

Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the Pre-submission
version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

October 2020

Quality information

Prepared by**Checked by****Verified by****Approved by**

 Rosie Cox
Environmental Planner

 Alastair Peattie
Associate

 Nick Chisholm-Batten
Associate

 Nick Chisholm-Batten
Associate
Revision History

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Prepared for:

Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
3rd Floor, Portwall Place
Portwall Lane
Bristol BS1 6NA
United Kingdom

T: +44 117 901 7000
aecom.com

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Non-technical summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan (CNP). This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan?

The CNP presents a plan for Colerne for the period to 2036. The Designated Area, for the purpose of the CNP, covers the Parish of Colerne in Wiltshire (**Figure 1.1**)

The CNP is being prepared in conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) (2015) and the Housing Site Allocations Plan (HSAP) (2019). Consideration will also be given to the forthcoming review of the Wiltshire Local Plan. The CNP sets out a vision and a range of policies for the CNP area, relating to a range of topics, including creating a diverse and resilient economy which is supported by attractive, healthy and affordable places to live, and improving and protecting the area's natural, built and historic environment.

It is currently anticipated that the CNP will undergo referendum in May 2021. This is in line with the newly revised PPG which sets out changes that have been introduced to neighbourhood planning in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.¹ New paragraph 107 states that referendums will be postponed in line with the Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 until 6 May 2021.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the CNP, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (June 2020), which includes information about the CNP area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the draft CNP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the draft CNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the draft CNP has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the draft CNP;
- The likely significant environmental effects of the draft CNP;

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2020) Planning Practice Guidance: Neighbourhood Planning [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#coronavirus>

- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the draft CNP; and
- The next steps for the CNP and accompanying SEA process.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the CNP

A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the CNP. The SEA Regulations are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report should present an appraisal of the '*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*'.

Chapter 4 of this SA Report therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the CNP area. As the delivery of new housing development through the CNP is what is most likely to have a significant effect on SEA objectives, it was determined that this issue should be the primary focus of the consideration of alternatives through the SA process. Case-law (most notably Friends of the Earth Vs. Welsh Ministers, 2015) has established that planning authorities may apply discretion and planning judgement when determining what should reasonably be the focus of alternatives appraisal, recognising the need to apply a proportionate approach and ensure an SEA process/ Environmental Report that is focused and accessible.

The potential site options for delivering development in line with the CNP objectives, will directly or indirectly influence the topic areas identified above and the Steering Group's preferred approach.

Establishing reasonable alternatives (site options)

Sites potentially in contention for allocation through the CNP were identified by the Steering Group through a Housing Site Assessment, with an Original Sites Report published in March 2018.

The MoD occupy a significant proportion of the parish (see **Figure 4.1** in main report):

- **Colerne Airfield** (134ha) consists of three runways and access taxiways, one large (4,000m²) World War II hangar, control tower and a small, brick fire station.
- **Azimghur Barracks (AzB)** (118ha) consists of a large number of mostly World War II brick built and generally unmodernised buildings in a low density randomly distributed pattern.
- **The Satellite Ground Station (SGS)** consists of 4.4ha and is a fenced enclave located in the centre of the MoD site.
- **Housing along Doncombe Lane** is mostly MoD built. Located to the north and east of Azimghur Barracks, part is private, part is owned by Annington Homes leased as Service Families Accommodation to the MoD.

In 2018, the Secretary of State for Defence announced that the airfield portion of the site would be disposed of by 2025. However, the Colerne Housing and Sites Report (January 2020) provides an updated position, highlighting that for technical reasons the airfield is now not considered suitable for conventional residential or light industrial development, and may therefore be more suitable for resumed light-aircraft flying or for eco-developments. This would align with feedback from the community on their aspirations for the site. With respect to the Azimghur Barracks component of the MoD site, the MoD has not expressed any intention to dispose of this for development before the 2030s.

Strategic scale sites such as this generally have long lead in times and require robust masterplanning. The future of the MoD site is uncertain at this stage and it is considered appropriate that the site be considered in further detail through the Local Plan Review. The Steering Group have discussed and agreed this with Wiltshire Council. Despite this, there are discrete areas within the larger MoD site that are being promoted and/ or could deliver small scale development to meet the identified needs during the plan period.

Table 4.1 of this report lists all fifteen sites identified and assessed by the Steering Group. The table also provides further details including the Steering Group's interim conclusions and reasons for either taking site options forward or not for further consideration through the SEA process.

Of the sites considered in **Table 4.1**, eight are discounted for a number of reasons, predominately due to sites being unavailable. The following seven sites are being carried forward for further consideration through the SEA process:

- Bath Road
- Rooks Nest Field #2
- Slaughterford Mill
- Thickwood T2
- Drill Ground, MoD (Southwood/ Northwood)
- Constitutional Club

The SEA process has subsequently undertaken an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the seven sites and potential effects that may arise as a result of housing development at these locations (see **Table NTS.1** and summary findings overleaf). The locations of these sites are presented in **Figure 4.1** in the main report.

Table NTS.1 Reasonable alternative site options – summary findings

SEA theme		Option 1 Bath Road	Option 2 Rooks Nest Field #2	Option 3 Slaughter ford Mill	Option 4 Thickwoo d T2	Option 5 Drill Ground, MoD	Option 6 Constituti onal Club	Option 7 Hangar Site
Biodiversity	Rank	2	2	5	3	3	1	4
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	No	Uncertain
Climate change	Rank	2	3	6	4	5	1	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	Uncertain	No	No	No	No
Landscape	Rank	5	3	7	2	4	1	6
	Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	No	Yes - Negative
Historic environment	Rank	1	4	3	4	3	2	3
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Land, soil and water resources	Rank	4	3	2	4	2	1	2
	Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	No	Uncertain
Population and communities	Rank	1	1	4	3	2	1	4
	Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Health and wellbeing	Rank	2	2	4	3	3	1	3
	Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Uncertain
Transportation	Rank	2	2	4	3	3	1	3
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Summary:

The assessment finds that **Option 3** stands out as the weakest performing of the options. Option 3 is found to be either the worst performing, or equally worst performing option in relation to every SEA theme other than land, soil and water (where it ranks second). This is given the location of the site distant from the settlement boundary within the Cotswold AONB, with the potential for impact on the setting and character of the village (as set out in the Wiltshire LCA), in addition to the flood risk present at the site, and the potential impact on nearby internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites.

The assessment finds that **Option 6** is the strongest performing option overall, ranked highest against every SEA theme other than historic environment. Uncertainty exists surrounding **Option 6** and the historic environment as the site is located within the Colerne Conservation Area and adjacent to Grade II Listed Buildings. However, uncertainty in this respect could lead to positive effects in the long term, given the nature of the site. **Option 6** performs most positively against all other environmental objectives given it is a small, urban brownfield site, with limited potential for impact on the parish's high quality landscape, biodiversity, soil and water resource. Despite not meeting Colerne's short-term housing needs in full, **Option 6** is anticipated to deliver positive effects of the greatest significance against social and economic objectives. This is given its village centre location, with excellent access to local services and facilities, which in turn will support health lifestyles.

In terms of the remainder of the options, **Option 7** performs poorly against environmental objectives due to potential impact on locally designated sites and nearby priority habitat, in addition to potential landscape and historic environments impacts and open development within the AONB. **Option 7** performs reasonably against social and economic objectives as it is relatively well located in terms of distance to the village core; however the C151 main road creates a physical barrier for residents, which is likely to reduce positive integration with the community, and may support continued car reliance. **Options 4** and **5** perform on a par with **Option 7** against socio-economic objectives, however it is noted that both **options 4** and **5** may negatively impact upon environmental objectives; given the potential to negatively impact upon the landscape (as a result of greenfield development in the AONB). Overall **Option 4** performs more negatively than **Option 5** given the loss of greenfield land, potential loss of BMV agricultural land and potential adverse effects on designated historic assets.

Options 1 and **2** perform very well against the socio-economic objectives, after **Option 6**, as a result of good accessibility and potential support for active travel uptake. **Options 1** and **2** also perform best, after **Option 6**, against the biodiversity SEA theme, although both do not perform well against the land, soil and water resources SEA theme due to the potential loss of BMV/ greenfield land. However it is noted that **Option 1** is best performing of all options in relation to the historic environment. This is given **Option 1** is not constrained by designated or non-designated heritage assets. **Option 1** therefore performs more positively than **Option 2** overall.

Developing the preferred approach

The Steering Group have set out in **Table NTS.2** the outline reasons for the progression or rejection of the site options. This is based on the Site Assessment Report (2020), community feedback and the SEA findings.

Table NTS.2 Outline reasons for selecting and rejecting options

Option	Status	Outline reasons
Option 1 Bath Road	Rejected – Identified in <i>Colerne Housing Sites Assessment (CHSA)</i> . Given special review in Section 6.ii of Draft Neighbourhood Plan.	Eliminated from further consideration in the September update of <i>CHSA</i> , due to Green Belt status. Could be supportable for sports use if such a proposal were advanced by Parish Council.
Option 2 Rooks Nest Field #2	No longer relevant – Not referenced in Draft Neighbourhood Plan.	By the September 2018 <i>CHSA</i> update, planning permission had been given. No longer relevant.
Option 3 Slaughterford Mill	Not allocated – Draft Neighbourhood Plan gives conditional support (Section 6.i 2), but cannot allocate the site.	Site remote from settlement boundary, and within the Cotswold AONB. Further constraints include flood risk at the site and potential impact on designated biodiversity sites. While within Colerne Parish, the site is socially-integrated with the hamlet of Slaughterford in Biddestone Parish.
Option 4 Thickwood T2	Allocated – Draft Neighbourhood Plan, Policy BEP4 i.	This site could be developable for a small number of dwellings through a Community Led Housing initiative. The Plan recommends development to provide around 5 units of Community Custom and Self-Build.
Option 5 Drill Ground, MoD	Not allocated – Draft Neighbourhood Plan gives conditional support (Section 6.i 1), but cannot allocate the site.	The development of this site could provide ample capacity for local needs to 2036. Although currently owned by the MoD the site is outside the military security fence, is already publicly accessible and is brownfield. It cannot presently be allocated because the MoD's current policy is not to consider the site's development separately from the whole Azimghur Barracks site, and because of restrictions of infrastructure and supplies which are currently serviced from within the MoD secure site. If these limitations could be addressed, this site could be allocated and would form an attractive development proposition for the purposes of the Plan.
Option 6 Constitutional Club	Allocated – Draft Neighbourhood Plan, Policy BEP4 ii.	At such time as the Club closes the site will be disposed of, which could provide a basis for acquisition for development through a Community Land Trust or Community Led Housing scheme. The site would be suitable for small scale development as favoured by the local community, and for affordable housing.
Option 7 Hangar Site	Rejected – Identified in <i>Colerne Housing Sites Assessment</i> . Given special review in Section 6.ii of Draft Neighbourhood Plan	The subject of withdrawn planning applications in recent years, when it was argued that intensive residential redevelopment would overwhelm the character of the old village, and that its development could set up a 'domino' effect beyond the Settlement Boundary. It is subject to restrictions imposed by the adjacent MoD site. If consistent with MoD safeguarding, the south of the site might be re-developable for employment opportunities, community facilities or heritage/museum to record the military significance of Colerne airfield in the 20th century. There are no proposals of this kind at this time and the site is judged inappropriate for other forms of development (see <i>CHSA</i>).

Table NTS.2 shows that of the site options assessed, Options 4 (Thickwood T2) and 6 (Constitutional Club) are considered by the NPSG as suitable for allocation through the CNP; performing well against SEA objectives and aligning most positively with the objectives of the CNP. The delivery of these two sites would not meet the full Plan Period Housing Need (80 dwellings), and therefore the CNP seeks to meet the Short-Term Housing Need (10 dwellings) only. This approach is supported by Wiltshire Council, although it is anticipated that an early review of the Neighbourhood Plan will likely be required; which the Parish Council is ready to undertake as necessary.

Assessment of the CNP

In August 2020 AECOM assessed an initial draft of the Pre-Submission Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan, providing the following recommendations:

- It is considered that Policy BEP4 (Housing Allocations) could be improved by providing support for upgraded pedestrian/ cycle access between Thickwood Field and the village centre. Notably, improved safety at the 'de-restricted section of the C151' may encourage uptake of active travel; increasing walking and cycling connectivity with the range of services and facilities available at the centre of Colerne village.
- The SEA supports the following recommendation set out within the HRA (2020):
 - *"A Paragraph be added to Policy NEP1: Landscape and Natural Environment stating that development will only be supported where the development can demonstrate compliance with the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) or any subsequent update, and where the development will not adversely affect any European site or Core Roosts and sensitive features within the Core Areas which are regarded as functionally linked to the European sites. All development brought forward within areas regarded as Core Areas within the Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) will be required to produce a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment to determine the developments impact upon the integrity of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC."*

The Steering Group subsequently updated the draft Neighbourhood Plan in response to the recommendations proposed through the Environmental Report.

The CNP now presents 27 planning policies for guiding development in Colerne Parish.

Assessment findings at this current stage

Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process has assessed the 27 policies put forward through the current version of the CNP for guiding development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under eight SEA themes.

Overall at this stage, the assessment has concluded that potential significant effects arising from plan implementation are both positive and negative. Positive effects relate to the delivery of new housing aimed at meeting local needs, protection of rural character and green infrastructure, and support for a modal shift towards active/ low-carbon travel. These are likely to bring about multiple benefits for communities, resident health and wellbeing and biodiversity. Negative effects relate to the environmental sensitivity of the parish, and the overall loss of greenfield land.

The aspect of the draft CNP that **significantly contribute to positive outcomes** is the delivery of a growth strategy that is small scale, aimed at identified local needs, and that does not overwhelm the existing settlements. Additionally, delivering growth in sustainable locations will further support accessibility and community cohesion. **Minor positive effects** are further anticipated through the protection and enhancement of existing amenities, social infrastructure, and Local Green Spaces. Furthermore, the requirement for EV provision, support for sustainable design and energy efficiency, and facilitation of working from home will support healthy lifestyles and contribute towards meeting local and national climate objectives.

Neutral effects are anticipated in relation to transportation and biodiversity. Notably in terms of biodiversity, while neutral effects are predicted overall, indirect positive effects are anticipated in relation to biodiversity through the protection and enhancement of local green infrastructure assets. Notably biodiversity net gain is supported through a number of the draft CNP policies.

The aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan identified as having the potential for a **minor negative effect** firstly relates to the permeant loss of greenfield/ agricultural land. This is anticipated as a result of the site allocation at Thickwood Field (Policy BEP4), although it is recognised that the site is relatively small in size. It is also noted that there is uncertainty in terms of the potential loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. **Minor negative effects** are also predicted in light of the environmental constraints present at Thickwood Field. Notably this includes the sensitive AONB landscape and

Lucknam Park (which includes listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments). Sensitive design and layout are likely to minimise the significance of any negative residual effects, but this is uncertain at this stage. It is further noted that while the Constitutional Club is also constrained in this respect, the nature of the site (small, brownfield, village centre infill) limits potential for adverse effects.

What are the next steps?

Subsequent to the current consultation on the draft CNP, the plan will be updated by the Steering Group to reflect comments received. This Environmental Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the plan.

