biodiversity and the natural environment. It is important to protect and, where possible, enhance existing habitats.	Natural England Baseline Evidence Local Consultation
The sensitive AONB landscape setting	The exceptional quality of the landscape in the plan area contributes to local distinctiveness and is of one of national importance with the AONB designation. Conservation is a priority.	Cotswold Area Management Plan Natural England Local Consultation
Maintenance of local built settlement character and heritage assets	Part of the plan area is a designated conservation area and all lies within the designated AONB and acknowledged to be high quality and locally distinct. There are also a high number of heritage assets – some listed and some with archaeological designations – others with local significance - much of which needs protection.	Sherston Conservation Area Statement Comments from English Heritage and Wiltshire Council
Design of Housing	There is a concern that the quality of design of modern development is poor in terms of style, design, layout and use of materials.	Local Consultation
Flood risk	Some areas adjacent to the River Avon tributaries are designated as flood risk zones – functional floodplain – by the Environment Agency and through the Flood Risk Assessments commissioned by the local authorities.	Environment Agency Wiltshire Council
Impact of climate change eg. rising energy prices	Concerns about climate change together with national and local policy objectives, provide an opportunity through sensitive local approaches to land use and buildings (new and existing).	NPPF Wiltshire Core Strategy Local Consultation

Lack of affordable housing and housing for the elderly	Housing Needs Studies have identified the need for affordable housing of various types in the parish to meet the needs of a range of people. Cost of existing housing stock in the area is high in relation to gross income.	Sherston Housing Needs Assessment Local Consultation
A lack of infrastructure and support for local businesses	Local consultation identified an increasing number of people working from home in the area, and a desire to encourage and support local business. The need for high speed broadband is considered to be of paramount importance.	Local Consultation
Community facilities and services	The need to retain and improve community facilities and accommodation of them is acknowledged as key for community cohesion and wellbeing. Accommodation for community services and events such as in the village hall and other buildings is considered to be inadequate and a need for improved facilities identified.	Local Consultation
Sport and Recreation	The need to secure improved facilities for various sporting and leisure activities within the village	Local Consultation Steering Group Report
Transport	The plan area is heavily reliant on cars for getting about and accessing local services and facilities. There is a need to at the very least maintain existing bus services but ideally seek enhanced services in the evening and at weekends. Pedestrian and cycle movements need to be encouraged wherever possible within the village itself.	Local Consultation
Pre-School Provision	The Busy Hands pre-school group would like to be able to fund and construct purpose built premises for their continued use.	Local Consultation
Allotments	The existing allotment site is fully used and there is a waiting list. Additional allotments are needed.	Local Consultation
Burial facilities	There is a shortage of space for burials in the NP area. Additional space is required.	Local Consultation
GP Surgery	The existing GP surgery is too small and is housed in premises that are not ideal for their purpose. A new purpose-built surgery to serve the community would be desirable.	Local Consultation

6. Task A4 - Sustainability Appraisal Framework

6.1 Introduction

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework consists of sustainability objectives which provide a way in which the effects of the neighbourhood plan can be described, analysed and compared. While not specifically required by the SEA Directive, objectives are a recognised way of considering the effects of a plan and comparing the effects of alternatives.

Sustainability appraisal objectives are **different** in concept and purpose from the objectives of the neighbourhood plan, though there is a degree of overlap. They are not necessarily intended to be achievable, but are more aspirational in nature, addressing the full cross-section of sustainability issues, including social, economic and environmental factors laid down by law or policy.

The objectives listed in Section 6.2 are based upon those outlined in the Wiltshire Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report but they have been amended and adapted to reflect the more locally specific baseline information and key issues highlighted in Sections 4 and 5 of this report.

6.2 Sustainability objectives

Sustainability objectives are set out in Figure 6.2 below, together with the sustainability topics they cover:

Figure 6.2: Sustainability objectives

Sustainability theme	Sustainability appraisal objective
Biodiversity	1. Protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the Plan area and seek to avoid irreversible losses - with particular reference to the designated County Wildlife Sites
Land and Soil Resources	2. Ensure efficient and effective use of land and give priority to the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings
	3. Protect those areas identified as being Grade 1 agricultural land from inappropriate development
Water Resources and Flood Risk	4. Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner
	5. Protect people and property from all sources of flooding and seek to reduce flood risk overall
Air Quality and Environmental Pollution	6. Minimise all sources of environmental pollution
Climatic Factors	7. Seek to minimise impact on climate change and reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects
Historic environment	8. Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment – with particular reference to the designated ancient monument, the two Conservation Areas and all listed buildings
Landscapes	9. Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the landscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place
Population and housing	10. Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures
Healthy communities	11. Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live
Inclusive Communities	12. Retain existing community facilities and provide additional facilities where such a need has been identified
	13. Improve access to, and engagement in, local community services and facilities
Education and skills	14. Provide good quality educational facilities capable of meeting the needs of the local community and provide opportunities for people to improve their workplace skills
Transport	15. Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices
Economy and enterprise	16. Encourage a vibrant and diversified economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth
	17. Ensure adequate provision of high-quality employment land and diverse employment opportunities to meet the needs of local businesses and a changing workforce

A more detailed framework is presented in Appendix C. As the proposed objectives are purposely broad and aspirational in nature, they are supported by 'decision aiding criteria'; these help to ensure that all the key sustainability issues in the neighbourhood area are considered during the appraisal.

6.3 Predicting and evaluating significant effects

The sustainability objectives outlined in Figure 3.2 will be used to predict and evaluate the social, environmental and economic effects of options being considered in the neighbourhood plan, and this will form a key part of the Sustainability Appraisal Report of the plan. The methodology for the prediction and evaluation of effects will be outlined in that report.

Significance of effects will be determined taking account of the criteria for determining likely significance, outlined in Annex II of the SEA Directive. Significance will also be determined taking account of the established criteria adopted by Wiltshire Council in its Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report. This is presented in Appendix C of that report.

7. Task A5 – Consultation requirements

SEA Directive requires consultation with:

“authorities with environmental responsibility when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report” **(Article 5.4)**

In accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive, the following authorities with environmental responsibility, otherwise known as the ‘statutory consultation bodies’, were consulted on the scope and level of detail contained within this report in February 2013. These bodies were:

- ENGLISH HERITAGE
- NATURAL ENGLAND
- THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Report was also made available to other interested stakeholders and local residents whom it was considered might be able to provide additional important local information that should be incorporated into this report.

Figure 7.1 below summarises all of the responses received from the statutory consultees and other interested parties and explains what actions were taken to address the various points raised.

The Report was subsequently amended to incorporate all of the comments made by the statutory consultation bodies and one local resident at the time.

Figure 7.1 Summary responses to draft SA Scoping Report and actions taken.

