

Briefing note by Laverstock and Ford Parish Council that May be of Interest to Residents Responding to the Wiltshire Council Local Plan Consultation on Policy 23 (Land North East of Salisbury)

The Parish Council has commissioned legal advice to help inform its response to the Wiltshire Council consultation on the draft local plan. The advice helps identify some of the issues which would be relevant to this evidence based consultation and informs this briefing note. Residents might wish to use these points to consider whether they want to address any of these points in their responses and use any examples from their own personal experience and local knowledge to provide support.

- LFPC have identified that this is a more difficult site to “knock out” from the draft LP in its entirety. It is a large site previously identified for housing. Wiltshire Council clearly intends to place great reliance on in order to meet its housing targets, in circumstances where the historic setting of Salisbury means development within the city is highly constrained.

-However, arguments can be made to support the overall submission that the draft LP would be unsound with this level of housing on this site. Efforts could therefore be focused on obtaining modifications that reduce the number of houses and/or more tightly control the form of development.

Sustainability and supporting infrastructure

-the allocation site lacks supporting infrastructure: there is a school and convenience store but a lack of other public facilities including a doctor’s surgery and a dentist. Annex 3 of the Sustainability Appraisal does not address this point.

- The lack of nearby services is a good argument for why the site cannot support the level of housing that is being proposed. That lack of nearby services includes alleged nearby employment land if it seems likely that this will come forward for housing instead.

- Paragraph 73 of the NPPF states that when planning for larger scale development, authorities should “ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself.” Similarly, paragraph 105 of the NPPF provides that “Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.”

- Obviously, sustainability is relative to size, and what is a sustainable location for a small number of houses might not be sustainable for a large number of houses. If this would be a car-heavy development, that is a reason to reduce the number of houses and therefore the number of car journeys.

Landscape

-There are good landscape arguments that can be made to either reduce the number of houses on the site or suggest more onerous modifications to the allocation, for example a requirement to show compliance with the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment supporting the NP.

- The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment states that the site has a Medium/High landscape character susceptibility and a High visual susceptibility, largely due to its high elevation. The Assessment recommends as follows:

“8.24 Development is generally not recommended on the higher elevations of this area due to its visibility from surrounding areas, particularly from Cockey and Ford Downs and Figsbury Ring.

8.25 Development near to Old Sarum Village is not recommended to the proximity of the Monarch’s Way and the location on the skyline...”

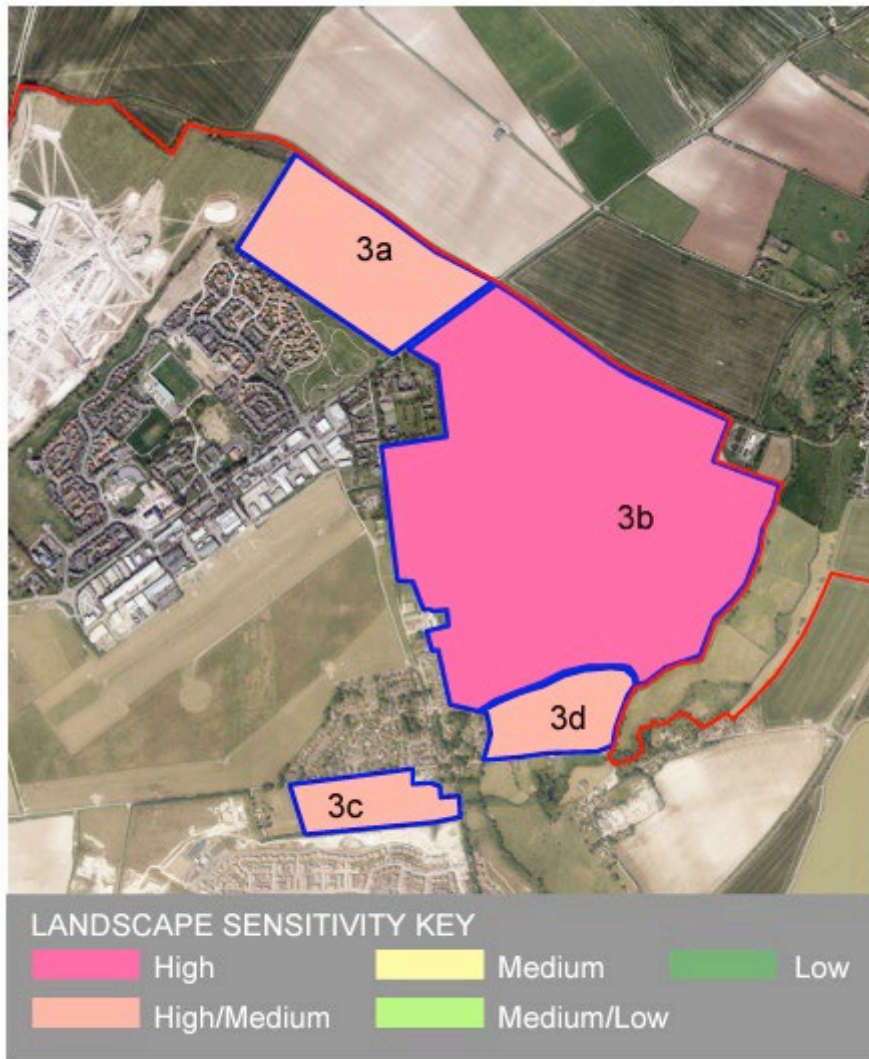


Fig. 8.3 Area 3 landscape sensitivity

- The assessment table describes the site as follows:

“higher elevation field on the visual skyline on the edge of Old Sarum Village and immediately adjacent to the Monarch’s Way. Visible from Figsbury Ring and Cockey and Ford Downs but due to topography not as visible as field 3g. Creates valuable open gap between the new village development and the Monarch’s Way.”

- the best argument for a reduction in housing numbers is the medium/high sensitivity of the site due to its elevation, and the need to design the scheme in a manner that is sensitive to its surroundings, which is difficult to achieve with the number of dwellings proposed.

Protected sites and air quality

-the mitigation requirements include “measures aimed at neutralising the levels of phosphates flowing into the River Avon Special area of Conservation (SAC) to improve water quality.” A simple suggested modification we can put forward is that if this is required mitigation, the measures should demonstrably be able to “neutralise” the levels of phosphates beyond reasonable scientific doubt, not simply be “aimed” at doing so, and this wording can be strengthened.

Alternative sites

- As with Policy 30, if we are aware of alternative sites that are not currently allocated and provide a better alternative than this one, we can of course make that submission. The many constraints of this site- drainage, noise, habitats, landscape, archaeology- mean that it will take a long time to come forward, if at all- which is another reason why there are better alternatives.

69. Similarly, if we know of nearby sites that are likely to come forward for housing, that is a reason why the level of housing on this site can be reduced.