The CNP and Environmental Report will then be submitted to Wiltshire Council for their consideration. Wiltshire Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the CNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Core Strategy (2015).

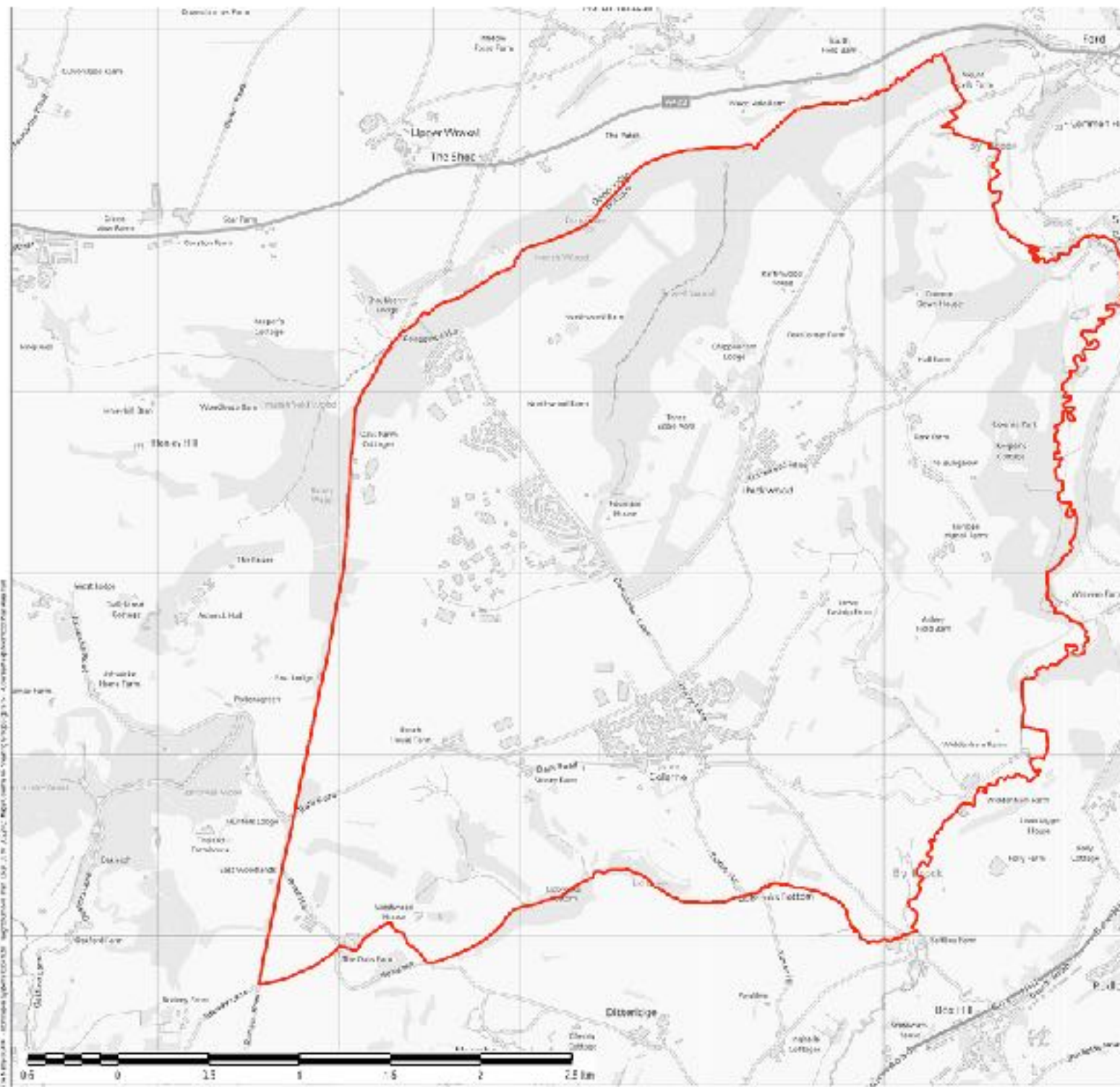
If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the CNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Wiltshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the CNP, then the Neighbourhood Plan will be 'made'. Once made, the CNP will become part of the Development Plan for Colerne.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Colerne Neighbourhood Plan (CNP).
- 1.2. The Colerne Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) (adopted 2015) and Housing Site Allocations Plan (HSAP) (2019). Consideration will also be given to the forthcoming review of the Wiltshire Local Plan.
- 1.3. The Colerne Neighbourhood Plan area is defined by the existing Parish boundary as depicted in **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.4. The Neighbourhood Plan area was designated in June 2017, and the key information relating to the emerging CNP is presented below in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the emerging CNP

Name of Responsible Authority	Colerne Parish Council
Title of Plan	Colerne Neighbourhood Plan (CNP)
Subject	Neighbourhood Planning
Purpose	The CNP is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Housing Site Allocations Plan. The CNP will be used to guide and shape development within the designated Neighbourhood Plan area.
Timescale	2020 - 2036
Area covered by the plan	The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the Parish of Colerne in Wiltshire (Figure 1.1)
Summary of content	The CNP will set out a vision, objectives, strategy and range of policies to guide future development within the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.
Plan contact point	Jane Mellett, Chair of Colerne NPSG Jane@mellett.org.uk



SEA explained

- 1.5. SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts. Through this approach, the SEA for the CNP seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.6. The Colerne Neighbourhood Plan has been screened in by Wiltshire Council and as requiring an SEA. In April 2020, Wiltshire Council determined that the Neighbourhood Plan will require a full SEA pursuant to Article 6/7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), due to the potential effects of the plan on the integrity of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation and Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA).
- 1.7. The Council concluded following the HRA screening that the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan requires an Appropriate Assessment, to further set out the detailed nature and timings of the mitigation measures necessary to avoid adverse effects on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC and Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA). Given the need for Appropriate Assessment the Council also concludes that a full SEA should be carried out as Regulation 5 (3) of the SEA Regulations states that a SEA should be carried out if a plan is determined to require an Appropriate Assessment.
- 1.8. It is noted that Wiltshire Council's screening decision also takes account of representations made by Historic England that, in their opinion, there is a lack of evidence to demonstrate that the allocated sites can be developed as proposed without causing harm to heritage assets.

The SEA Regulations

- 1.9. The SEA has been undertaken to meet specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.10. The SEA Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.11. In line with the SEA Regulations this Environmental Report must essentially answer four questions:
 1. What's the scope of the SEA?
 2. What has Plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
 - 'Reasonable alternatives' must have been appraised for the plan.
 3. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?
 - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
 4. What happens next?
- 1.12. These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which present the information to be provided within the report'. **Table 1.2** presents the linkages between the regulatory requirements and the four SEA questions.

This Environmental Report

- 1.13. This document is the Environmental Report for the draft CNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed above with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as presented in **Table 1.2**.

Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the Environmental Report in order to meet regulatory² requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include...
What's the scope of the SEA?	- What is the plan seeking to achieve? - An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	- What is the sustainability 'context'? - The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level - Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	- What is the sustainability 'baseline'? - The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan - The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected - Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	- What are the key issues & objectives? - Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	- Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) - The likely significant effects associated with alternatives - Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	- The likely significant effects associated with the Pre-submission version of the plan - The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the Pre-submission version of the plan
What happens next?	The next steps for plan making/ SEA process.

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

2. Local plan context and vision for the CNP

- 2.1. The CNP is being prepared in the context of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), which sets out a framework for how future development across Wiltshire will be planned and delivered in the period to 2026.
- 2.2. The Wiltshire Development plan comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy³, Chippenham Site Allocations Plan⁴ and the Wiltshire mineral and waste plans⁵. The plan will provide the strategic context for development up to 2036 and determine the level and direction for future growth; in line with the revised NPPF (2019) and current practice. It will include the allocation of a range of sites to meet the identified need for homes and jobs, a review of existing development management policies, and strategic guidance for the preparation of neighbourhood plan.
- 2.3. The CNP is also being prepared in the context of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (HSAP) (2019), which in accordance with the Core Strategy, identifies new sites for housing, to provide surety of delivery over the plan period to 2026.⁶

Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 2015)

- 2.4. In the context of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, Colerne is designated as a 'Large Village' within Policy 1 of the Core Strategy. The 'Principle Settlements' of Wiltshire - Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury - have been identified by Policy 1 as strategically important centres where new development will be primarily focused, but new development is also expected in the Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large and Small Villages.
- 2.5. Within Policy 1 of the Core Strategy, Large Villages are defined as: "*Settlements with a limited range of employment, services and facilities*". It is indicated that, for large villages, "*development will predominantly take the form of small housing and employment sites within the settlement boundaries.*"
- 2.6. Colerne falls within the Corsham Community Area. Core Policy 11 (Spatial Strategy: Corsham Community Area) establishes the Community Area as:
 - Market Towns: Corsham;
 - Large Villages: Box, Colerne and Rudloe; and
 - Small Villages: Gastard, Lacock, Neston and Westwells.
- 2.7. In line with Core Policy 11:

"Over the plan period (2006 to 2026), 6 ha of new employment land (in addition to that delivered or committed at April 2011) will be provided, including:

The following Principal Employment Area will be supported in accordance with Core Policy 35:

 - *Leafield Industrial Estate and Fiveways Trading Estate.*

Over the plan period (2006 to 2026), approximately 1,395 homes will be provided, of which about 1,220 should occur at Corsham. Approximately 175 homes will be provided in the rest of the Community Area. Growth in the Corsham Community Area over the plan period may consist of a range of sites in accordance with Core Policies 1 and 2."
- 2.8. Core Policy 11 and the supporting text (paragraph 5.62) of the WCS identify specific issues to be addressed in planning for the Corsham Community Area, including:

³ Wiltshire Council (2015): 'Wiltshire Core Strategy' [online]. Available from: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy>

⁴ Wiltshire Council (2017): 'Chippenham Site Allocations Plan' [online]. Available from: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-site-allocation-plan-chippenham>

⁵ Wiltshire Council (2019) 'Minerals and Waste' [online]. Available from: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-minerals-waste>

⁶ Wiltshire Council (2018): 'Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan' [online]. Available from: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-whsap>

- All development within the Community Area will need to have particular regard to the potential constraints of the Green Belt and conserve the designated landscape of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its setting, and where possible enhance its locally distinctive characteristics.
- All development will maintain the integrity of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC)⁷, having particular regard to the Wiltshire Bats SAC Guidance.⁸

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (2018)

- 2.9. In July 2018, the council submitted the HSAP along with a 'Schedule of Proposed Changes' and supporting evidence to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
- 2.10. The Submission HSAP (2018) presents proposals and associated policies designed to be in general conformity with the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and national planning policy. It considers sites in relation to the geographic area of Wiltshire (excluding Chippenham which has been dealt with in a separate Development Plan Document (DPD)).
- 2.11. The Corsham Community Topic Paper (2018) forms the evidence for the HSAP, summarising the outcomes of the site selection process in relation to the Corsham Community Area.⁹

Housing requirement

- 2.12. The Council's 2017 Housing Land Supply Statement (published March 2018) (hereafter "2017 HLSS") provides a confirmed housing land supply position (base dated April 2017), and represents the current housing land position. The housing requirements shown in the 2017 HLSS for Corsham Community Area are set out in **Table 1.2** below.

Table 1.2: Housing requirements for Corsham Community Area

Area	Indicative requirement 2006 – 2026	Completions 2006 – 2017	Developable commitments 2017 – 2026	Indicative residual requirement ^t
Corsham (market town)	1,220	597	629	0
Corsham CA remainder (large and small villages)	175	285	96	0
Corsham total	1,395	882	724	0

- 2.13. **Table 1.2** shows the overall housing requirement for the community area over the Plan period 2006-2026. In addition, it shows the number of dwellings that have already been delivered and those that are planned. This leaves an 'indicative residual requirement' of homes yet to be delivered during the remainder of the Plan period. For Corsham and the Corsham Community Area Remainder, the residual requirement is 0, and hence there is no need to look at these areas for the purpose of allocating further land for housing. However, as anticipated by Core Policy 2 of the WCS, smaller-scale housing growth across the Community Area remainder will be capable of being addressed separately through emerging neighbourhood plans.

⁷ JNCC (date unknown) Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC [online] available at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012584>

⁸ Wiltshire Council (2020) Writing ecological surveys to inform the planning [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-bio-ecological-survey>

⁹ Wiltshire Council (2018): 'Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan Community Area Topic Paper – Corsham' [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planningpolicydocument?directory=Wiltshire%20Housing%20Site%20Allocations%20DPD/Submission%20July%202018/Community%20Area%20Topic%20Papers&fileref=6>

Wiltshire Local Plan Review

- 2.14. Wiltshire Council is reviewing the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) to be recast as the Wiltshire Local Plan. The Local Plan will identify land for development up to 2036. An initial consultation in November 2017 asked about the issues the Local Plan Review should address in order to plan for the period to 2036. The consultation document is available at:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review>

- 2.15. This document has been prepared to stimulate discussion on how the review of the Wiltshire Local Plan should be carried out. At this stage no decisions have yet been made on the future locations for growth and development.
- 2.16. The provisional programme for the Local Plan Review suggested that Regulation 19 Pre-submission consultation would take place in Quarter 4 of 2019; however, this is currently delayed.

Long-term vision for the CNP

- 2.17. The long-term vision for the CNP, which was established during earlier stages of plan development, is as follows:

“The community recognises that absence of development would be a symptom of eventual decline and regards a Neighbourhood Plan as providing an opportunity to secure development that will be welcomed as fitting the character of the environment, contributing to the unique character and environment of this Cotswolds hilltop community, a sense of place, and ensuring the sustainability of a lively and demographically-balanced rural community. Our Vision is that by the end of its term the Neighbourhood Plan will have ensured that:

The three residential areas of the parish have maintained their distinctiveness whilst developing organically and in close association to meet local housing, employment and community services needs.

- *Development has enhanced and developed, and not diluted, community identity and cohesion.*
- *'The design of new developments, contributed to by the community, has helped to reinforce and enhance the distinctive character of the parish, its settlements and buildings'*
- *The buffer of existing greenfield and light industry to the north of the village has retained current usages dedicated to agriculture, recreation and employment.*
- *Ribbon development between the three residential areas has been prevented, and their surrounding agricultural landscape has been maintained.*
- *Future development, including the MoD site (the former “RAF Colerne”), has been compatible with infrastructure capacities, and given emphasis to autonomous and regenerative building.*
- *Building development and restoration has enhanced the rural nature of the parish, and also responded to the economic and environmental challenges of climate change.*
- *Transport infrastructure has been enhanced to encourage better interconnectedness and low-carbon impact within and without the parish.”*

3. The scope of the SEA

- 3.1. The SEA Regulations require that: *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.¹⁰ These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SEA for the CNP in June 2020.
- 3.2. The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the CNP;
 - Baseline data against which the CNP can be assessed;
 - The key sustainability issues and opportunities for the CNP; and
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the CNP can be assessed.
- 3.3. Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in **Appendix A**. Comments received on the Scoping Report, and how they have been considered and addressed, are presented in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Natural England	
No response received.	N/A
Historic England David Stuart, Historic Places Adviser	
Many thanks for your consultation on the SEA Scoping Report for the emerging Colerne Neighbourhood Plan.	Comment noted.
We have few comments to offer on the Report. We are pleased to see that the rationale for the need for SEA is included at the beginning of the document. This is most helpful in highlighting the particular issues upon which attention may need to focus in the SEA process.	
We are also pleased to note the reference to our guidance on relevant themes, such as Setting of heritage assets, Site Allocations and the SEA process itself, and formal inclusion of key parts of that guidance on Site Assessments which will help ensure that appropriate methodology relating to the significance of heritage assets is employed.	
On this basis we look forward to sight of the SEA and its supporting evidence base in due course.	
Environment Agency	
No response received.	N/A

¹⁰ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme’.