Consultation Response	How addressed
<p>Charles Routh, Lead Adviser, Natural England.</p> <hr/> <p>Overall it appears to be comprehensive.</p> <p>Our only comments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The National Character Area profiles which Natural England is in the process of producing for all natural areas in England, and has completed the one for the Cotswolds. You may find this a useful information source. Please see http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/default.aspx for more information. 	<p>Scoping Report amended to incorporate direct reference National Character Area profile.</p> <p>The details contained in the NCA Profile for the Cotswolds provide useful background information and guidance albeit at a much broader level than that contained in the above-mentioned Report prepared by White Consultants. It nevertheless is a useful source of background information which reinforces much of what is noted in this Scoping Report.</p> <p>All of these issues addressed through SA process.</p>

<p>· With the advent of the NPPF, and the requirement to allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework. (para 110), we see Sustainability Appraisal potentially being the evidence base showing that this requirement has been met. In particular, we advise that any allocation process considers amenity value in the context of access to the countryside (and other informal recreational space) – both availability to new residents, and loss to existing residents, and that landscape impact on the AONB is carefully considered, so that it can be shown that the plan is consistent with the above paragraph of the NPPF. To show this with respect to biodiversity should be more straightforward.</p>	<p>Sustainability Framework amended to incorporate direct reference to amenity value. Landscape impact on AONB was key consideration when assessing options.</p>
<p>Rohan Torkildsen , Historic Environment Planning Adviser , South West and West Midlands, English Heritage.</p> <hr/> <p>The two key points I would make relate to the Appraisals Framework. Often overlooked but of importance will be the assessment of the potential impact of proposals on the setting of all heritage assets, including the integrity of the settlement of Sherston itself. Often only the direct impacts of development are considered but not the indirect ones. You may find useful <i>The Setting of Heritage assets (EH, 2010)</i>. www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/setting-heritage-assets/</p> <p>Could I also mention the importance of ensuring the consideration of all heritage assets whether designated or not - an important feature of national historic environment policy in the NPPF. Many archaeological features and buildings of local importance are important and shouldn't be overlooked. The historic environment record at the Council will be of particular interest in this respect and may highlight certain unknown and interesting historic features, as will the English Heritage website and specific neighbourhood plan making guidance. www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/get-involved/improving-your-neighbourhood/planning-opportunities/</p>	<p>Appraisals Framework amended to make direct reference to “the setting of all historic assets”.</p> <p>Appraisals Framework amended to make direct reference to “non - designated assets with local significance”.</p>
<p>Conservation Team, Wiltshire Council</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 2: suggest that bullet point 3 be slightly amended to explicitly include historic environment issues - Safeguarding those parts of the settlement that have been identified as being worthy of protection from development by reason of their landscape quality, ecological importance, historic interest, or local significance. • Throughout the report – where there is reference to heritage assets (listed buildings, archaeology, conservation areas and locally significant sites/buildings etc.) their description should be expanded to include “...and their settings” in order to 	<p>Objective 2 amended as suggested.</p> <p>Description expanded to include phraseology “and their settings”</p>

<p>reflect current, more holistic, approach in conservation policy (see paras 129, 132 NPPF; paras 113-124 PPS5 Practice Guide [remains extant guidance]).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the obvious designated heritage assets (listed building, scheduled monuments, conservation area etc) care should be taken to include reference to non-designated heritage assets which have local significance. These are mentioned in a few areas of the document, but perhaps not consistently. Whilst falling below the bar for national designation, it is often these ordinary buildings/structures/sites which form the predominant fabric of an area and which make a very significant contribution to the way it looks and feels. Such buildings/structures can be very vulnerable to uncontrolled minor changes which may have an incremental impact upon the character and quality of an area. This value to local distinctiveness is recognised in the NPPF (para 135 requires that impact upon the significance of non-designated assets be taken into account in judging proposals) (also, paras 83-84 PPS5 Practice Guide). 	<p>where appropriate throughout the Scoping Report.</p> <p>Appraisals Framework amended as recommended to include reference to “non- designated heritage assets”.</p>
<p>Jill Cainey (local resident)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>---</p> <p>I contacted the Environment Agency (EA) for an update on the water quality and the Sherston Avon is now graded as "Moderate" (down from good), so the statement on page 19, under Surface Water will need to be adjusted.</p> <p>The EA also provided information on conservation values (protected) in the Sherston area, but did not identify the specific locations (for legal reasons). These points may be worth including (where not already mentioned - for instance the AONB is detailed in the SEA):</p> <p><u>Protected species and habitats</u></p> <p>Brown trout Freshwater white clawed crayfish Great crested newts Brook lamprey (add to general under biodiversity on pg 14)</p> <p><u>Protected Habitats</u></p> <p>Lowland calcareous grassland Deciduous woodland Traditional Orchard (add to general under biodiversity on pg 14. Some of the habitats listed here may apply to the two County Wildlife Sites already detailed in the SEA)</p> <p><u>Local wildlife sites</u></p> <p>Carriers Farm Meadows New Farm Meadows (add to section on pg 14 addressing County Wildlife Sites)</p> <p><u>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</u></p> <p>Cotswolds AONB</p>	<p>Scoping Report amended to take account of this noted change in water quality.</p> <p>Amendment made as suggested.</p> <p>Amendment made as suggested.</p>

<p>(already included in SEA)</p> <p>Other than the points above the SEA is very comprehensive and appears to cover everything.</p> <hr/>	<p>Amendment made as suggested.</p>
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Community consultation

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community plan and must derive its objectives, actions and authority from the community.

The Steering Group formed to prepare the SNP initially comprised representatives from each of the primary interest groups in the village, including:

- Sherston Allotments
- Sherston Busy Hands Pre-School
- Sherston Businesses
- Sherston Churches
- Sherston Green Wing
- Green Square Housing Association
- Sherston Primary School
- Sherston Parish Council
- Sherston Old School Community Interest Company
- Sherston Sports
- Tolsey GP Surgery
- Sherston Seniors Club
- Sherston Scouts and Youth
- Sherston Village Hall
- (N.B. Four additional village residents were later seconded onto the Steering Group – having attended several meetings of the SG as interested parties and expressed an interest in influencing the shape of the plan)

The appointed representatives were tasked with canvassing opinion from their various interest groups and reporting back on the identified needs and aspirations. This was done at a series of (initially) monthly meetings.

The Steering Group were keen to ensure that local residents should be kept informed and given every opportunity to participate in the process.

A communication programme was established to:

- i. promote a high degree of awareness of the project;
- ii. invite residents to join the team advising the Parish Council;
- iii. encourage everyone to contribute to the development of the Plan;

- iv. promote consultation events;
- v. provide regular updates on the status of the Plan and its development.

Key to this programme was publicity, public events and the use of local print and electronic media to provide regular updates, together with the creation of a Sherston Neighbourhood Planning website (<http://www.sherston.org.uk/sherston-neighbourhood-plan.html>) to provide easily accessible, extensive information to the whole village and to encourage the village to participate. More recently use has been made of Facebook as a medium for discussing SNP issues.

The Sherston Cliffhanger is delivered to all homes in the village and read by a large proportion of the population. It is published monthly and since work started on the SNP has incorporated several articles at appropriate stages of the plan making process.

In addition, village opinion was sought by:

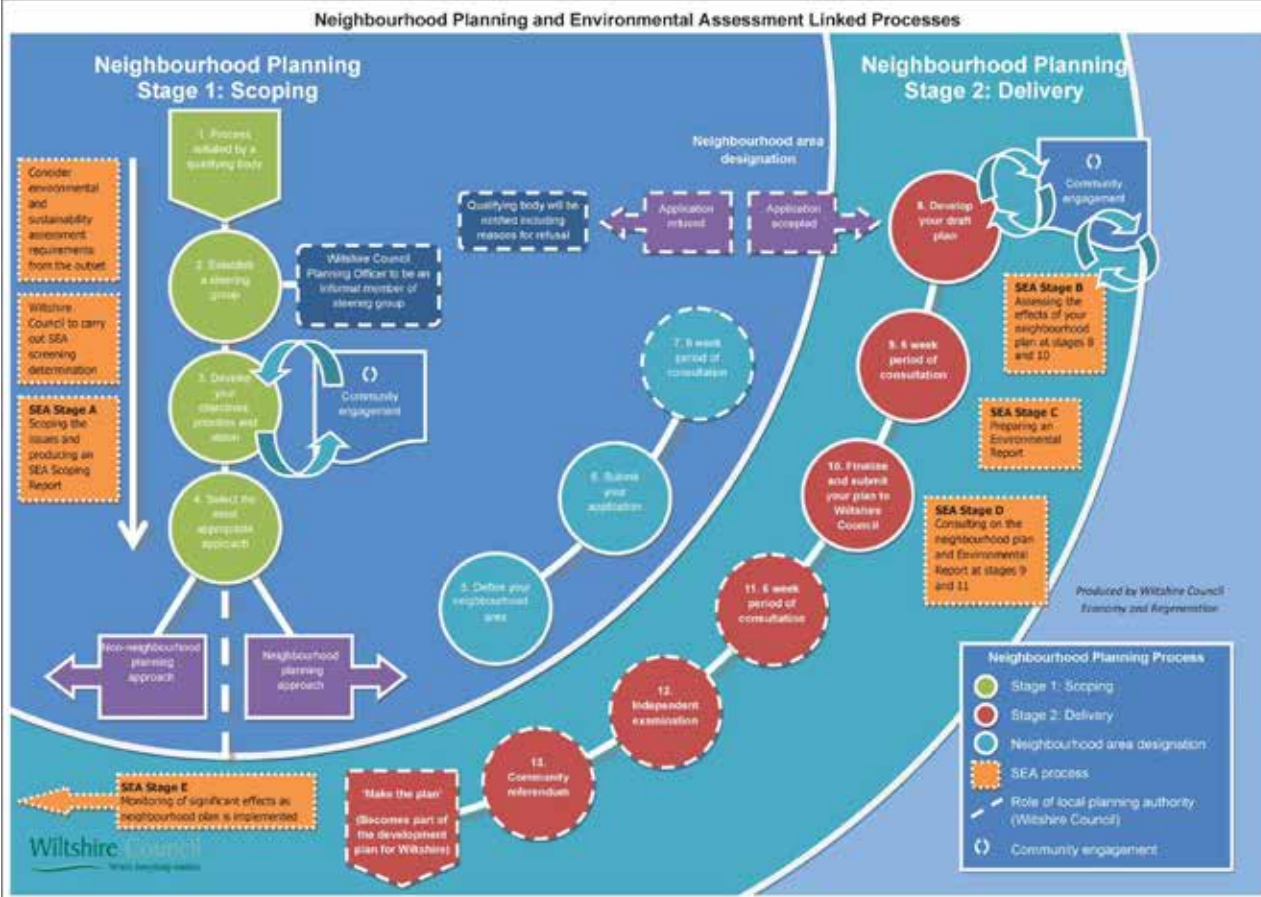
- surveying every house in the Parish to assess the level of housing need (February 2012) – N.B. Survey undertaken by Wiltshire Council;
- running two workshops in July 2012 and March 2013 (each attracting about 100 people) to solicit views on the purpose, content and proposals in the Plan;
- holding a presentation and subsequent workshop session on the ideas evolving as a result of the work undertaken by the Steering Group and the appointed planning consultants in September 2014;
- holding an exhibition and open forum over the weekend of 20th/21st September 2014 – at which questionnaires were handed out seeking the views of local residents on the emerging ideas;
- holding a public meeting in January 2017 (attended by over 100 people) – to consider and discuss a particular proposal for the development of one of the key sites linked to the issue of a questionnaire seeking feedback on that specific proposal;
- holding a public meeting in May 2017 to consider a number of alternative options for that same key site which had been tabled by members of the Steering Group;
- holding a public meeting in September 2017 at which all of the objectives, policies and proposals that were being considered for inclusion in the draft SNP were set out, debated and subsequently agreed by the Steering Group.
- Undertaking a formal consultation on the draft SNP (in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations) between 22nd February and 9th April 2018 after which a number of minor amendments were made to the plan.

8. Final step

As the draft neighbourhood plan developed, the information contained within the updated scoping report was used to inform the assessment of options, as described in Section 2. The required Sustainability Appraisal Report has been published alongside the draft Sherston neighbourhood plan for public consultation, as outlined in the neighbourhood planning process diagram in Appendix A.

Appendices

Appendix A: The neighbourhood planning process



APPENDIX B: REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

Plan/Programme/legislation: National Planning Policy Framework

Author: National Government

Document date: March 2012

Summary of document:

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It replaces nearly all of previous Planning law. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan:

The NPPF must be complied with in its entirety, however there are several elements which are particularly relevant when looking to achieve sustainable development in the Sherston NP Area and a compliant Neighbourhood Plan: These are as follows:

- Delivering a choice of high quality homes of good design.
- Building and supporting the local economy, through retail and business development and ensuring the vitality of the town centre and supporting high quality communications infrastructure.
- Promoting healthy communities and sustainable transport.
- Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding.
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan:

The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan must conform with the National Planning Policy Framework, therefore this document has been referred to as a principle source of guidance for the Plan.