Key sustainability issues

3.4. Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SEA Scoping Report was able to identify a range of sustainability issues and opportunities that should be a particular focus of SEA. These are as follows, presented by each of the nine SEA themes.

Air quality

- There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within or in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- Traffic and congestion arising from planned new development within and surrounding the area has the potential to increase emissions and reduce air quality in the City of Bath which is the closest AQMA (approximately 7km from the Neighbourhood Plan Area), however this is unlikely to be significant.
- Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, and the minimal level of growth likely to be delivered through the plan, **the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

Biodiversity

- The Neighbourhood Plan Area includes part of Colerne Park and Monks Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), to the east of the Parish.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Area is located approximately 1km from Box Mine SSSI, which is part of the network of significant underground sites supporting the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- The Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the red 'consultation zone' for Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. New development must take into consideration the location of the Parish in terms of the 'consultation zone' and potential to impact upon commuting corridors for bats. These are generally well vegetated, sheltered linear features that provide direct routes between foraging areas and roosts.
- There are opportunities for development to create new habitats and contribute to improved ecological connectivity in the Plan area, particularly given the proximity of Box Mine SSSI. It will be important for the Neighbourhood Plan to maximise potential contributions and ensure appropriate access and management of new habitats on development sites.
- The County Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodland and priority habitats within the Plan area host a variety of plant and animal species (including bats) that contribute to biodiversity and support ecological connectivity. These areas should be retained and enhanced in development.
- The Neighbourhood Plan can also maximise opportunities to support multiple benefits from biodiversity, such as climate resilience.

Climate change

- Colerne Parish is partially affected by areas of high fluvial flood risk, particularly along the Parish boundary, coinciding with the By Brook River. Surface water flood risk affects a slightly broader extent of the Plan area and development proposals will need to deliver sufficient mitigation to minimise the risk of flooding from all sources.
- The total CO₂ emissions per capita within Wiltshire is greater than the regional and national totals; however, the percentage reduction of emissions within Wiltshire between 2005 and 2017 were greater than the average reductions in the South West of England and the whole of England.
- Any development in the Plan area should consider the need to provide access to sustainable or low carbon travel options, that meet the needs of consumers and improves mobility, whilst also reducing emissions.

- Wiltshire Council has recently declared a climate emergency and has resolved to support local authorities (and, by extension, Neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible. The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to maximise opportunities to support Council actions in tackling climate change. This may include through encouraging renewable energy technologies in small-scale developments in the Parish; i.e. solar PV and water heating, continuing the positive trend seen for Wiltshire

Landscape

- The Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is recognised as a nationally designated landscape.
- Land in the north of the Parish is associated with the Belstead Brook valley and was formerly designated a Special Landscape Area (SLA).
- The Neighbourhood Plan Area lies within the National Character Area (NCA): 107 Cotswolds. The Cotswolds form the best-known section of the predominantly oolitic Jurassic Limestone belt that stretches from the Dorset coast to Lincolnshire.
- There are three landscape character types identified in the Cotswold AONB Landscape Character Area (LCA) that overlap with the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary: Enclosed Limestone Valley, Dip-Slope Lowland Valley and High Wold Dip-Slope.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is covered by two distinctly different landscape character types within the Wiltshire LCA: Limestone Wold (Cotswolds Dip-Slope) and Limestone Valleys (By Brook Limestone Valley). Cotswolds Dip-Slope follows the Parish boundaries, while By Brook Limestone Valleys covers the central area of the Parish
- The Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement (2019) has generated 16 potential Character Areas covering the built settlements of the parish. This is presented as three main areas, Colerne Village, Thickwood and North Colerne, comprised of 15 sub-areas, eleven for Colerne village and two each for Thickwood and North Colerne.
- The potential effects of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan may have implications for the overall character and appearance of the landscape in the future.

Historic environment

- The Neighbourhood Plan area contains one Grade I, one Grade II* and 93 Grade II Listed Buildings. The majority are sited in Colerne Village, the highest concentration being within the Conservation Area which covers the central, southern, and southeastern extent of Colerne Village.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Area contains three Scheduled Monuments.
- The Heritage at Risk Register, has identified just one designated heritage asset in the Neighbourhood Plan Area at risk. This asset could potentially deteriorate further without intervention or as a result of inappropriate development.
- The National Monuments Record (accessed through Heritage Gateway¹¹) identifies five archaeological records in Colerne Parish, and HE PastScape identifies eight archaeological and architectural heritage records within the Parish.
- A Romano-British villa (West of Lucknam Lodge), located within Colerne Airfield and excavated in 1854, is a critical aspect of the Parish's history.
- The significance and setting of the varied designated and non-designated heritage assets present within the Plan area should be considered in, and positively impacted upon by, new development.

¹¹ Heritage Gateway [online] available at: <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results.aspx>

Land, soil and water resources

- There is a lack of evidence to ascertain agricultural land quality for the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. National provisional quality datasets indicate that the majority of land within the Neighbourhood Plan Area is Grade 3, and as part of a precautionary approach it is noted that there is the potential for loss of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.
- There is potential for contaminated land to be present at the Colerne MoD site.
- Part of the Neighbourhood Plan Area is designated as an NVZ (2017) 'Surface Water 568 - Doncombe Bk - source to conf By Bk NVZ'.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Area is within the Avon Bristol catchment area which contains 75 waterbodies, 62 of which have moderate or good ecological status, and all bar one has met the appropriate threshold for good chemical status.
- The Plan area lies over a principle bedrock aquifer identified as of importance for water supply. The Plan area is of 'high' groundwater vulnerability, and therefore any development in the Plan area will need to consider potential groundwater effects and sustainable drainage systems to manage infiltration.

Population and communities

- The population of Colerne grew by 5.8% between the 2001 census and 2011 census, less than averages for the County, region and nation as a whole. The largest proportion of residents are within the 25-44 age category.
- Household deprivation levels within the Plan area are comparatively low (59.5% deprived in no dimensions).
- Colerne spans over two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) (Wiltshire 017E and Wiltshire 017D). Levels of deprivation in relation to the IMD 2019 for both LSOAs are generally lower than national figures.
- A comparatively high proportion of residents in the Plan area either own their own homes (65.7%) or privately rent (25.5%).
- The majority of residents in the Plan area hold at least one qualification (95.9%).
- There are three lower schools within the Plan area (one playgroup, co-ed school for children with learning disabilities and village primary school). The nearest secondary school is located in Corsham.
- The following three occupational bands depict 43.8% of professions within the Plan area: Professional occupations (16.7%), Associate professional & technical occupations (14.7%) and Managers, directors, senior officials (12.4%).
- Results of both versions of the Colerne Business Survey Report depict concerns surrounding employment provision within the Plan area, including access issues for current businesses and good quality infrastructure.
- There are three key residential areas within the Plan area which are mutually dependent on each other for key services and facilities.
- In general, the Plan area hosts a range of services, facilities, events, community groups and societies for residents.
- The southern extent of the Plan area is partially located within the Avon Green Belt.

Health and wellbeing

- Colerne performs well with regards to general health in the Plan area. Figures for those reporting at least 'good' health are 89.5% in Colerne, compared to 83.8% (Wiltshire), 81.42% (the South West) and 81.4% (England as a whole). Additionally, those reporting 'very good' health is high.

- For those with long term health conditions, 89.3% of residents' activities in the Colerne are not affected, higher than figures for Wiltshire (84%), the South West (81.6%) and England as a whole (82.4%).
- The Colerne Parish Playground Facilities report identifies nine open spaces within the Plan area, however community consultation indicated there remains a desire to develop more green spaces around and within housing developments.
- Results of the most recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) indicate issues in relation to physical and mental wellbeing in the wider district, though these are not necessarily representative of general health within Colerne as overall levels of health and health-related deprivation are highly localised within Wiltshire

Transportation

- In the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in the Plan area is likely to continue prevalent trends in which residents' favour private vehicles as the transport mode of choice/ necessity.
- There is constrained highway access to Colerne Parish; exacerbated by HGV access limitations, resulting in frequent congestion and safety implications for pedestrians/ cyclists.
- Roadside parking is a considerable issue for the Parish, notably in Colerne village, contributing to localised issues around congestion and safety, notably at peak school times.
- Access to public transport (bus and train services) is limited in the Parish. The nearest train stations are located at Chippenham and Bath Spa, approximately 8 miles from Colerne village.
- Higher than average percentages of residents in the Plan area walk and cycle to work when compared to the County, region and nation. Opportunities to capitalise on this positive trend should be maximised.

SEA Framework

- 3.5. The issues and opportunities were then translated into an 'SEA Framework'. This SEA Framework provides a methodological framework for the assessment of likely significant effects on the baseline. The SEA framework for the CNP is presented below in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 SEA Framework

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geodiversity.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Protect and enhance European, Nationally and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and species, such as ancient woodland? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan Area	Will the option/proposal help to: • Reduce the number of journeys made? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?
	Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan Area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding	Will the option/proposal help to: • Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water runoff, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Neighbourhood Plan Area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and villagescapes.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Conserve and enhance the quality and integrity of the Cotswolds AONB and its setting? • Support landscape character of the landscape character areas covering the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Conserve the capacity for landscape features to accommodate new development through considerate planning? • Protect locally important viewpoints contributing to the sense of place and visual amenity of the Neighbourhood Plan Area?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions
Historic environment	Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan Area	Will the option/proposal help to: • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting? • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings? • Support the integrity of the historic setting of key buildings of cultural heritage interest as listed on the Wiltshire HER? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the environment? • Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes? • Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?
Land, soil and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Promote the use of previously developed land? • Promote the use of vacant & derelict brownfield land opportunities?
	Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Reduce the amount of waste produced? • Support the minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste? • Maximise opportunities for local management of waste to minimise export of waste to areas outside? • Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions
	Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Support improvements to water quality? • Support measures which minimise water consumption? • Ensure the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? • Protect groundwater and surface water resources from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling?
Population and community	Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Support the delivery of new and improved community facilities and amenities? • Maintain and enhance economic and social interlinkages between the three core residential areas within the Plan area? • Support and contribute to the improvement of employment offer and associated infrastructure within the Plan area, such as high quality broadband for remote working? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents, including residents with specialist needs? • Maintain the integrity and openness of the Avon Green Belt?
	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Support enhancements to the current housing stock? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.	Will the option/proposal help to: - Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? - Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards? - Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? - Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? - Avoiding any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	Will the option/proposal help to: - Support the key objectives within the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) to encourage more sustainable transport? - Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? - Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? - Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian movement? - Facilitate home and remote working? - Improve road safety? - Reduce the impact on residents from the road network? - Improve parking facilities?

4. What has plan making/ SEA involved to this point?

- 4.1. In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include:
 - An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives/ an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2. The 'narrative' of plan-making/ SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, this section explains how preparation of the current version of the CNP has been informed by an assessment of alternative locations for non-strategic scale development in the Parish.

Developing the reasonable alternatives

- 4.3. The following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the CNP area. As the delivery of new housing development through the CNP is what is most likely to have a significant effect on SEA objectives, it was determined that this issue should be the primary focus of the consideration of alternatives through the SEA process. Case-law (most notably Friends of the Earth Vs. Welsh Ministers, 2015) has established that planning authorities may apply discretion and planning judgement when determining what should reasonably be the focus of alternatives appraisal, recognising the need to apply a proportionate approach and ensure an SEA process/ report that is focused and accessible.
- 4.4. The potential sites for delivering development in line with the CNP objectives, will directly or indirectly influence the topic areas identified above and the Steering Group's preferred approach.

Local planning framework

- 4.5. As discussed in **Section 2.1**, the CNP is being prepared in the context of the WCS (2015), the HSAP (2019), and with due consideration of the forthcoming Local Plan Review.
- 4.6. Colerne is designated as a 'Large Village' within Policy 1 of the Core Strategy. It is indicated that, for large villages, "*development will predominantly take the form of small housing and employment sites within the settlement boundaries.*"
- 4.7. The Submission HSAP (2018) presents proposals and associated policies designed to be in general conformity with the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and national planning policy. The Corsham Community Topic Paper (2018) forms the evidence for the HSAP, summarising the outcomes of the site selection process in relation to the Corsham Community Area; which includes Colerne parish.¹²
- 4.8. **Table 1.2** overleaf shows the overall housing requirement for the community area over the Plan period 2006-2026. For Corsham and the Corsham Community Area Remainder, the residual requirement is 0, and hence there is no need to look at these areas for the purpose of allocating further land for housing. However, as anticipated by Core Policy 2 of the WCS, smaller-scale housing growth across the Community Area remainder will be capable of being addressed separately through emerging neighbourhood plans.

Table 1.2: Housing requirements for Corsham Community Area

¹² Wiltshire Council (2018): 'Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan Community Area Topic Paper – Corsham' [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planningpolicydocument?directory=Wiltshire%20Housing%20Site%20Allocations%20DPD/Submission%20July%202018/Community%20Area%20Topic%20Papers&fileref=6>

Area	Indicative requirement 2006 – 2026	Completions 2006 – 2017	Developable commitments 2017 – 2026	Indicative residual requirement
Corsham (market town)	1,220	597	629	0
Corsham CA remainder (large and small villages)	175	285	96	0
Corsham total	1,395	882	724	0

- 4.9. Further to the above, a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) was produced by Wiltshire Council in April 2018. This concluded that there was “a low level of sustained need for housing in the parish” and a short current waiting list. It indicated that a minimum of ten affordable dwellings, either as subsidised rented housing or shared ownership/ discounted market homes, would be needed in the parish in the following three years. This is referred to as the community’s Short-Term Housing Need.
- 4.10. Information provided by Wiltshire Council in 2020 has updated these figures with details from the Wiltshire Housing Register and the Help to Buy South Register. It is noted that the findings of the Colerne Community Survey of June 2018 are largely consistent with those of the original HNS.
- 4.11. On the advice of Locality, and based on existing evidence/ sources, a recommendation was put to, and accepted by the Steering Group, that a planning target of an additional 80 new dwellings for the full Plan period is appropriate. This is inclusive of the Short-Term Housing Need, and is referred to as the Plan Period Housing Need.
- 4.12. Taking the above into account, alternatives should be explored through the SEA to deliver the indicative requirement of 80 dwellings, while also helping to meet the wider objectives of the draft CNP.
- 4.13. The first step in establishing reasonable alternatives that can achieve this need is to identify site options.