Plan/Programme/legislation: Wiltshire Core Strategy

Author: Wiltshire Council

Document date: January 2015

Summary of document:

The purpose of the document is to outline Wiltshire Council's Strategy from 2006 to 2026 for the County of Wiltshire with regard to sustainability, health, economic vitality and provision of housing.

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan:

The main aim of the Strategy is to state the way forward for all aspects of life in Wiltshire and as such lies under the National Planning Policy Framework and other EC and Government legislation. Additionally within the Wiltshire Core Strategy there is a specific strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area. To be compliant the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan must meet the basic conditions of all of these.

The specific objectives for Sherston are:

- Provide appropriate levels of housing in the town and villages within the designated area (N.B. Sherston is identified as a Large Village for the purposes of the settlement strategy);
- All development within the community area must conserve the designated landscape of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting, and where possible enhance its locally distinctive characteristics;
- Future development will be carefully managed to ensure the high quality built environment including the important historic assets - such as Malmesbury Abbey and Conservation Area, are protected. Future development should be of high quality design and well integrated with the existing built form and landscape setting of the town including using local materials where appropriate.

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

The Wiltshire Core Strategy is one of the two main references informing the Neighbourhood Plan, especially the Malmesbury Community Area Strategy section. This document will be used to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the sustainability objectives, new housing and other requirements and specifically the Malmesbury Community Area Strategy.

Plan/Programme/legislation: North Wiltshire Local Plan

Author: North Wiltshire District Council

Document date: June 2006

Summary of document:

This document sets out the vision and spatial strategy for the area of North Wiltshire as envisaged prior to the more recent adoption of the Wiltshire Core Strategy together with a significant number of more detailed policies aimed at managing future development over the plan period to 2016.. Many of the policies contained in this plan have subsequently been superseded - following the adoption of the above-mentioned Core Strategy.

Certain policies have been "saved" pending review or the preparation of other development plan documents. The following "saved" policies are considered to be of particular relevance to the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan area:

- Policy C3 – the Development Control Core Policy
- Policy NE4 – which relates to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policies NE 5,6, 7, 9, and 11 - which deal with Nature Conservation
- Policies NE 12 and 14 – which relate to trees and woodlands
- Policy NE15 – which deals with landscape character
- Policies HE1,2 and 4 – which deal with Conservation Areas and other historic buildings
- Policies HE 5,6,7,and 8 – which deal with archaeological matters
- Policy H3 – which relates to development within the (currently) defined settlement boundaries
- Policy H4 – which deals with development outside of the defined settlement boundaries
- Policies BD1 to 7 inclusive – which deal with various aspects of business development
- Policies CF1,2 and 3 – which deal with community, education and leisure facilities

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan

Many of these policies are still relevant today. It is anticipated that they will continue to be utilised in the decision-making process unless and until they have been replaced either by policies and proposals in this plan (e.g. those relating to the safeguarding of certain facilities and business premises) or in other development plans (e.g. revisions to the village development boundary).

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

Consideration will have to be given to whether it is necessary to seek to incorporate additional policies in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan that deal with any or all of the matters covered in the "saved" policies noted above. It is considered likely that the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan will seek to concentrate on those areas where change is deemed necessary or appropriate to meet the defined objectives of the new plan.

Plan/Programme/legislation: Joint Strategic Assessment For Malmesbury Community Area 2011 (Wiltshire Council)

Author Wiltshire Council

Document date 2011

Summary of document

This document sets out the strategic issues for the whole of the Malmesbury Community Area for the next three years based on data, information and knowledge about Area.

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan

Although this document covers the whole of the Malmesbury Community Area, and not just the Sherston NP Area designated for the Neighbourhood Plan, arguably it has the most current local data available at this time, apart from specially commissioned survey work. This is

necessary evidence which has to be considered for Plan proposals. There is a lot of background information, but specific objectives, which this document can assist with are:

- Population and forecasted age range
- Health and wellbeing
- Housing
- Transport
- Environment

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

With an increasingly ageing population and those with other needs, appropriate types of housing is an important factor when considering Plan proposals. Linked into this is a sustainable approach to supporting a healthy way of life, through promoting walking and cycling. However as we are a rural community, car and bus transport especially is an issue for consideration.

Plan/Programme/legislation: Wiltshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2011 – 2026 Appendix 1: Community Area

Delivery Schedules – Malmesbury Community Area

Author Wiltshire Council

Document date 2011

Summary of document

This document shows an infrastructure delivery schedule for the Malmesbury Community Area which sets out the infrastructure requirements identified by service providers as being necessary to support development as outlined in the Pre- Submission Wiltshire Core Strategy Feb 2012. However, it does show some information and costings specifically for infrastructure in the designated Neighbourhood Plan area.

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan

The Appendix information is in table form detailing main requirements. The most relevant for consideration for the Neighbourhood Plan relates to extra school provision which will be needed as a result of any future housing development.

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

The document shows estimated costings which will be needed to provide additional infrastructure. Also shown is the estimated level of risk of not being able to deliver additional infrastructure, given that funding will mostly be from new development planning gain (CIL and possibly S106). This information will provide some of the baseline evidence to support Neighbourhood Plan proposals.

Plan/Programme/legislation: Strategic housing land availability assessment - Output report Dec 2011

(Wiltshire Council) and Strategic housing land availability assessment Sherston Dec 2011 (Wiltshire Council)

Author Wiltshire Council

Document date 2011

Summary of document

These documents list those sites which have been recommended to Wiltshire Council by landowners and others as being suitable and ready for development within a fairly short time period. The sites have been assessed in a general way to ensure that they will meet basic development requirements and the SHLAA documents this as well as other relevant information. There are documented SHLAA sites within the designated Sherston NP Area.

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan

The sites shown in the SHLAA must, together with others, be considered for the Neighbourhood Plan, given that they are understood to be available for development and already meet Wiltshire Council's baseline assessments.

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

Each site specified in the SHLAA will be assessed (with others not yet listed) using the Neighbourhood Plan Criteria.

Plan/Programme/legislation: North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment – Whites 2004

Author Whites

Document date 2004

Summary of document

Gives a general overview of North Wiltshire and a small part is of the Malmesbury Area. This is the most current landscape assessment for the area.

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan

Soil types and a description of the landscape, particularly the rural areas outside of the Town, are a guide to assessing landscape as evidence for Plan proposals.

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

Landscape issues are important and this document will inform the Plan on this. It is also important to consider soil types which influence landscape, land formations especially in relation to rivers, and also land drainage.

Plan/Programme/legislation: Sherston Conservation Area Statement (Adopted as supplementary planning guidance)

Author Wiltshire Council

Document date 1999

Summary of document

This appraisal contains background information on the reasons and methods of the designation of Sherston conservation area and outlines the effects of designation. The appraisal also contains detailed character analysis of the Sherston conservation area and makes observations on positive and negative features within it, with a view to informing development guidelines and enhancement proposals specific to the character areas studied in the appraisal.

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan

Sherston is one of the oldest chartered boroughs in England, and it is a key requirement that the effect of new development on this historic settlement must be considered carefully. Considerations include the effect on scheduled monuments, archaeology, listed buildings and the conservation area. Added to this is consideration of the setting of any new buildings within the townscape and landscape.

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

The Sherston Conservation Area Statement will inform the consideration of these heritage aspects when looking at sites for further development in the settlement.

Plan/Programme/legislation: Sherston Parish Housing Needs Survey

Author: Wiltshire Council

Document date: February 2012

Summary of document:

The aim of carrying out the survey was to investigate the affordable housing need for people who have a need to live in the Parish of Sherston. The report itself is divided into two parts. The first section looks at existing households within the Parish in order to provide a description of the current housing situation within the Sherston NP area. It also describes the level of new affordable housing, if any, which would be supported by local residents. The second section examines those households that have declared a need for new housing within the Parish (in terms of both market and affordable housing). A financial assessment is then made in order to determine the numbers of households who have a current need for new affordable housing. The results of this assessment are finally summarised in the document.

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan

The report acknowledges that the survey undertaken is only one of several assessments that have to be carried out and that it is necessary also to review: housing registers; the local Strategic Housing Market Assessments; and advice from allocation staff who manage the

register. The information obtained from this survey and the related work all needs to be taken into account when preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

The survey recommends that there is a need to provide: 15 subsidised rented houses (of differing types), 5 shared/low cost homes; and 1 two bed sheltered shared ownership home.

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

The Housing Needs Survey and Report will inform consideration of this aspect of the plan when reviewing the level of housing need required to be provide over the plan period.

Plan/Programme/legislation: Wiltshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Author: Wiltshire Council (Scott Wilson)

Document date: June 2009

Summary of document:

This report summarises information on the application of the Sequential Test, a broad scale assessment of flood risk for potential strategic developments, flood risk management measures for consideration for new developments, recommendations for flood risk policy and site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) guidance.

Further guidance is given on issues of flood risk at the district level based on information provided within earlier prepared Level 1 SFRA's for each part of the County (including North Wiltshire).

Key objectives/requirements/conclusions to be taken into consideration in neighbourhood plan

Development should be directed to Flood Zone 1 wherever possible, and then sequentially to Flood Zone 2 and then Flood Zone 3. Where a site spans different flood zones, a sequential approach based on vulnerability of development should be undertaken steering development to the areas of least risk.

More specifically in the former North Wiltshire District the following guidance is given:

- Fluvial flooding has been experienced within Chippenham, Calne, Malmesbury and Cricklade in recent years. Properties, transport links and agricultural land has been subject to damage and disruption;
- Surface water flooding has been experienced in Wootton Bassett, Calne, Malmesbury and Marston Meysey affecting properties and transport links. The nature of the underlying geology means that groundwater flooding is less significant than other sources, although isolated occurrences have been recorded;
- Twenty six properties have been identified as being currently (September 2007) at risk from sewer flooding. Wessex Water are currently undergoing works to eliminate the majority of foul sewage flooding incidents by 2010;
- There are four reservoirs that are considered under the Reservoir Act 1975 (volume greater than 25000 m³). There are no potential development sites, identified within the NWDC Level 1 SFRA, located directly downstream of a reservoir. However, if future development is proposed downstream of these reservoirs a site specific FRA will be required to assess the potential flood risk;
- Four of the main settlements in North Wiltshire have potential development sites that intersect with Climate Change Flood Zone 3b and 3a. All of the main settlements have potential development sites located within Flood Zone 1;
- Small parts of the Sherston NP area fall within the functional flood plain (see Map 2). There is no other land identified as falling within Flood Zones 2 or 3 on the relevant maps (see Map 3A attached to the Scott Wilson Report).

How objectives and/or requirements might be considered in the neighbourhood plan

Flood risk is an issue that will need to be taken into account when considering development options. The sequential test will need to be implemented at an early stage in the plan process.

Appendix C: Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Sustainability Topic	Sustainability Appraisal objective	Decision aiding questions. Will the policy ?
Biodiversity	1. Protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the Plan area and seek to avoid irreversible losses - with particular reference to the designated County Wildlife Sites	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect and enhance priority habitats and species? 2. Protect and enhance locally designated biodiversity sites? 3. Avoid habitat fragmentation? 4. Ensure all new developments protect and enhance local biodiversity as far as possible? 5. Contribute to the achievement of objectives and targets within local BAPs? 6. Result in greater community engagement with biodiversity? 7. Maintain the existing extent of ancient woodland sites? 8. Require protection and provision of green corridors and river corridors, with use of buffer strips, where necessary?
Land and Soil Resources	2. Ensure efficient and effective use of land and give priority to the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximise densities in sustainable locations that have good access to local facilities and key infrastructure? 2. Maximise reuse of Previously Developed Land where possible/appropriate? 3. Encourage remediation of contaminated land? 4. Avoid the loss of natural floodplain?
	3. Protect those areas identified as being Grade 1 agricultural land from inappropriate development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land? 2. Protect and enhance soil quality?
Water Resources and Flood Risk	4. Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take into account predicted future impacts of climate change, including water scarcity issues? 2. Encourage sustainable and efficient management of water resources? 3. Ensure that essential water infrastructure is co-ordinated with all new development? 4. Consider the need for adequate provision of surface water and foul drainage? 5. Promote provision of pollution prevention measures? 6. Protect, and where possible, improve surface, ground and drinking water quality?
	5. Protect people and property from the risk of flooding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimise the risk of flooding to people and property (new and existing development)? 2. Take into account the predicted future impacts of climate change in the location and design of development, ensuring that development can adapt to any future flood risk scenarios? 3. Protect and enhance the natural function of floodplains? 4. Ensure the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) in appropriate circumstances?
Air Quality and Environmental Pollution	6 Minimise all sources of environmental pollution.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimise and, where possible, improve on unacceptable levels of noise, light pollution, odour and vibration? 2. Minimise all forms of contamination to soils?