Site options

- 4.14. Sites potentially in contention for allocation through the CNP were identified by the Steering Group through a Housing Site Assessment, with an Original Sites Report published in March 2018. Fifteen sites were identified through the following sources:
- Wiltshire Council Strategic Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) (2017);
 - Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites (CfS) (2017 – 2018); and
 - Survey work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Sites Sub-group.
- 4.15. The MoD occupy a significant proportion of the parish (see **Figure 4.1** overleaf):
- **Colerne Airfield** (134ha) consists of three runways and access taxiways, one large (4,000m²) World War II hangar, control tower and a small, brick fire station.
 - **Azimghur Barracks (AzB)** (118ha) consists of a large number of mostly World War II brick built and generally unmodernised buildings in a low density randomly distributed pattern.
 - **The Satellite Ground Station (SGS)** consists of 4.4ha and is a fenced enclave located in the centre of the MoD site.
 - **Housing along Doncombe Lane** is mostly MoD built. Located to the north and east of Azimghur Barracks, part is private, part is owned by Annington Homes leased as Service Families Accommodation to the MoD.



Figure 4.1 Sketch-map of main areas of the MoD estate

- 4.16. In 2018, the Secretary of State for Defence announced that the airfield portion of the site would be disposed of by 2025. However, the Colerne Housing and Sites Report (January 2020) provides an updated position, highlighting that for technical reasons the airfield is now not considered suitable for conventional residential or light industrial development, and may therefore be more suitable for resumed light-aircraft flying or for eco-developments. This would align with feedback from the community on their aspirations for the site. With respect to the Azimghur Barracks component of the MoD site, the MoD has not expressed any intention to dispose of this for development before the 2030s.
- 4.17. Strategic scale sites such as this generally have long lead in times and require robust masterplanning. The future of the MoD site is uncertain at this stage and it is considered appropriate that the site be considered in further detail through the Local Plan Review. The Steering Group have discussed and agreed this with Wiltshire Council. Despite this, there are discrete areas within the larger MoD site that are being promoted and/ or could deliver small scale development to meet the identified needs during the plan period.
- 4.18. **Table 4.1** overleaf lists all fifteen sites identified and assessed by the Steering Group. The table also provides further details including the Steering Group's interim conclusions and reasons for either taking site options forward or not for further consideration through the SEA process.

Site	Source	Size (ha)	SHELAA Conclusion	Colerne Housing Sites Assessment (Jan 2020)	Taken forward for further consideration through the SEA process?
Bath Road	SHELAA (Ref 628) and CfS	1.32	Not suitable: in Green Belt and AONB, no assessment of achievability, not deliverable, developable in long term. Availability unknown.	This site is within the AONB and Green Belt. Development of this site might seem to form a natural extension to the main village and a final extension given the protected community uses to the west and north west. However, because of its Green Belt status, eliminated from further consideration.	Yes – although NPSG rejected due to GB status, the site (given put forward during the SHEELA process and through CfS) is available and deliverable. Site therefore included through the SEA process for completeness. It is noted that the site could enable small-scale development in line with village aspirations.
Hangar Site (Former Colerne Airfield)	SHELAA (Ref 3253)	7.18	Suitable, not achievable. In AONB and Green Belt. Not shown as available or deliverable but the subject of a recent planning application. Developable in the long term.	This site is inappropriate in terms of the general settlement pattern. There are concerns about its potential development, together with the other sites north of the C151 referred to elsewhere (Doncombe Lane, Site 2 and fields 3322 and 1713) because of the disturbing precedent they could set for development of all of the strip of land between the main airfield site and the main C151 road.	Yes - while this site was discounted through the Site Assessment Report (2020) it has been carried forward for further consideration given landowner interest.
Doncome Lane Crossroads	SHELAA (Ref 3429)	4.8	Suitable and achievable but in the AONB. Available and deliverable in the short term.	This site is inappropriate in terms of the general settlement pattern. The SHELAA assessment as suitable is inexplicable. This site is well outside the settlement and its development would be damaging in terms of landscape and settlement pattern. On 15 August 2019 the landowner confirmed that this site is not available for development.	No – site unavailable.
23, Watergates	SHELAA (Ref N/07/01725/FUL)	0.575	Not suitable in total but extant planning permission. In Green Belt and AONB. Adjacent to CA. Suitable area: 0.002 ha. Availability unknown. Developable in long term.	Inappropriate addition locationally and in terms of likely scale of development at the important southern edge of the village. It would be a significant and inappropriate addition to the 'straggle' of older developments along Watergates and other lanes down the hill.	No – availability unknown, site considerably distant from the settlement boundary with numerous further constraints (AONB, Green Belt, CA).

Site	Source	Size (ha)	SHELAA Conclusion	Colerne Housing Sites Assessment (Jan 2020)	Taken forward for further consideration through the SEA process?
Rooks Nest	SHELAA (Ref N/07/02349/FUL)	0.47	Not suitable, in Green Belt and AONB. Developable in long term. Availability unknown, not assessed for achievability.	As an isolated site, further development on this field is not unacceptable. However, if considered with other Rooks Nest submissions (see below), this would comprise part of a significant and inappropriate addition to the 'straggle' of older developments down the hill. Furthermore, this site is in the Green Belt and the proposal relates to its development as an equestrian/horticultural centre. Equestrian centre developments within the Green Belt are only likely to be acceptable if they are in remote locations; this small site is on the edge of the village.	Yes – see other Rooks Nest submission below. This site is considered potentially suitable for residential development (in addition to equestrian facilities).
Site 2, Colerne Airfield	SHELAA (Ref N/09/01380/FUL)	1.04 ha	Outside settlement boundary so considered to be in 'open countryside'. Not suitable. Availability unknown, not assessed for achievability.	This site is inappropriate in terms of the general settlement pattern. There are serious concerns about its potential development, together with the other sites north of the C151 referred to elsewhere (Hangar site, Doncombe Lane, and fields 3322 and 1713) because of the disturbing precedent they could set for development of all of the strip of land between the main airfield site and the main C151 road.	No – site not shown as suitable and availability unknown. Significant constraints include distance from main settlement (significantly outside of settlement boundary), and potential to set precedent for urban sprawl.
Eastrip Lane	CfS	1.39	N/A	Inappropriate 'ribbon' development along a narrow and difficult lane with no footpaths. Severe damage to view to south which is an important village amenity. Access along Eastrip Lane would be severely stressed. Not supportable.	No – significant constraints include distance from settlement boundary and access.
Slaughterford Mill	CfS	1.8	N/A	Varied proposed uses, not market housing (live/ work units, self-builds camping, holiday chalets). Supportable subject to considerable further detail needed, plus discussion with Biddestone (adjacent parish).	Yes – no significant constraints identified.
Thickwood T2	CfS	0.36	N/A	Appropriate in the overall pattern of Thickwood. Supportable.	Yes – no significant constraints identified.
Rook's Nest – 3 fields (field 2 included above)	CfS	2	N/A	Partial development (the western field) would be not unacceptable but overall development of the three fields would constitute an excessive and inappropriate additional to the western slope of the village.	Yes – a proportion of the site is suitable, this section carried forward for further consideration.

Site	Source	Size (ha)	SHELAA Conclusion	Colerne Housing Sites Assessment (Jan 2020)	Taken forward for further consideration through the SEA process?
Fields 3322 and 1793	CfS	7.4	N/A	This site is inappropriate in terms of the general settlement pattern. There are serious concerns about its potential development, together with the other sites north of the C151 referred to elsewhere (Hangar site, Doncombe Lane, and Site 2) because of the disturbing precedent they could set for development of the strip of land between the main airfield site and the main C151 road.	No - significant constraints include: - Site outside of settlement boundary. Intensive development of the site would be a sizeable addition to the village, significantly altering the village character and settlement pattern. - Development of the site could set precedent for urban sprawl, damaging the preservation of the green corridor north of the village.
Drill Ground, MoD (between Southwood / Northwood)	Local Survey Work	3.5	N/A	This parcel of land is still in MoD ownership but lies outside the security fence of Azimghur Barracks and is publicly accessible. The MoD insists (Feb. 2018) that its future may only be considered as part of the eventual Azimghur Barracks disposal, even though there is no known or likely military need for it. It is assessed here because of its obvious advantages for development – location, community integration, topography. As such it presents a good prima facie case for development. The Steering Group acknowledges that the MoD will not at this time consider its separation from the overall site but wishes to give it special note because of its ideal development potential for the village.	Yes – while uncertainty surrounds the release of the site by the MoD, no significant constraints identified.
Constitutional Club	Local Survey Work	0.1	N/A	An ideal location for a small scale development of the type favoured by the local community. It is understood that this Club is to be sold by the Conservative Association within the next two years.	Yes - no significant constraints identified.
Doncombe Lane Crossroads (west)	Local Survey Work	5.6	N/A	This site is inappropriate for development as it is greenfield land and forms part of the green area between the village and the MOD site. Additionally the landowner has stated that he is not interested in development at this time. Not recommended for adoption.	No – site not available.
East of Primary School	Local Survey Work	1.55	N/A	Greenfield but appropriate addition locationally at the eastern edge of the village, and in terms of likely scale of development. However, landowner has stated that this field is not available for development.	No – site not available.

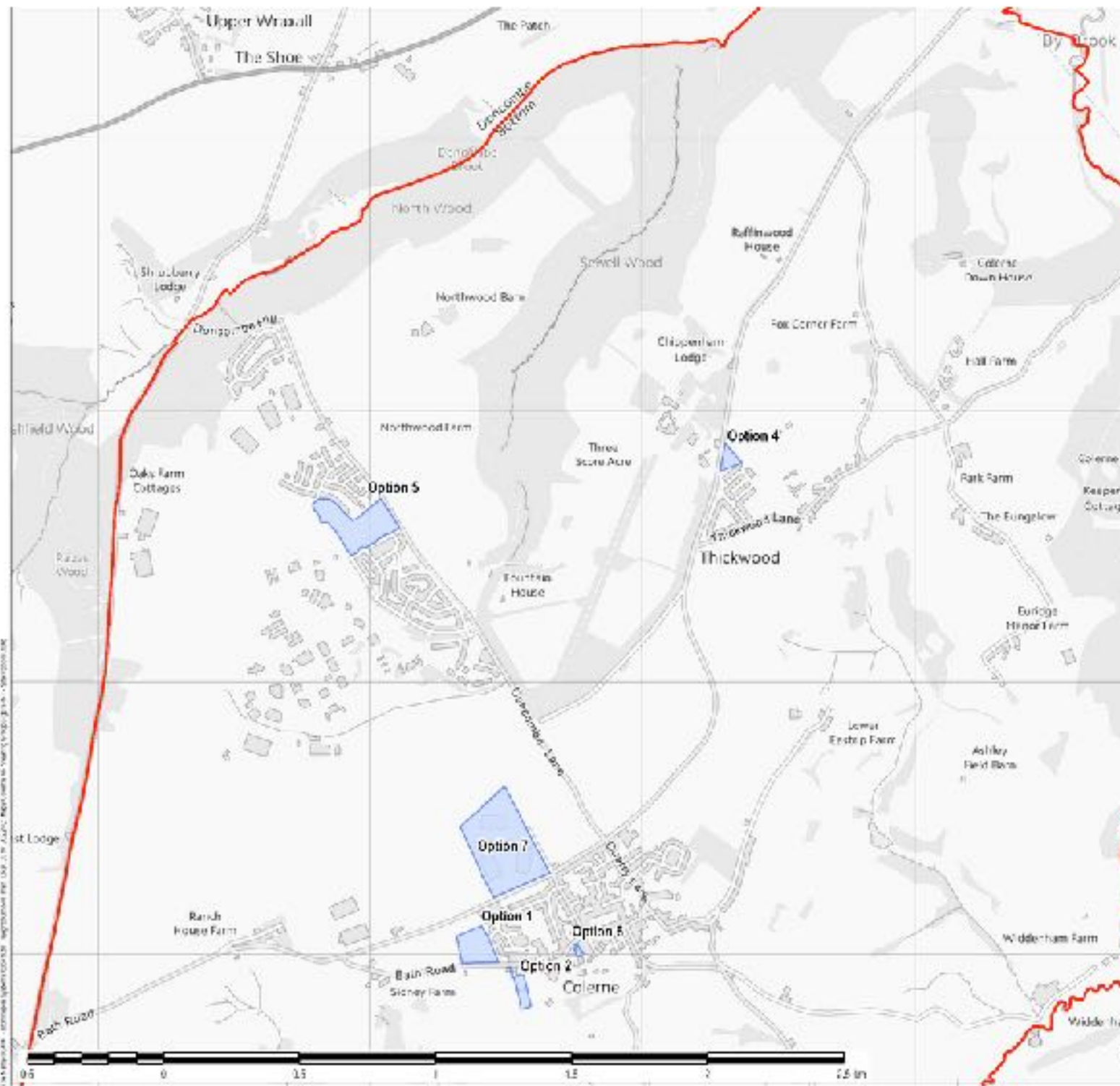
4.19. Of the sites considered in **Table 4.1**, eight are discounted for a number of reasons, predominately due to sites being unavailable. The following six sites are being carried forward for further consideration through the SEA process:

- Bath Road;
- Rooks Nest Field #2;
- Slaughterford Mill;
- Thickwood T2;
- Drill Ground, MoD (Southwood/ Northwood);
- Constitutional Club; and
- The Hangar Site.

4.20. The SEA process has undertaken a comparative appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the seven site options and potential effects that may arise as a result of housing development at these locations (see **Table 4.2** below). The locations of these sites are presented in **Figure 4.2** overleaf.

Table 4.2 site options considered through the SEA process

Option	Name	Size (ha)
1	Bath Road	1.32
2	Rooks Nest Field #2	0.47
3	Slaughterford Mill	(<2.8ha)
4	Thickwood T2	0.36
5	Drill Ground, MoD (Northwood/ Southwood)	3.5
6	Constitutional Club	0.1
7	Hangar Site (former Colerne Airfield)	7.18



5. Assessing the reasonable alternatives

- 5.1. Following on from the previous chapter, seven sites are established as reasonable options to deliver against the aims for short-term growth in the Parish. This chapter presents the summary findings for the assessment of these options, with detailed findings presented in **Appendix B**.

Methodology

- 5.2. For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework. **Green** is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst **red** is used to indicate significant negative effects.
- 5.3. Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.
- 5.4. Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate **a rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with 1 performing the best.
- 5.5. Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations.¹³ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects.

Summary assessment findings

- 5.6. The options established for assessment are as follows:
- Bath Road
 - Rooks Nest Field 2
 - Slaughterford Mill
 - Thickwood T2
 - Drill Ground, MoD (Northwood/ Southwood)
 - Constitutional Club
 - Hangar Site (former Colerne Airfield)
- 5.7. **Table 5.1** overleaf presents summary findings for the assessment of these options, with detailed findings presented in **Appendix B**.