Sustainability Topic	Sustainability Appraisal objective	Decision aiding questions. Will the policy ?
Climatic Factors	7. Seek to minimise impact on climate change and reduce vulnerability to future climate change effects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimise emissions of greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances? 2. Minimise the likely impacts of future development on climate change through appropriate adaptation? 3. Promote the development of renewable and low carbon sources? 4. Promote energy efficiency in buildings and new development? 5. Minimise contributions to climate change through sustainable building practices?
Historic environment	8. Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment – with particular reference to the designated ancient monument, the two Conservation Areas and all listed buildings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conserve and enhance features and areas of historical and cultural value (and their settings), including Listed Buildings, non-designated assets with local significance, archaeology, Conservation Areas and the Scheduled Ancient Monument? 2. Ensure appropriate archaeological assessment prior to development? 3. Promote sensitive re-use of historical buildings and buildings of significant local interest, where appropriate? 4. Improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage and historic sites? 5. Maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements through high quality and appropriate design? 6. Support the delivery of actions in the adopted Sherston Conservation Area Statement (1999).
Landscapes	9. Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the landscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect and enhance the landscape character and scenic quality of the countryside? 2. Conserve and enhance areas with landscape designations and take account of their management objectives? 3. Maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements? 4. Deliver good quality design that reflects local character? 5. Protect rights of way, open space and common land? 6. Improve the quality and quantity of access to the wider countryside for recreation? 7. Consider amenity value in the context of access to the countryside (and other informal recreational space)?
Population and housing	10. Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing? 2. Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all sectors of the community – particularly the elderly? 3. Ensure adequate provision of land to meet housing needs? 4. Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs? 5. Ensure that best use is made of the existing housing stock? 6. Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? 7. Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? 8. Provide for an adequate range of housing?

Sustainability Topic	Sustainability Appraisal objective	Decision aiding questions. Will the policy ?
Healthy communities	11. Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote design of buildings and spaces to reduce crime and the fear of crime? 2. Increase opportunities for regular participation in sports /exercise? 3. Protect rural ways of life? 4. Promote recreational and leisure opportunities?
Inclusive Communities	12. Retain existing community facilities and provide additional facilities where such a need has been identified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including healthcare, education, retail and leisure? 2. Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities? 3. Encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? 4. Maintain and enhance local facilities?
	13. Improve access to, and engagement in, local community services and facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents? 2. Encourage active involvement of local people in the design of new developments? 3. Encourage and promote social cohesion?
Education and skills	14. Provide good quality educational facilities capable of meeting the needs of the local community and provide opportunities for people to improve their workplace skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the provision of adequate pre- school and primary school places to meet need resulting from additional new housing development? 2. Encourage the retention and formation of new businesses in the locality capable of providing training for employees.
Transport	15. Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote developments that reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car? 2. Promote uptake of sustainable travel choices ie walking and cycling?
Economy and enterprise	16. Encourage a vibrant and diversified economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote business development? 2. Support the rural economy and farm diversification? 3. Seek to prevent the loss of existing business premises?
	17. Ensure adequate provision of high-quality employment land and diverse employment opportunities to meet the needs of local businesses and a changing workforce	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide local employment opportunities? 2. Assist businesses in finding appropriate land and/or premises? 3. Protect existing employment sites?

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Please see the separate “Consultation Statement” that has been prepared and published in support of the draft Sherston Neighbourhood Plan for full details of the continuing community consultation that has been undertaken over the last six years.

As described in Section 7 above this included:

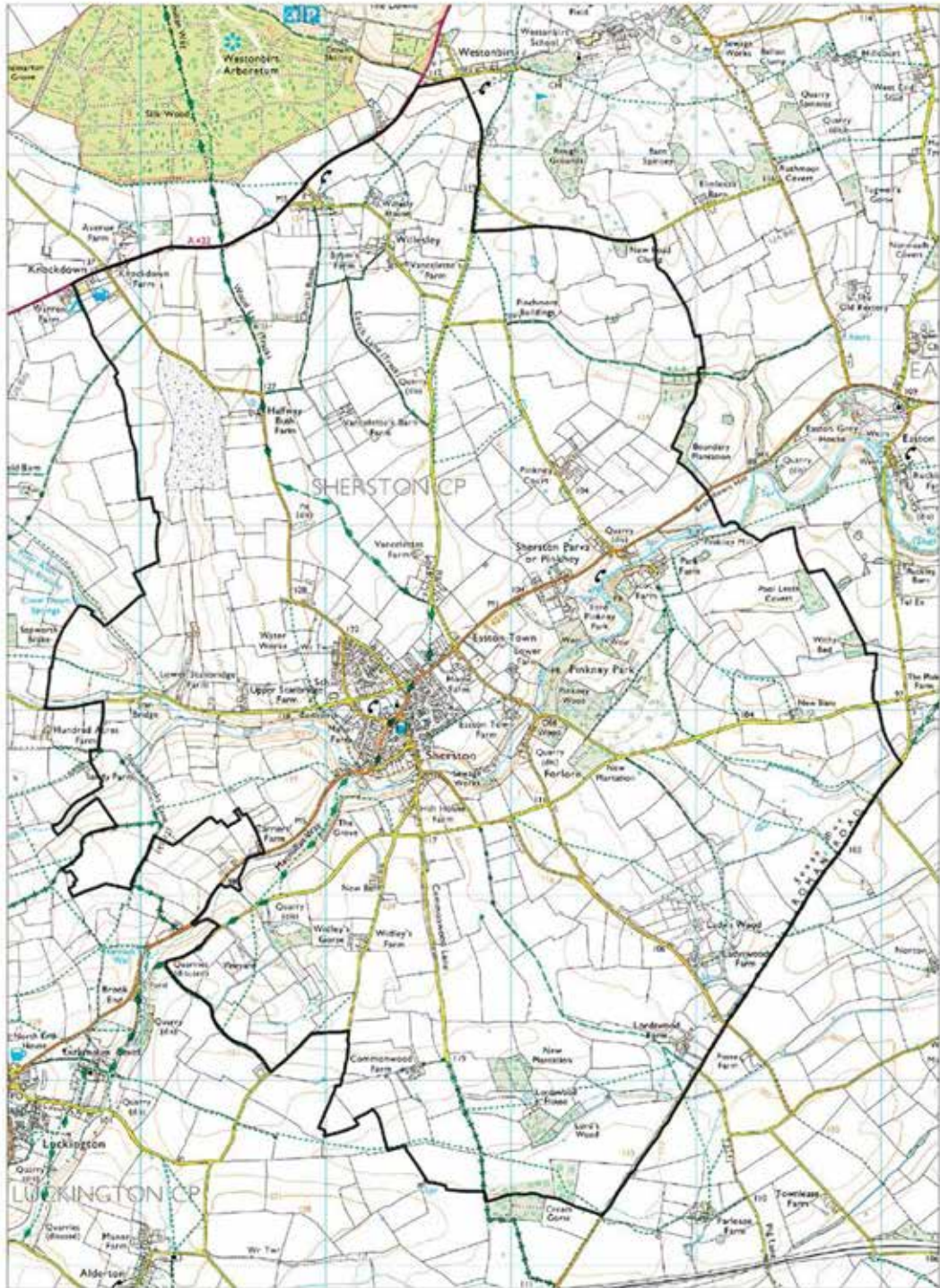
- Surveying every house in the Parish to assess the level of housing need (February 2012);
- Running two workshops in July 2012 and March 2013 (each attracting about 100 people) to solicit views on the purpose, content and proposals in the Plan;
- Holding a presentation and subsequent workshop session on the ideas evolving as a result of the work undertaken by the Steering Group and the appointed planning consultants in September 2014;
- Holding an exhibition and open forum over the weekend of 20th/21st September 2014 – at which questionnaires were handed out seeking the views of local residents on the emerging ideas;
- Holding a public meeting in January 2017 (attended by over 100 people) – to consider and discuss a particular proposal for the development of one of the key sites linked to the issue of a questionnaire seeking feedback on that specific proposal;
- Holding a public meeting in May 2017 to consider a number of alternative options for that same key site which had been tabled by members of the Steering Group;
- Holding a public meeting in September 2017 at which all of the objectives, policies and proposals that were being considered for inclusion in the draft SNP were set out, debated and subsequently agreed by the Steering Group.
- Undertaking a formal consultation on the draft SNP (in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations) between 22nd February and 9th April 2018 after which a number of minor amendments were made to the plan.

A copy of the various Workshop Reports and minutes of all of the various Steering Group meetings are available on the Parish Council’s website - <http://www.sherston.org.uk/>

These are all fully summarised in the afore-mentioned Sherston NP “Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement.

APPENDIX E

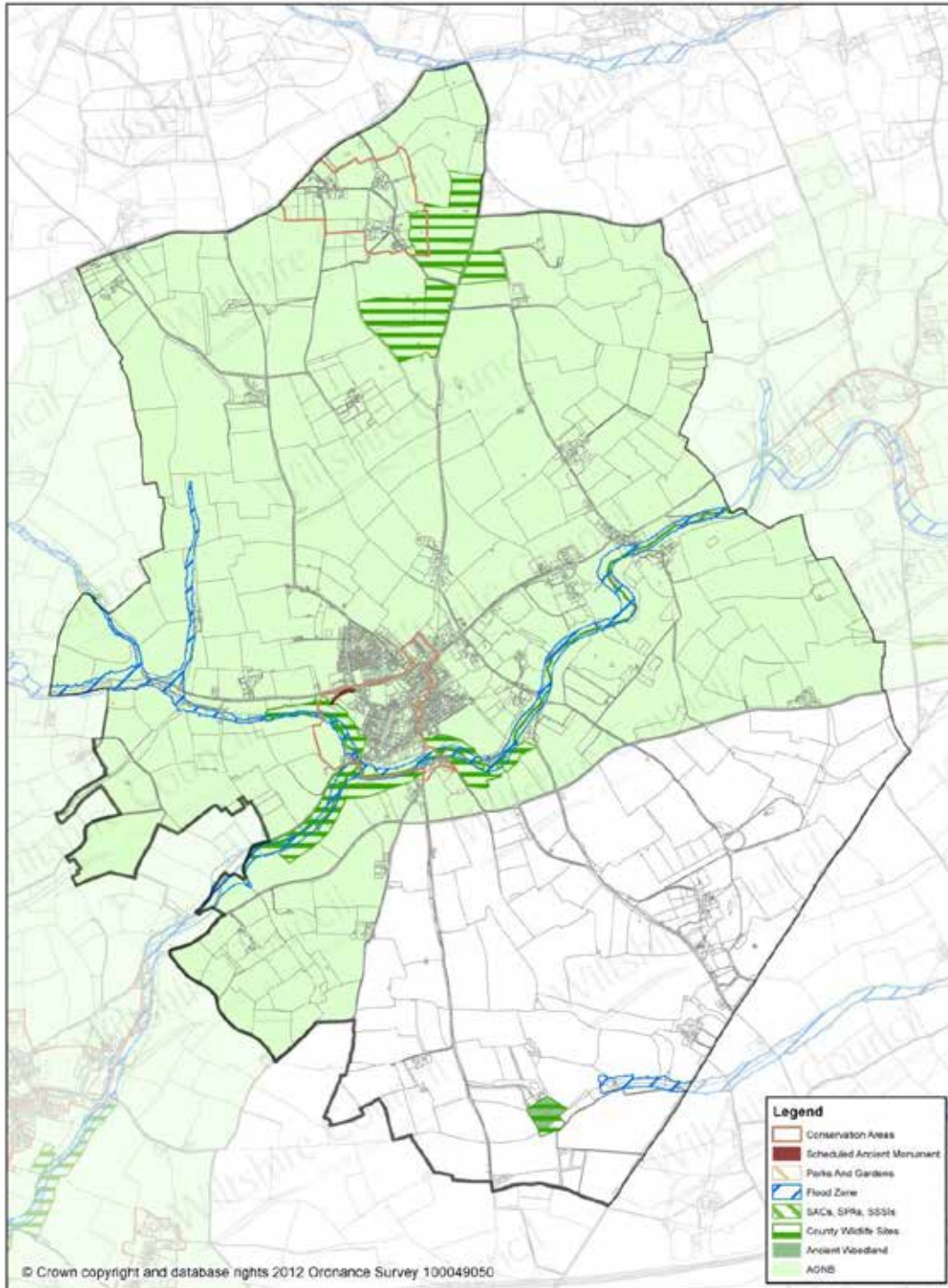
MAPS AND DIAGRAMS