¹³ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Table 5.1 Reasonable alternative site options – summary findings

SEA theme		Option 1 Bath Road	Option 2 Rooks Nest Field #2	Option 3 Slaughter ford Mill	Option 4 Thickwoo d T2	Option 5 Drill Ground, MoD	Option 6 Constituti onal Club	Option 7 Hangar Site
Biodiversity	Rank	2	2	5	3	3	1	4
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	No	Uncertain
Climate change	Rank	2	3	6	4	5	1	5
	Significant effect?	No	No	Uncertain	No	No	No	No
Landscape	Rank	5	3	7	2	4	1	6
	Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	No	Yes - Negative
Historic environment	Rank	1	4	3	4	3	2	3
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Land, soil and water resources	Rank	5	4	2	3	2	1	2
	Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	– Uncertain	No	Uncertain
Population and communities	Rank	1	1	4	3	2	1	4
	Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Health and wellbeing	Rank	2	2	4	3	3	1	3
	Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Uncertain
Transportation	Rank	2	2	4	3	3	1	3
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Summary:

- 5.8. The assessment finds that **Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill)** stands out as the weakest performing of the options. **Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill)** is found to be either the worst performing, or equally worst performing option in relation to every SEA theme other than land, soil and water (where it ranks second). This is given the location of the site distant from the settlement boundary within the Cotswold AONB, with the potential for impact on the setting and character of Colerne village (as set out in the Wiltshire LCA), in addition to the flood risk present at the site, and the potential impact on nearby internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites.
- 5.9. The assessment finds that **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)** is the strongest performing option overall, ranked highest against every SEA theme other than historic environment. Uncertainty exists in relation to the historic environment as **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)** is located within the Colerne Conservation Area and adjacent to Grade II Listed Buildings. However, the nature and significance of the residual effect will be dependent on the final design and layout of development. There is the potential for a long term positive effect given the brownfield nature of the site. **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)** performs most positively against all other environmental objectives given that it is a small, urban brownfield site, with limited potential for impacts on the parish's high quality landscape, biodiversity, soil and water resource. Despite not meeting Colerne's short-term housing needs in full, **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)** is anticipated to deliver positive effects of the greatest significance against social and economic objectives. This is given its village centre location, with excellent access to local services and facilities, which in turn will support health lifestyles.
- 5.10. In terms of the remainder of the options, **Option 7 (Hangar Site)** performs poorly against environmental objectives due to potential impact on locally designated biodiversity sites and nearby priority habitat, in addition to potential landscape and historic environment impacts as a result of development within the AONB. **Option 7 (Hangar Site)** performs reasonably against social and economic objectives as it is relatively well located in terms of distance to the village core; however, the C151 main road creates a physical barrier for residents, which is likely to reduce positive integration with the community, and may support continued car reliance. **Options 4 (Thickwood T2) and 5 (Drill Ground, MoD)** perform on a par with **Option 7 (Hangar Site)** against socio-economic objectives, however it is noted that both **Options 4 (Thickwood T2) and 5 (Drill Ground, MoD)** are likely to have negative effects on landscape and land, soil and water resources themes given the loss of greenfield land in the AONB. Overall **Option 4 (Thickwood T2)** performs more negatively than **Option 5 (Drill Ground, MoD)** given the loss of greenfield land and potential adverse effects on designated historic assets.
- 5.11. **Options 1 (Bath Road) and 2 (Rooks Nest Field #2)** perform well against the socio-economic objectives, after **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)**, as a result of good accessibility and potential support for active travel uptake. **Options 1 (Bath Road) and 2 (Rooks Nest Field #2)** also perform well, after **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)**, against the biodiversity SEA theme; however, both do not perform well against the land, soil and water resources SEA theme due to the potential loss of BMV/ greenfield land. **Option 1 (Bath Road)** is best performing of all options in relation to the historic environment, given it is not constrained by designated or non-designated heritage assets. **Option 1 (Bath Road)** therefore performs more positively than **Option 2 (Rooks Nest Field #2)** overall.

Developing the preferred approach

5.12. The Steering Group have set out in **Table 6.1** the outline reasons for the progression or rejection of the site options. This is based on the Site Assessment Report (2020), community feedback and the SEA findings.

Table 6.1: Outline reasons for selecting or rejecting alternatives

Option	Status	Outline reasons
Option 1 Bath Road	Rejected – Identified in <i>Colerne Housing Sites Assessment (CHSA)</i> . Given special review in Section 6.ii of Draft Neighbourhood Plan.	Eliminated from further consideration in the September update of <i>CHSA</i> , due to Green Belt status. Could be supportable for sports use if such a proposal were advanced by Parish Council.
Option 2 Rooks Nest Field #2	No longer relevant – Not referenced in Draft Neighbourhood Plan.	By the September 2018 <i>CHSA</i> update, planning permission had been given. No longer relevant.
Option 3 Slaughterford Mill	Not allocated — Draft Neighbourhood Plan gives conditional support (Section 6.i 2), but cannot allocate the site.	Site remote from settlement boundary, and within the Cotswold AONB. Further constraints include flood risk at the site and potential impact on designated biodiversity sites. While within Colerne Parish, the site is socially-integrated with the hamlet of Slaughterford in Biddestone Parish.
Option 4 Thickwood T2	Allocated – Draft Neighbourhood Plan, Policy BEP4 i.	This site could be developable for a small number of dwellings through a Community Led Housing initiative. The Plan recommends development to provide around 5 units of Community Custom and Self-Build.
Option 5 Drill Ground, MoD	Not allocated – Draft Neighbourhood Plan gives conditional support (Section 6.i 1), but cannot allocate the site.	The development of this site could provide ample capacity for local needs to 2036. Although currently owned by the MoD the site is outside the military security fence, is already publicly accessible and is brownfield. It cannot presently be allocated because the MoD's current policy is not to consider the site's development separately from the whole Azimghur Barracks site, and because of restrictions of infrastructure and supplies which are currently serviced from within the MoD secure site. If these limitations could be addressed, this site could be allocated and would form an attractive development proposition for the purposes of the Plan.
Option 6 Constitutional Club	Allocated – Draft Neighbourhood Plan, Policy BEP4 ii.	At such time as the Club closes the site will be disposed of, which could provide a basis for acquisition for development through a Community Land Trust or Community Led Housing scheme. The site would be suitable for small scale development as favoured by the local community, and for affordable housing.

Option	Status	Outline reasons
Option 7 Hangar Site	Rejected – Identified in <i>Colerne Housing Sites Assessment</i> . Given special review in Section 6.ii of Draft Neighbourhood Plan	The subject of withdrawn planning applications in recent years, when it was argued that intensive residential redevelopment would overwhelm the character of the old village, and that its development could set up a ‘domino’ effect beyond the Settlement Boundary. It is subject to restrictions imposed by the adjacent MoD site. If consistent with MoD safeguarding, the south of the site might be re-developable for employment opportunities, community facilities or heritage/museum to record the military significance of Colerne airfield in the 20th century. There are no proposals of this kind at this time and the site is judged inappropriate for other forms of development (see <i>CHSA</i>).

- 5.13. **Table 6.1** shows that of the site options assessed, Options 4 (Thickwood T2) and 6 (Constitutional Club) are considered by the NPSG as suitable for allocation through the CNP; performing well against SEA objectives and aligning most positively with the objectives of the CNP. The delivery of these two sites would not meet the full Plan Period Housing Need (80 dwellings), and therefore the CNP seeks to meet the Short-Term Housing Need (10 dwellings) only. This approach is supported by Wiltshire Council, although it is anticipated that an early review of the Neighbourhood Plan will likely be required; which the Parish Council is ready to undertake as necessary.

Assessment of the CNP

- 5.14. In August 2020 AECOM assessed an initial draft of the Pre-Submission Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan, providing the following recommendations:

- It is considered that Policy BEP4 (Housing Allocations) could be improved by providing support for upgraded pedestrian/ cycle access between Thickwood Field and the village centre. Notably, improved safety at the ‘de-restricted section of the C151’ may encourage uptake of active travel; increasing walking and cycling connectivity with the range of services and facilities available at the centre of Colerne.
- The SEA supports the following recommendation set out within the HRA (2020):
 - “A Paragraph be added to Policy NEP1: Landscape and Natural Environment stating that development will only be supported where the development can demonstrate compliance with the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) or any subsequent update, and where the development will not adversely affect any European site or Core Roosts and sensitive features within the Core Areas which are regarded as functionally linked to the European sites. All development brought forward within areas regarded as Core Areas within the Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) will be required to produce a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment to determine the developments impact upon the integrity of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC.”

- 5.15. The Steering Group subsequently updated the draft Neighbourhood Plan in response to the recommendations proposed through the Environmental Report.

Current approach in the CNP and the CNP policy framework

- 5.16. To support the implementation of the vision for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in **Section 2.18**, the current version of the CNP puts forward 27 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

- 5.17. The policies, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are set out in **Table 6.1** overleaf.

Table 6.1 Colerne Neighbourhood Plan policies

Theme A: Built environment

Policy BEP1	Character and design
Policy BEP2	Heritage
Policy BEP3	Housing policies
Policy BEP4	Housing allocations
Policy BEP5	Meeting longer-term housing demand
Policy BEP6	Sustainable design and construction
Policy BEP7	Infill or backland development
Policy BEP8	Custom and self-build
Policy BEP9	Permeable surfacing
Policy BEP10	Design for homeworking
Policy BEP11	Sustainable land-preparation and contamination control

Theme B: Natural Environment

Policy NEP1	Landscape and natural environment
Policy NEP2	Green infrastructure and biodiversity
Policy NEP3	Green spaces
Policy NEP4	Key Views

Theme C: Employment and business

Policy EBP1	Sustaining existing employment
Policy EBP2	Encouraging new employment

Theme D: Communications

Policy CP1:	Traffic and transport
Policy CP2:	Walking and cycling

Theme E: Sustainable energy

Policy SEP1	Renewable energy –
Policy SEP2	Electrical charging points
Policy SEP3	Dark skies and street lighting

Theme F: Community wellbeing

Policy CWBP1	Protection and enhancement of community facilities
Policy CWBP2	Promoting additional community facilities
Policy CWBP3	Allotments provision
Policy CWBP4	Childrens' play areas
Policy CWBP5	Principles of Infrastructure Phasing and Priorities

Theme G: Pre-application protocol

Policy CPA1	Pre-application procedures
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6. What are the assessment findings at this current stage?

Introduction

- 6.1. The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings in relation to the current Regulation 14 version of the CNP. This chapter presents:
- An appraisal of the current version of the CNP under the eight SEA theme headings; and
 - The overall conclusions at this current stage.

Appraisal method

- 6.2. The appraisal is structured under the eight SEA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA and that are linked to the SEA objectives, see **Table 3.2**.
- 6.3. For each theme ‘significant effects’ of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect ‘characteristics’ are described within the appraisal as appropriate.
- 6.4. Every effort is made to identify/ evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan

Biodiversity

- 6.5. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is located within the influence of the Bath and Bradford on-Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) ; designated for supporting internationally important populations of hibernating Greater Horseshoe, Lesser Horseshoe and Bechstein’s bat. The SAC is comprised of a network of significant underground sites in both the Wiltshire and Bath and North East Somerset (BNES) administrative areas, including four nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), namely Box Mine, Winsley Mines, Combe Down and Bathampton Down Mines, and Brown’s Folly.¹⁴ Colerne Parish is located approximately 1km from Box Mine SSSI.
- 6.6. The component sites comprise extensive networks of caves, mines and man-made tunnels which are used by bats for hibernation, breeding, mating and as a staging post prior to dispersal. The grassland, watercourses, scrub and woodland surrounding them are used by bats for feeding and commuting. Although these habitats are not included in the SAC designation, they are vital to support the bats which are features of the SAC. Significant potential effects to the SAC therefore include impacts to the foraging areas and commuting routes in the surrounding landscape used by the bats as well as roosts; this may include through recreational disturbance, air and light pollution, and habitat degradation.
- 6.7. Given the potential for adverse effects, detailed bat surveys are often required for development proposals located several kilometres from individual SAC sites. Wiltshire Council’s Planning Guidance for the SAC, sets out ‘consultation zone’ areas, whereby development proposals

¹⁴ Natural England (2015): “Bat Special Areas of Conservation: Planning Guidance for Wiltshire” [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/bat-special-areas-of-conservation-planning-guidance-for-wiltshire.pdf>

within the areas could potentially have impacts on the SAC by affecting 'sensitive features'.¹⁵ Colerne Parish, and therefore the two proposed allocations within the CNP, fall within this zone. Taking each site in turn, The Constitutional Club is a brownfield site allocated for around five homes within the settlement boundary; and therefore is not considered to have the potential to lead to residual negative effects on the SAC.¹⁶ Thickwood Field is a greenfield site (also allocated for around five homes), and as such the draft CNP recognises that mitigation measures must be integrated as a fundamental component of the scheme design. Policy BEP4 (Housing Allocations) requires that *"An assessment of potential impacts on bats, following the latest best practice guidelines, must be submitted with any application in line with the recommendations of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) associated with this Plan."*

- 6.8. An initial HRA screening of an earlier draft of the CNP (July 2020) identified that the Thickwood Field site allocation requires Appropriate Assessment and further consideration for the potential 'loss of functionally linked land'.¹⁷ This is due to the site having features of potential interest for foraging and commuting bats and being located within or partially within 4km of a component SSSI of the SAC (greater horse shoe foraging distance buffer). In addition to this the site is within 1.5km of the lesser horseshoe Core Area (1.5km from Core Roost).
- 6.9. The screening identified similar potential effects for large-scale development supported but not allocated through the draft CNP at Slaughterford Mill. A Core Roost for lesser horseshoe bats (Wiltshire Council, 2015)¹⁸ regularly supporting over 100 breeding lesser horseshoe bats is listed to be at or within the immediate vicinity of the Slaughterford Mill site. Although this site is not allocated within this iteration of the Neighbourhood Plan, the HRA states that the Steering Group should be carefully consider whether the site should be included as an allocated site in the Plan update. As the roost is regarded as a Core Roost any impact to it through development could harm the integrity of the SAC and it is considered likely to be unsuitable for development in the long-term.
- 6.10. In terms of the current plan allocations, the HRA concluded that development at Thickwood Field could cause adverse effects; however, it recognises that the overarching Wiltshire Core Strategy provides protection to European sites through Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity. In line with the recommendations of the HRA, the latest version of the draft CNP now includes a paragraph within Policy NEP1: Landscape and Natural Environment, which states that *"development will be only be supported where the development can demonstrate compliance with the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) or any subsequent update, and where the development will not adversely affect any European site or Core Roosts and sensitive features within the Core Areas which are regarded as functionally linked to the European sites. All development brought forward within areas regarded as Core Areas within the Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) will be required to produce a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment to determine the developments impact upon the integrity of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC."*
- 6.11. The latest version of the HRA (September 2020) considers that *"the aforementioned addition of the wording to Neighbourhood Plan Policy NEP1: Landscape and Natural Environment is sufficient to conclude that the Neighbourhood Plan has a sufficient policy framework in place to ensure that adverse effect upon the integrity of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC will not arise with regards to recreational pressure either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects."*
- 6.12. In terms of nationally designated biodiversity sites, Colerne Park and Monks Wood Site of SSSI is located partially within Colerne Parish, along the eastern boundary. Honeybrook Farm SSSI and Box Mine SSSI are also in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area. An area to the

¹⁵ Wiltshire Council (2015) Bat Special Areas of Conservation: Planning Guidance for Wiltshire [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/bat-special-areas-of-conservation-planning-guidance-for-wiltshire.pdf>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ AECOM (2020) Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Habitats Regulations Assessment

¹⁸ Wiltshire Council, 2015. Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire. <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/bat-special-areas-of-conservation-planning-guidance-for-wiltshire.pdf> [Accessed 9/08/2020]

north of the Parish, surrounding Colerne Park and Monk's Woodland SSSI and Honeybrook Farm SSSI is located within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for residential and/ or rural-residential developments. This applies to residential development of 50 to 100 units or more, and rural residential development (outside of existing settlements/ urban areas) of 10 to 50 units or more. In line with Policy NEP2 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity) *"all development proposals should have particular regard to [...] designated areas of Site of Special Scientific Interest"*. It is noted that the existing settlement of Colerne village itself, including the location of proposed Neighbourhood Plan site allocations, does not fall within an IRZ. In addition to this, given the low level of growth proposed, residual negative effects are not anticipated.