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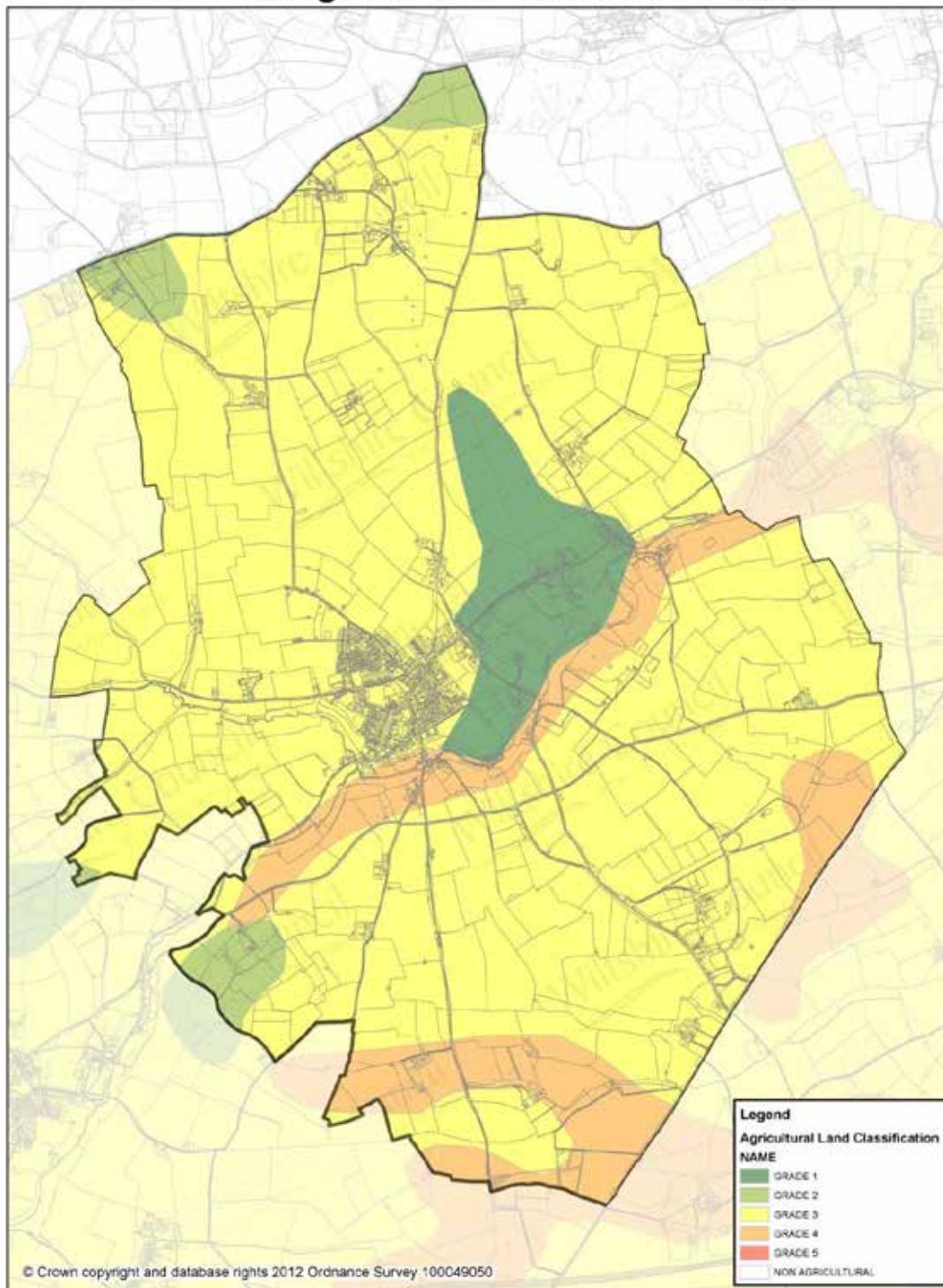
MAP 1 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

Sherston General Constraints



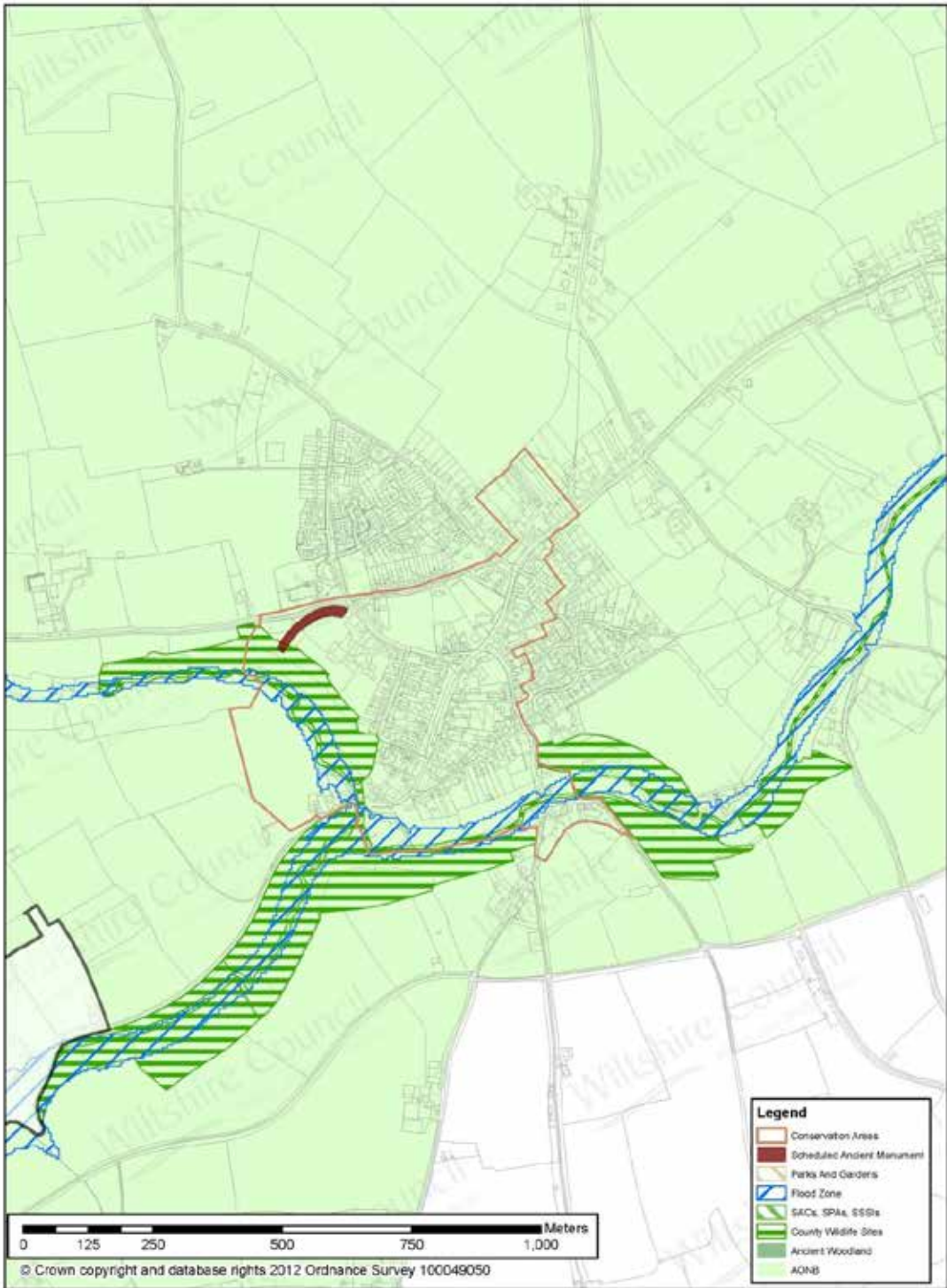
MAP 2 GENERAL CONSTRAINTS

Sherston Agricultural Land Classification



MAP 3 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Sherston General Constraints



MAP 5 VILLAGE CONSTRAINTS