- 6.13. There is a considerable amount of Ancient Woodland present within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area. Notably along the eastern and northern parish boundaries. It is recognised that these dense woodland areas lead into South Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds and, together with the surrounding agricultural pastures, hedgerows, and other natural features, provide essential habitats and corridors supporting biodiversity. In terms of the housing site allocations, the potential for direct effects on these sensitive features is limited given the distance from both housing site allocations and the low level of growth proposed. Policy NEP2 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity) however sets requirements for the wider Plan area; stating that *"all development proposals should, where possible, and appropriate to their nature and scale: maintain and improve the quality of existing green infrastructure, including local networks and corridors, specifically to increase attractiveness as a recreation opportunity and the value as a habitat for biodiversity"*. In addition, Policy NEP2 supports a *"net gain in biodiversity through enhancement and creation of ecological networks"*. This will likely lead to long term positive effects in terms of extending and improving the area's valued green infrastructure network.
- 6.14. Consideration is also given to the ten County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) present partially or wholly within the Parish. While many of these coincide with Ancient Woodland discussed above, others include grassland and deciduous woodland, amongst other habitats. While it is not considered that either of the site allocations are constrained by CWSs, Policy NEP2 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity) requires that *"all development proposals should have particular regard to areas already defined as County Wildlife Sites"*.
- 6.15. More broadly, biodiversity assets are protected and enhanced through the draft CNP policies which seek to maintain and where possible enhance the highly valued, natural environment. Notably, Policy NEP3 (Local Green Spaces) and Policy CWBP1 (Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities) could lead to positive effects by virtue of protecting multifunctional green space present within the Parish. Whilst the main policy intent relates to recreation and amenity, there are likely to be secondary effects in relation to biodiversity by virtue of maintaining natural spaces for wildlife.
- 6.16. Overall, the draft CNP is predicted to have a residual **neutral effect** on biodiversity. It is recognised that there is the potential for positive effects to be delivered in the long term through, for example, securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. This however is uncertain at this stage.

Climate change

- 6.17. The climate change SEA objectives have a dual focus of reducing the contribution of the Neighbourhood Plan area to climate change and supporting resilience to the potential effects of climate change, particularly flooding. In practice, development plans can contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change by minimising greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment. Adapting to the effects of climate change includes ensuring development is directed away from areas at greatest risk of flooding, limiting effects of extreme weather and reducing urban heat island effects.
- 6.18. In terms of adapting to climate change the preferred strategy performs well overall. Growth is distributed away from areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk. However, while the site allocations are not at risk of flooding, the draft CNP recognises that surface water runoff is an issue for the wider parish. As such, Policy BEP9 (Permeable Surfacing Policy) states that

development will only be supported where permeable surfaces are incorporated for “*driveways and hard standing areas in excess of 5m²*” and where roof water run-off is sufficiently mitigated.

- 6.19. Well planned green infrastructure can help an area adapt to and manage the risks of climate change (including flood risk). Enabling and providing for green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area is therefore a key way in which the Neighbourhood Plan can help to promote climate change adaptation measures. Policy NEP2 (Green infrastructure and biodiversity) and Policy NEP3 (Green Spaces) will likely lead positive effects in this respect, reinforcing the need for plans to “*identify, map and safeguard [...] local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks*”. Policy NEP2 recognises the multi-functional benefits of strengthening green infrastructure networks locally, including assisting carbon sequestration and promoting walking and cycling through the attractive public realm.
- 6.20. The domestic sector is a contributing factor which can be influenced by plan policies, and in line with national and local targets, the draft CNP seeks to reduce emissions, contributing positively towards Wiltshire’s commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.¹⁹ Core Policy 42 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy identifies how stand-alone renewable energy installations, of all types, will be encouraged and supported. The UK Renewable Energy Strategy further states that the parish environment is most suited to solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays, heat pumps and CHP (combined heat and power) installations. Policy SEP1 (Renewable Energy) therefore sets out support for localised renewable energy generation where policy criteria are met. Particular support will be given to renewable generation developments that “*have regard to the wider benefits of providing energy from renewable sources, and the potential effects on the local environment*”.
- 6.21. Policy BEP6 (Sustainable Design and Construction) supplements Policy SEP1, setting wider sustainable design and construction requirements; supporting methods such as low carbon, renewable energy, water use reduction, waste-water management, waste reduction and the use of locally-sourced materials. In line with Policy BEP6 “*any new development in the Parish should aim to meet a high level of sustainability in both design and construction, and be optimised for energy efficiency.*” Furthermore, Policy BEP6 encourages applications to “*positively address issues related to climate change*”, supporting applications that “*include sustainable design and construction approaches in advance of national standards in force at that time.*” Significant long term positive effects are therefore anticipated through supporting new development that meets, and where possible exceeds, national and local climate change policy objectives.
- 6.22. The draft CNP includes a number of policies which could be effective at reducing emissions from transport, partly by reducing the need to travel overall and partly by seeking a modal shift to lower-emission transport modes. In terms of reducing the need to travel overall, Policy BEP10 (Design for Homeworking) may lead to minor positive effects through easing the transition to home working; which will likely reduce out-commuting by enabling residents to both live and work in their locality. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, a significant proportion of the population has been forced to work from home and travel less, with transport emissions falling significantly in a short space of time.²⁰ The draft CNP acts positively on this behavioural shift, facilitating longer-term home working and reducing car-based travel.
- 6.23. Conversely, Policy CP1 (Traffic and Transport) places focus on development where it generates “*significant amounts of movements*”, recognising that traffic capacities and transport services are limited in and around the parish. In line with Policy CP1 development will be required to produce a travel plan to “*show how specific local factors will be addressed*”, which could include improved walking and cycle links in support of increased active travel. Positive effects in this respect are also anticipated through Policy CP2 (Walking and Cycling); requiring that “*Applications for developments that are adjacent to Public Rights of Way should, where it is appropriate, ensure that links are provided to those routes.*”

¹⁹ Wiltshire Council (2020) Climate Emergency [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/green-economy-climate-emergency>

²⁰ Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (2020) 11,000 air pollution-related deaths avoided in Europe as coal, oil consumption plummet [online] available at: <https://energyandcleanair.org/air-pollution-deaths-avoided-in-europe-as-coal-oil-plummet/>

- 6.24. The draft CNP further supports increased electric vehicle (EV) numbers, including e-bikes within the Parish. Policy SEP2 (Electrical Charging Points) requires that *“all new houses where dedicated parking per house is provided must have an appropriately located charging point.”* Additionally, planning applications for non-residential developments are encouraged to provide electric charging points for staff and/ or other users. Requiring new development to deliver or contribute to electric vehicle charging points away from petrol/ diesel vehicles is anticipated to lead to long term positive effects, supporting sustainable travel in the Parish in line with national and local climate change commitments.
- 6.25. Overall, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a **minor positive effect** in relation to the climate change SEA theme. The draft CNP seeks to allocate growth in sustainable locations, supports the uptake of active travel, and seeks to ensure wider development proposals contribute to Wiltshire's carbon neutral target through sustainable design and construction.

Landscape

- 6.26. The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich valued landscape, falling entirely within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The draft CNP recognises that being within the Cotswolds AONB, the central village, the outlying hamlets and the wider environment require special conservation considerations due to their significant landscape value within a rural setting.
- 6.27. The Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) describes the variations in character between different types of area and landscape in the County, including Colerne Parish. The parish is covered by two landscape character types: Limestone Wold (Cotswolds Dip-Slope) and Limestone Valleys (By Brook Limestone Valley). In terms of the site allocations, both fall within the Limestone Wold (Cotswolds Dip-Slope) character type. The overall condition of this landscape is perceived to be 'moderate', and management objectives include retaining rural character by limiting further large scale development and urban influences (e.g. signing, kerbing of rural roads). It is therefore considered that both draft CNP site allocations hold little inherent landscape sensitivity; being small, flat, relatively well screened, and within the settlement boundary.
- 6.28. The Constitutional Club is a wholly brownfield site allocated for around five homes in the village centre, and Policy BEP4 (Housing Allocations) requires that development *“Particular attention should be paid to the avoidance of overlooking to adjacent properties.”* Depending on design and layout, the redevelopment of this centrally located site could result in positive effects on the local villagescape.
- 6.29. Thickwood Field is a greenfield site screened by trees along a main road. Visibility in and out of the site is generally poor, with some visibility from the north east. Policy BEP4 seeks to limit any potential impact on neighbouring views, requiring proposals to *“retain the current TPO tree line which borders the road.”* This will likely reduce adverse effects on Colerne's built environment, in accordance with the broad management objectives of the Wiltshire LCA.
- 6.30. The Natural Environment Policies (NEP1 – 4) aim to further protect the landscape setting of the parish, in particular the setting of the Cotswolds AONB. The value of the landscape locally was made apparent during Community Consultations, with 99% of 536 respondents reporting it *“extremely important /important”* that development should respect the natural environment and character of the parish. In direct recognition of the presence of the AONB and local priorities, impacts on landscape character will be limited through Policy NEP1 (Landscape and Natural Environment) which seeks to maintain the *“open landscape space, rural and agricultural character, between Colerne and other settlements in the parish”*.
- 6.31. Policy NE1 is further supplemented by Policies NEP4 (Key Views) and Policy SEP3 (Dark Skies and Lighting). Key views into, within, and out of the parish and its settlements contribute significantly to its character and are valued by the local community; as identified through the

Key Views (2019) and Valued Views Reports (2019).^{21 22} Policy NEP4 requires that these key views are maintained and protected, with any development “*avoiding significant adverse impact*”. Policy SEP3 further protects the open landscape through requiring that development does “*not give rise to an unacceptable level of illumination into the sky, open countryside, or in the village*”. It is noted that while key views do not coincide with the site allocations, Policy BEP4 requires that for any development at Thickwood Field “*Any street lighting is to ensure no prejudice to the Plan’s dark skies policy*”.

- 6.32. The draft CNP also requires that green spaces within housing areas and recreational spaces are adequately protected, as set out in the Local Green Spaces Report (2019).²³ The green infrastructure improvements and new green spaces proposed through the draft CNP (Policies NEP2 - 3) are likely to enhance local character with the potential for minor long-term positive effects.
- 6.33. Overall, the draft CNP seeks to deliver growth that supports landscape and townscape character and local identity, with limited potential for residual adverse effects on the landscape once mitigation has been taken into account. Furthermore, the wider CNP policy framework protects distinctive views and visual connectivity between the parish and surrounding countryside, maintaining and enhancing the local green infrastructure offer. This builds upon Wiltshire Core Strategy policies, the provisions of the AONB Management Plan, and the NPPF (2019).
- 6.34. However, any loss, albeit small in scale, of previously undeveloped land within this sensitive landscape (anticipated as a result of site allocation ‘Thickwood Field’) is ultimately considered to lead to residual **uncertain minor negative effects** in the long-term. Sensitive design and layout are likely to minimise the significance of any negative residual effects, but this is uncertain at this stage.

Historic environment

- 6.35. The heritage of the draft CNP area includes one Conservation Area, 95 Listed Buildings, three Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and one Grade II Registered Park or Garden. In terms of the site allocations, The Constitutional Club is located within the Colerne Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to two Grade II Listed Buildings to the east and west. Development at the site therefore has the potential to impact on the intrinsic qualities, and setting of these important heritage features, notably affecting views to and from the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. For any proposals coming forward at The Constitutional Club, in line with Policy BEP4 (Housing Allocations), the “*design character [must] be consistent with that of the Colerne Conservation Area*”. This is in accordance with the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement (2020). Furthermore, Policy BEP4 (Housing Allocations) requires that “*A Heritage Impact Assessment will be necessary in relation to the nearby listed buildings and the general Conservation Area context.*” Depending on design and layout, the redevelopment of this centrally located brownfield site could result in positive effects on the local villagescape, including through preserving and enhancing the local identity of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 6.36. The draft CNP’s second site allocation at Thickwood Field is located in close proximity to Lucknam Park which includes three listed buildings and two Scheduled Monuments. Policy BEP4 requires “*heritage implications related to the Lucknam Park estate to be addressed and if required supported by a heritage assessment, within the contingency that although the main building of Lucknam Park and some outbuildings are listed, the grounds are not, and the listed buildings are some 300meters from the site perimeter wall.*” Furthermore, Policy BEP4 requires that “*Design, materials and layout character to be congruent with the neighbouring listed*

²¹ Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering (2019) Group Key Views [online] available at: <https://www.colerne-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-docs>

²² Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (2019) Valued Views Report [online] available at: <https://www.colerne-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-docs>

²³ Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (2019) Local Green Spaces Report [online] available at: <https://www.colerne-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-docs>

Lucknam Park estate and sensitive to the neighbouring Thickwood estate houses." This is in accordance with the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement (2020).

- 6.37. High quality design is also promoted through Policy BEP1 (Character and Design) which states that all proposals *"will be supported where they show a congruence with or enhancement of their surroundings in terms of built form, height, materials, historic character and boundary treatments."* Ensuring that new development is responsive to heritage sensitivities within the immediate surroundings has the potential to help to minimise residual negative impacts where they may arise. The overarching CNP policy in this respect is Policy BEP2 (Heritage). Policy BEP1 supplements it by seeking to protect and enhance the historic significance of the parish. In addition to the designated assets listed above, the draft CNP specifically highlights the importance of the Lucknam Park estate, Euridge Manor, and MoD site, which includes features of longer-term heritage value including a number relating to its World War II historical significance. These are listed in the Parish's Historic Evidence Report (2018).²⁴
- 6.38. In line with Policy BEP2 (Heritage) *"Planning applications for the demolition or development of, or substantial alterations to, the buildings or structures listed in the Historic Environment Record, or those identified in the Design Statement, will be expected to show that priority has been given to the retention of distinctive and important features."* Furthermore, *"Where appropriate, Heritage Impact Assessments will be required to accompany applications."* Positive effects are therefore anticipated in terms of conserving local features and key buildings of cultural heritage; protecting the overall history of the parish.
- 6.39. There is potential for indirect positive effects from the natural environment policies (NEP1 – 4). Although these policies are not primarily heritage-focussed, their implementation could lead to residual positive effects on historic character and villagescape by establishing protection in principle for key views, green spaces, and the wider green infrastructure network. All have the potential to make an important contribution to the parish's historic character and setting.
- 6.40. Overall, it is considered that the draft CNP, supported by the Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement (2020), and alongside the higher-level policy suite, provides a robust framework for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. However, careful consideration will need to be given to designated heritage assets in the design and layout of any new development; including the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in close proximity to proposed site allocations. It is considered that Policy requirements in accordance with the requirements set out in the design statement will likely ensure that *"heritage implications [...] will be addressed."* However **uncertain effects** are predicted overall at this stage due to the sensitivity of the historic environment, and that any residual effects will be dependent on detailed design and masterplanning.

Land, soil and water resources

- 6.41. Policy BEP3 (Housing Policy) performs positively in terms of prioritising the development of brownfield land, stating that *"In line with the NPPF, where there is developable brownfield land, or a reasonable prospect thereof in the Plan timeframe, brownfield development will be supportable and greenfield development opposed."* This is actioned through housing allocation Policy BEP4, which seeks to deliver around five dwellings on small brownfield site 'The Constitutional Club', located in the village centre.
- 6.42. To meet Colerne's short-term housing needs in full, the draft CNP also allocates Thickwood Field for a further five dwellings. Thickwood Field is wholly greenfield land; the loss of which has the potential for minor long-term negative effects with regards to efficient land use. In terms of agricultural land quality, a detailed survey undertaken at the site (2014)²⁵ determined the site to be of Grade 4 quality. The survey therefore concludes *"that the site comprises no loss of "best and most versatile agricultural land" and consequently its development will not*

²⁴ Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record & Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Historic Evidence Report (2018) available at: <https://www.colerne-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-docs>

²⁵ Richard Baker (2014) Agricultural Land Classification and Farming Circumstance: Land Adjacent to Thickwood Estate, Wiltshire

impact on the national resource of best quality farm land.” However minor negative effects from Policy BEP4 remain given the overall loss of greenfield land.

- 6.43. It is recognised that a significant proportion of the parish was originally a WWII operational airfield, and as such, the land is assumed to potentially be contaminated to some degree. Land is also recognised as important for water collection/ supply, with the entire plan area laying over a principle bedrock aquifer. Aquifers are sensitive to changes in water flows and water quality; and it is further noted that the entire plan area is of ‘high’ groundwater vulnerability.
- 6.44. Given the complexity of the parish’s natural resources, development proposals will be required to comply with detailed requirements set out within Policy BEP11 (Sustainable land-preparation and contamination control), which seeks to ensure appropriate investigation, identification and where necessary, remediation is carried out. Specifically, *“on full application, evidence should be provided to demonstrate that any potential contamination of the site has been fully investigated and any remediation found to be necessary has been satisfactorily planned prior to commencing construction work.”*
- 6.45. It is considered that on a whole, issues surrounding water resources will be a matter for Wessex Water. The Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) (2019) sets out how water supply and demand will be balanced over the next 25 years; ensuring adequate supply to homes whilst also protecting the environment.
- 6.46. The draft CNP policies further provide indirect support for improving the quality of land and water resources in the parish. For example, supporting biodiversity and facilitating enhancements to green infrastructure provision in the Neighbourhood Plan area will promote the ability of natural processes to support soil and water quality. Key policies in this regard includes policies NEP1 – 3, and CWBP3.
- 6.47. In light of the above, although the draft CNP policy framework seeks to prioritise the development of brownfield land; it is considered that **minor negative effects** are anticipated overall through the loss of a small area of greenfield land at Thickwood Field.

Population and communities

- 6.48. The quantum and distribution of growth proposed through Policy BEP3 (Housing Policy) performs positively in relation to the SEA objective to ‘provide a mix of types and tenures of housing.’ Policy BEP3 allocates ten dwellings across two sites, meeting the short-term housing needs of the parish as defined by the Wiltshire Council Housing Needs Assessment 2018, in the early years of the Plan period. In terms of Colerne’s longer term housing needs, Policy BEP5 (Meeting Longer Term Housing Demand) sets out that full delivery of need (residual 70 homes) should be met in due course by the announced intention to release for development MoD sites from the former Colerne Airfield/ Barracks. There is currently a level of uncertainty in this respect, which will be addressed through an early review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.49. In respect of the short-term housing allocations, it is considered that growth at Thickwood Field and the Constitutional Club will have a long term positive effect, in line with Policy BEP3 (Housing Policy), *“meet[ing] residents’ revealed preferences for small scale developments capable of offering a mix of different dwelling type.”* Thickwood Field is allocated through the draft CNP in order to ensure delivery of social housing for the benefit of local people. Policy BEP4 (Housing Allocations) requires *“delivery of the development to be led by a community-led initiative such as a Community Co-operative Custom and Self-Build.”* The draft CNP regards such a specialist co-operative scheme as valid in view of the long and close association between the community and the military, and the idea of “homes for veterans” was well-supported in the Community Survey. The Constitutional Club is also favoured by the community, being a small-scale village centre infill development, allocated for *“affordable houses/apartments”*. It is therefore considered that growth proposed through the draft CNP will help ensure a good mix of different dwelling types, helping to meet a range of housing needs to support the existing and future population of the parish.

- 6.50. Positive effects are also anticipated through the allocation of sites for housing in sustainable locations. Notably, the delivery of housing on a previously developed town centre site (The Constitutional Club) will lead to positive effects through regeneration, supporting positive growth with well-established access to village services/ facilities, that also enables active travel. Notably, the village centre, its primary school, shop, and village hall are all within 300 metres of the Constitutional Club.
- 6.51. In terms of Thickwood Field, this site is well connected to the main area of Thickwood, (a 'sister' community to Colerne), although the site is distant from main village facilities. Thickwood currently lies outside the Colerne settlement boundary in open countryside and Wiltshire Council does not regard it as a sustainable community in its own right. However, Thickwood residents routinely depend upon Colerne facilities, and vice-versa in terms of employment. There are widely-used footpaths between Thickwood and Colerne village, although it is approximately 1.3 miles to the village centre (which is arguably unachievable by foot for many residents, including those elderly or disabled).
- 6.52. Although not specifically related to the Thickwood Field site allocation, it is noted that Policy CP2 (Walking and Cycling) provides support for development proposals that include a transport strategy, *"advocating new and improved networks of routes for pedestrians and cyclists"*. Nonetheless, it is considered that new residents at Thickwood Field may rely on the private vehicle for access to the village centre. Effects are therefore uncertain at this stage.
- 6.53. While Thickwood is recognised for its local employment offer, it is noted that there is limited existing and potential employment in the parish overall. The draft CNP highlights that this is unlikely to change quickly because of poor transport links and road connections. The delivery of small scale housing to meet short term need therefore has the potential to intensify out-commuting to Chippenham, Bath, Bristol, etc. with the potential for negative effects on the local economy. Policy EBP1 (Sustaining Existing Employment) and Policy EBP2 (Encouraging New Employment) seek to protect and enhance the commercial employment mix, providing support for the retention of existing businesses (where possible) and the reuse of suitable land in another use for job creation. This will lead to positive effects in terms of addressing local employment needs, and subsequently supporting economic growth of the village.
- 6.54. Furthermore, Policy BEP10 (Design for homeworking), will likely lead to positive effects through contributing to the growth of sustainable communities; widening employment opportunities for the owner or occupier. It is also considered that enabling residents to both live and work in their locality may provide more support to other local businesses.
- 6.55. The draft CNP recognises the need to maintain and enhance local services, especially shops, to support the environment of homeworkers and also older members of the community with reducing mobility and increasing dependency. Policies CWBP1 – 4 are key in this respect, supporting the protection and enhancement of facilities locally. Notably, Policy CWBP2 (Promoting Additional Community Facilities) provides support for *"new or enhanced community facilities"* where they are accessible and meet an identified need. It is considered that improved facilities within the community can add value to the life of the parish, and may result in a reduced need for travel outside of the area for services/ facilities.
- 6.56. Overall it is considered that the draft CNP is likely to have a **significant positive effect** in relation to the population and communities SEA theme; meeting Colerne's short-term housing needs, and ensuring that the type of housing being developed is likely to support the various needs of the local community. Furthermore, the draft CNP supports the vitality and viability of the plan area through protecting and enhancing services, facilities and local employment opportunities, and reducing levels of out-commuting.

Health and wellbeing

- 6.57. The health and wellbeing of residents will be supported by the draft CNP policies which support a high quality public realm, local distinctiveness and landscape/ townscape character. This has been discussed to some extent under the 'Landscape' and 'Historic Environment' SEA themes above. In this context maintaining and enhancing the attractiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan

area will positively affect residents' quality of life, contributing to the satisfaction of residents with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

- 6.58. Policies NEP1 – 4, BEP1, and SEP3 are all of relevance; notably Policy BEP1 (Character and Design) requires that development “*show a congruence with or enhancement of their surroundings in terms of built form, height, materials, historic character and boundary treatments*”, supporting a high quality living environment. Furthermore, in line with Policy SEP3 (Dark Skies and Street Lighting) development proposals “*must ensure that the measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not negatively affected*”. The delivery of development that is sympathetic to Colerne's sensitive built and rural environment will likely lead to long term positive effects through supporting neighbourhood satisfaction and sense of place.
- 6.59. Attractive and wildlife-rich green spaces or 'green infrastructure' also create better places for people, often supporting a high-quality public realm with engaged, social communities. Notably the Environment Bill sets out an intention to “*introduce a mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain in the planning system, to ensure that new developments enhance biodiversity and create new green spaces for local communities to enjoy*”. This is reflected through the draft CNP which states that “*It is essential that future developments include, appropriate to the site, the highest possible quality and quantity of 'green' features [...] with a presumption not just in favour of preservation of existing such features but also an overall 'net gain' (as proposed in the Environment Bill of 2019).*”
- 6.60. A key point raised through community consultation was that “*there must be community access to open spaces*”, which is likely to be further prioritised in light of Covid-19 and the increased value placed on accessible green space.²⁶ Policies NEP1 – 3 perform positively in this respect; notably Policy NEP2 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity) requires that “*proposals demonstrate what consideration has been given to a range of factors as relevant, including but not limited to:*
- i) Maintaining and improving the quality of existing green infrastructure, including local networks and corridors, specifically to increase value as a recreation asset [...].*”
- 6.61. Furthermore, the Local Green Spaces Report (2019) identifies 25 potential Local Green Spaces and sets out their significance to their area and communities. These are protected through Policy NEP3 (Green Spaces), in accordance with the NPPF (2019). Better connecting people with the environment is anticipated to lead to long term positive effects on residents' health and wellbeing; promoting sustainable movement and ecological connectivity through the parish.
- 6.62. Policy BEP4 (Housing allocations) has the potential to promote healthier modes of transport to meet local needs, though this is arguably less apparent in relation to the proposed site at Thickwood Field. The Constitutional Club, located in the centre of the village, has direct access to the High Street, where the village primary school, shop, and village hall all within 300 metres; minimising the need to travel by car for day to day requirements. Thickwood Field is around 1.3 miles from the village centre which may be beyond reasonable walking or cycling distance for some residents (notably those that are elderly or disabled). However, it is possible to travel the full distance on a narrow pavement alongside a de-restricted section of the C151.
- 6.63. It will therefore be particularly important that opportunities to enhance walking and cycling connectivity at Thickwood Field are maximised, as walking and cycling may not be natural first choice transport options for many residents. Policy CP2 (Walking and Cycling) encourages links between new development and existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW), with the potential for minor positive effects. Policy CP2 further includes a detailed map showing locations for development and improvement for walking and cycling throughout the parish. This is likely to provide support for upgraded pedestrian/ cycle access between the site and the village centre. Notably, improved safety at the 'de-restricted section of the C151' may encourage uptake of active travel; increasing walking and cycling connectivity with the range of services and facilities available at the centre of Colerne.

²⁶ ONS (2019) Urban green spaces raise nearby house prices by an average of £2,500 [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/urbangreenspacesraiseneighbouringhousepricesbyanaverageof2500/2019-10-14>

- 6.64. Overall, it is considered that the draft CNP is likely to have residual **minor long term positive effects** in relation to the Health and Wellbeing SEA theme.

Transportation

- 6.65. The distribution of growth proposed through Policy BEP4 (Housing Allocations) could have some potential to promote sustainable travel and reduce the need to travel to meet local needs, though this potential is not distributed evenly. The Constitutional Club, located in the centre of the village, clearly supports sustainable travel, with direct access to the High Street, where the village primary school, shop, and village hall all within 300 metres. Thickwood Field is around 1.3 miles from the village centre which may be beyond reasonable walking or cycling distance for some residents (notably those that are elderly or disabled). However, it is possible to travel the full distance on a narrow pavement alongside a de-restricted section of the C151.
- 6.66. Nonetheless, as noted under the health and wellbeing theme, it is not clear that car-free access to the village centre is achievable from Thickwood Field. It is therefore recommended that support be provided through Policy BEP4 for new cycleways and pathways to better connect the settlements. The draft CNP recognises that much interconnection is by car and this can cause parking issues in the village. While allocated sites are required to “*provide parking on site to Wiltshire Highways standards*” (Policy BEP4), the delivery of short-term localised transport solutions may encourage a modal shift and active travel. This in turn may reduce traffic and congestion in the village centre.
- 6.67. Both allocated sites are close to bus stops; however, services are described through the draft CNP as ‘*partial*’, ‘*infrequent and inconvenient services to Bath, Marshfield, Biddestone, Corsham and Chippenham and Bristol.*’ Furthermore, the nearest train stations are Chippenham and Bath Spa, which from the centre of Colerne village is a 17 minute drive (8.5 miles) and a 21 minute drive (8.1 miles) respectively. High levels of car reliance are therefore likely to continue for access to services, facilities and employment outside of the parish.
- 6.68. The draft CNP intends that, where feasible, larger developments should facilitate transport infrastructure improvements. In line with Policy CP1 (Traffic and Transport) “*all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, as per Wiltshire Core Policy 62, and this should show how specific local factors will be addressed.*” This is likely to be a consideration for strategic growth coming forward through the Plan review, with the potential for positive effects in the long term.
- 6.69. Policy SEP2 (Electrical charging points) may have a minor positive effect in terms of promoting sustainable transport on the basis that it will support electric and low emission vehicle use through the provision of electric vehicle charging points in all new housing development. This supports the Department for Transport (DfT) and Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) (2019) consultation on “*proposing that new-build homes are fitted with an electric car charging point*”,²⁷ although by incorporating guidance into policy the Neighbourhood Plan takes a more robust position.
- 6.70. Policy BEP10 (Design for homeworking) may lead to minor positive effects through facilitating home working; which can reduce out-commuting by enabling residents to both live and work in their locality. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, a significant proportion of the population have been forced to work from home, and it is estimated that in the longer-term 25–30% of the workforce will be working at home on a multiple-days-a-week basis.²⁸ This is likely to result in reduced vehicles on the road at peak times, which will in turn lead to reduced congestion levels and increased road capacity and safety.
- 6.71. Overall, in light of the above it is considered that the draft CNP is likely to have an overall **neutral effect** in relation to the transport SEA theme.

²⁷ Department for Transport (DfT) and Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) (2019) Consultation proposing that new-build homes are fitted with an electric car chargepoint <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/electric-car-chargepoints-to-be-installed-in-all-future-homes-in-world-first>

²⁸ Global Workplace Analytics (2020) Work at Home After Covid-19 – Our Forecast [online] available at: <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/work-at-home-after-covid-19-our-forecast>

Conclusions

- 6.72. Overall at this stage, potential significant effects arising from plan implementation are both positive and negative. Positive effects relate to the delivery of new housing aimed at meeting local needs, protection of rural character and green infrastructure, and support for a modal shift towards active/ low-carbon travel. These are likely to bring about multiple benefits for communities, resident health and wellbeing and biodiversity. Negative effects relate to the environmental sensitivity of the parish, and the overall loss of greenfield land.
- 6.73. The aspect of the draft CNP that **significantly contribute to positive outcomes** is the delivery of a growth strategy that is small scale, aimed at identified local needs, and that does not overwhelm the existing settlements. Additionally, delivering growth in sustainable locations will further support accessibility and community cohesion. **Minor positive effects** are further anticipated through the protection and enhancement of existing amenities, social infrastructure, and Local Green Spaces. Furthermore, the requirement for EV provision, support for sustainable design and energy efficiency, and facilitation of working from home will support healthy lifestyles and contribute towards meeting local and national climate objectives.
- 6.74. **Neutral effects** are anticipated in relation to transportation, historic environment, and biodiversity. In terms of biodiversity, while neutral effects are predicted overall, indirect positive effects are anticipated in relation to biodiversity through the protection and enhancement of local green infrastructure assets. Notably biodiversity net gain is supported through a number of the draft CNP policies.
- 6.75. In terms of the historic environment, while the CNP policy framework and accompanying design statement provides a robust framework for its protection and enhancement; **uncertain effects** are predicted overall for the due to the sensitivity of assets, and that any residual effects will be dependent on detailed design and masterplanning.
- 6.76. The aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan identified as having the potential for a **minor negative effect** firstly relates to the permeant loss of greenfield/ agricultural land. This is anticipated as a result of the site allocation at Thickwood Field (Policy BEP4), although it is recognised that the site is relatively small in size, and that the wider CNP policy framework sets out a preference for brownfield land in accordance with the NPPF (2019). It is also noted that there is uncertainty in terms of the potential loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 6.77. **Uncertain minor negative effects** are also predicted in light of the environmental constraints present at Thickwood Field. Notably this includes the sensitive AONB landscape and Lucknam Park (which includes listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments). Policy requirements such as sensitive design and layout are likely to minimise the significance of any negative residual effects, however this is uncertain at this stage. It is further noted that while the Constitutional Club is also constrained in this respect, the nature of the site (small, brownfield, village centre infill) limits potential for adverse effects.

7. What are the next steps?

- 7.1. Subsequent to the current consultation on the draft CNP, the plan will be updated by the CNP Steering Group to reflect comments received. This Environmental Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the plan.
- 7.2. The CNP and Environmental Report will then be submitted to Wiltshire Council for their consideration. Wiltshire Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the CNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (2019), and forthcoming Wiltshire Local Plan Review.
- 7.3. If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the CNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Wiltshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the CNP, then the Neighbourhood Plan will be 'made'. Once made, the CNP will become part of the Development Plan for Colerne.

A.Context review

Air quality

Context review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas.
- Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.
- 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. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.
- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 transpose into UK law the Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) which sets legally binding limits for outdoor concentrations of major air pollutants which impact public health.

The Clean Air Strategy 2019 identifies how government will tackle all sources of air pollution and is aimed at complementing the Industrial Strategy, Clean Growth Strategy and 25 Year Environment Plan. The strategy proposes new goals to cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution and sets out the comprehensive action that is required from across all parts of government and society to meet these goals. The proposed measures include new legislation and new local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem, including through the creation of 'Clean Air Zones'.

The government published the 'UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations' in July 2017. This is the air quality plan for bringing nitrogen dioxide within statutory limits in the shortest possible time. The plan identifies that "the link between improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions is particularly important" and that consequently the UK government is determined to be at the forefront of vehicle innovation by making motoring cleaner.

Published in January 2018 by the UK Government, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' sets out a number of goals and policies in order to help the natural world regain and retain good health. In this context, Goal 1 'Clean Air' and the policies contained within 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' within the 25-year plan directly relate to the air quality SEA theme.

Local

Wiltshire Council is required to publish annual Air Quality Annual Status Reports (ASRs) to discharge their monitoring obligations under Part IV of the Environment Act (1995). Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and Part II of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 requires local authorities in the UK to review air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary. Where an AQMA is designated an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) must then be put in place.

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the air quality theme:

- Core Policy 55: Air Quality
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport

Current baseline summary

In line with the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995), Wiltshire is required to assess Air Quality standards within the region on an annual basis.

As of November 2019, no AQMAs have been identified within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Subsequently, Wiltshire Council does not currently undertake air quality monitoring in Colerne. However, the 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)²⁹ for Wiltshire has identified eight AQMAs, declared due to their exceedances in annual mean concentrations of NO₂. These are as follows:

- Salisbury;
- Wilton Road;
- London Road;
- Bradford on Avon;
- Devizes;
- Marlborough;
- Westbury; and
- Calne.

While Colerne Parish lies entirely within the Unitary Council of Wiltshire, it borders both South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset (BANES). The closest AQMA to Colerne is located in Bath, within BANES District, declared in 2002 for its annual mean levels of NO₂.³⁰ The Bath AQMA covers the major road network in Bath, extending to the London Road/ M4 roundabout, which is approximately 7km from the centre of Colerne village.

While there is the potential for increased traffic and congestion to exacerbate NO₂ levels in Bath, it is considered that residents can also travel to Corsham, Chippenham, Bristol and Swindon for an increased service offer, sustainable transport (i.e. train station), and employment.

Future baseline summary

New housing and/ or employment provision within the Plan area has the potential to impact air quality through increasing congestion and associated levels of pollutants such as NO₂. However, new development may also present opportunities to place increased focus on sustainable transport connections, particularly active travel opportunities within and outside of the Plan area.

The delivery of public realm improvements, including planning for green infrastructure, can also deliver positive air quality impacts. In addition to encouraging walking/ cycling, the selection of species (e.g. trees) and planting design can ensure that opportunities to mitigate poor air quality are maximised.

The CNP can also ensure that the location of new development minimises and/ or suitably mitigates the effects of increased congestion on local roads; which can in turn reduce local air quality.

²⁹ Wiltshire Council (2019): '2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)', [online] available at: http://www.wiltshireairquality.org.uk/assets/documents/council-reports/Wiltshire%20Council_ASR_21_08_2019.pdf

³⁰ UK Air Defra (date unknown) AQMA Details [online] available at: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/details?aqma_ref=7

Implementation of the aims and objectives contained within the Wiltshire Core Strategy, along with the policies in the Local Transport Plan indicate that future development within Colerne Parish is not likely to significantly increase emissions and reduce air quality within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Biodiversity

Context review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework³¹ (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF to ‘contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment’ including by ‘helping to improve biodiversity’.
- Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value [...], take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
 - Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for biodiversity.
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.

The Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan³² (2018) sets out a strategy for managing and enhancing the natural environment, embedding ‘net gain’ principles as key to environmental considerations. These aims are supported by a range of policies which are focused on six key areas. In this context, Goal 3 ‘Thriving plants and wildlife’ and the policies contained within Chapter 2 ‘Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’ and Chapter 5 ‘Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans’ directly relate to biodiversity and geodiversity.

³¹ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

³² HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/673203/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

The Biodiversity 2020 Strategy³³ (2011) presents a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services which builds on the Natural Environment White Paper³⁴ and sets out the "strategic direction for biodiversity for the next decade". The strategy aims to halt biodiversity loss and improve ecological networks and ecosystems for all people.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan³⁵ (BAP) identifies priority species and habitats requiring conservation action. Although the UK BAP has been superseded, BAP priority species and habitats have been used to draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England.

Local

The existing BAP for Wiltshire has been supplemented with a new Landscape Scale BAP³⁶ which identifies Landscape Biodiversity Areas to deliver more integrated, landscape scale conservation for the County.

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the biodiversity theme:

- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure

Current baseline summary

European designated sites

The Bath and Bradford on-Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The Bath and Bradford on-Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC)³⁷ is designated for supporting internationally important populations of hibernating Greater Horseshoe, Lesser Horseshoe and Bechstein's bat. The SAC is comprised of a network of significant underground sites in both the Wiltshire and BNES administrative areas, including four nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), namely Box Mine, Winsley Mines, Combe Down and Bathampton Down Mines, and Brown's Folly. Colerne Parish is located approximately 1km from Box Mine SSSI.

The component sites comprise extensive networks of caves, mines and man-made tunnels which are used by bats for hibernation, breeding, mating and as a staging post prior to dispersal. The grassland, watercourses, scrub and woodland surrounding them are used by bats for feeding and commuting. Although these habitats are not included in the SAC designation, they are vital to support the bats which are features of the SAC.

Potential impacts to the SAC from development

The above protected sites form the main hubs or nodes. Beyond these lie an integrated network of commuting routes, foraging areas and roosts which are not covered by any statutory designation.

Foraging areas used by bats vary between species and throughout the year, and include a wide range of habitats which support their invertebrate prey. Suitable semi-natural habitats such as woodlands, mature hedgerows, grazed pasture, rough grassland, watercourses and wetlands closest to bat roosts are most likely to be important to the bat populations, particularly for juveniles, however some species are highly mobile and may forage several kilometres from their roosts on a regular basis.

³³ Defra (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>

³⁴ Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

³⁵ JNCC (2007) UK BAP priority species [online] <http://archive.jncc.gov.uk/page-5717>

³⁶ Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (2012): 'A landscape-scale framework for conservation in Wiltshire and Swindon' [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/corestrategydocument?directory=Studies%2C%20Surveys%20and%20Assessments&fileref=130>

³⁷ Natural England (2015): "Bat Special Areas of Conservation: Planning Guidance for Wiltshire" [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/bat-special-areas-of-conservation-planning-guidance-for-wiltshire.pdf>

In order to migrate between the network of summer, winter and transitory roosts, autumn swarming sites and the commute to and from their numerous foraging areas, bats use established commuting corridors. Although bats are capable of crossing (and frequently do cross) large open areas, good quality connective habitats are preferred. These are generally well vegetated, sheltered linear features that provide direct routes between foraging areas and roosts.

Significant potential effects to the SAC therefore include impacts to the foraging areas and commuting routes in the surrounding landscape used by the bats as well as roosts.

Detailed bat survey methods are often required for development proposals located several kilometres from individual SAC sites. Development proposals within the 'consultation zone' areas could potentially trigger impacts on the SAC by affective 'sensitive features'. Colerne Parish falls within the 'consultation zone'.

Nationally designated sites

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Colerne Park and Monks Wood SSSI is located partially within Colerne Parish, along the east boundary. There are also a number of other SSSIs in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area. These are detailed below.

Colerne Park and Monks Wood SSSI

In the east of Colerne Parish lies Colerne Park, which includes Colerne Park and Monks Wood SSSI. The SSSI was notified in March 1986 and is approximately 50 ha in size. Based on the most recent condition assessment the SSSI is classified as 'Favourable'. The citation statement for the SSSI states:

*"Colerne Park and Monk's Wood is a southern calcareous ash-wych elm wood on the oolitic limestone of the Wiltshire Cotswolds. This floristically rich site lies on the western slopes of the southward running By Brook valley. The woodland is a mixture of high forest and coppice-with-standards. Ash, wych elm, field maple and hazel occur mainly as former coppice, with ash and pedunculate oak standards."*³⁸

It is noted that most of the site is owned by the Woodland Trust and lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Honeybrook Farm SSSI

This SSSI is located adjacent to Colerne Park, to the east, approximately 1km from the Parish. The SSSI was notified in January 1992 and is approximately 42.3 ha in size. Based on the most recent condition assessment the SSSI is classified as 'Favourable'. The citation statement for the SSSI states:³⁹

"Honeybrook Farm comprises a series of unimproved neutral to calcareous hay meadows, unimproved lime-stone grassland, ancient semi-natural woodland, a small lake and an undisturbed meandering stretch of river.

It is situated adjacent to Colerne Park SSSI, three miles south of Castle Combe, and constitutes one of the few remaining non-intensively managed lowland farms in Britain on which agricultural chemicals have never been used.

The site, which lies on the oolitic limestone of the Wiltshire Cotswolds, consists of a dry Combe to the east and a section of the alluvial flood plain of the By Brook to the west. An exposure of Midford Sands emerges between the foot of the limestone and alluvium."

³⁸ Natural England (date unknown) 'Colerne Parks and Monks Wood SSSI' [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1003288>

³⁹ Natural England (date unknown) 'Honeybrook Farm SSSI' [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1006376>

Box Mine SSSI

SSSIs coincide with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC, discussed above. The SAC is comprised of a network of significant underground sites in both the Wiltshire and BNES administrative areas, including four SSSIs, namely Box Mine, Winsley Mines, Combe Down and Bathampton Down Mines, and Brown's Folly. Box Mine is 1km from the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The SSSI was notified in February 1991 and is approximately 58.7 ha in size. Based on the most recent condition assessment the SSSI is classified as 'Favourable'. The citation statement for the SSSI states:⁴⁰

*"Box Mine is an extensive network of man-made tunnels which is used by bats for hibernation, mating and as a staging post prior to dispersal. The mine seasonally supports up to 10% of the total British population of greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, one of the rarest native bat species. All British bat species have suffered marked population decline over the last forty years due partly to habitat destruction and partly to poisoning from persistent toxic chemicals used in treating structural timbers."*

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSI's. In this context, significant areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the north of the Parish, surrounding Colerne Park and Monk's Woodland SSSI and Honeybrook Farm SSSI are located within an IRZ for residential and/or rural-residential developments. This applies to residential development of 50 to 100 units or more, and rural residential development (outside of existing settlements/ urban areas) of 10 to 50 units or more. It is however noted that the existing settlement of Colerne village does not fall within an IRZ.

Ancient Woodland

There is a considerable amount of Ancient Woodland present within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area. Notably, within the Neighbourhood Plan area, this includes:

- Husseyhill/ Erkwood Woods – Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland, 47.2 ha in size, located along the eastern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Matthews/New/ Mt.Scylia Woods – Ancient Replanted Woodland, 49.3 ha in size, located to the north of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Matthews/New/ Mt.Scylia Woods – Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodlands, 25.3ha in size, located along the northern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

These dense woodland areas lead into South Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds and, together with the surrounding agricultural pastures, hedgerows, and other natural features, provide essential habitats and corridors supporting a rich biodiversity.

Local

County Wildlife Sites

Wiltshire hosts approximately 1,500 County Wildlife Sites (CWS), specifically recognised for their importance for wildlife. Ten County Wildlife Sites fall either partially or wholly within the Plan area, covering a considerable proportion of the Parish. CWSs present include Husseyhill/ Erkwood Woods and Matthews/New/ Mt.Scylia Woods discussed above, and a CWS also coincides with Colerne Airfield. Colerne Airfield CWS is referenced within the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005):⁴¹

⁴⁰ Natural England (date unknown) 'Box Mine SSSI' [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1006376>

⁴¹ Wiltshire Council (2005) Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment [online] available at: https://2a5c70ad-63f7-4a56-ba3b-deded52911a2.filesusr.com/ugd/8a5522_23750f9a4c354860a7867405cc57c291.pdf

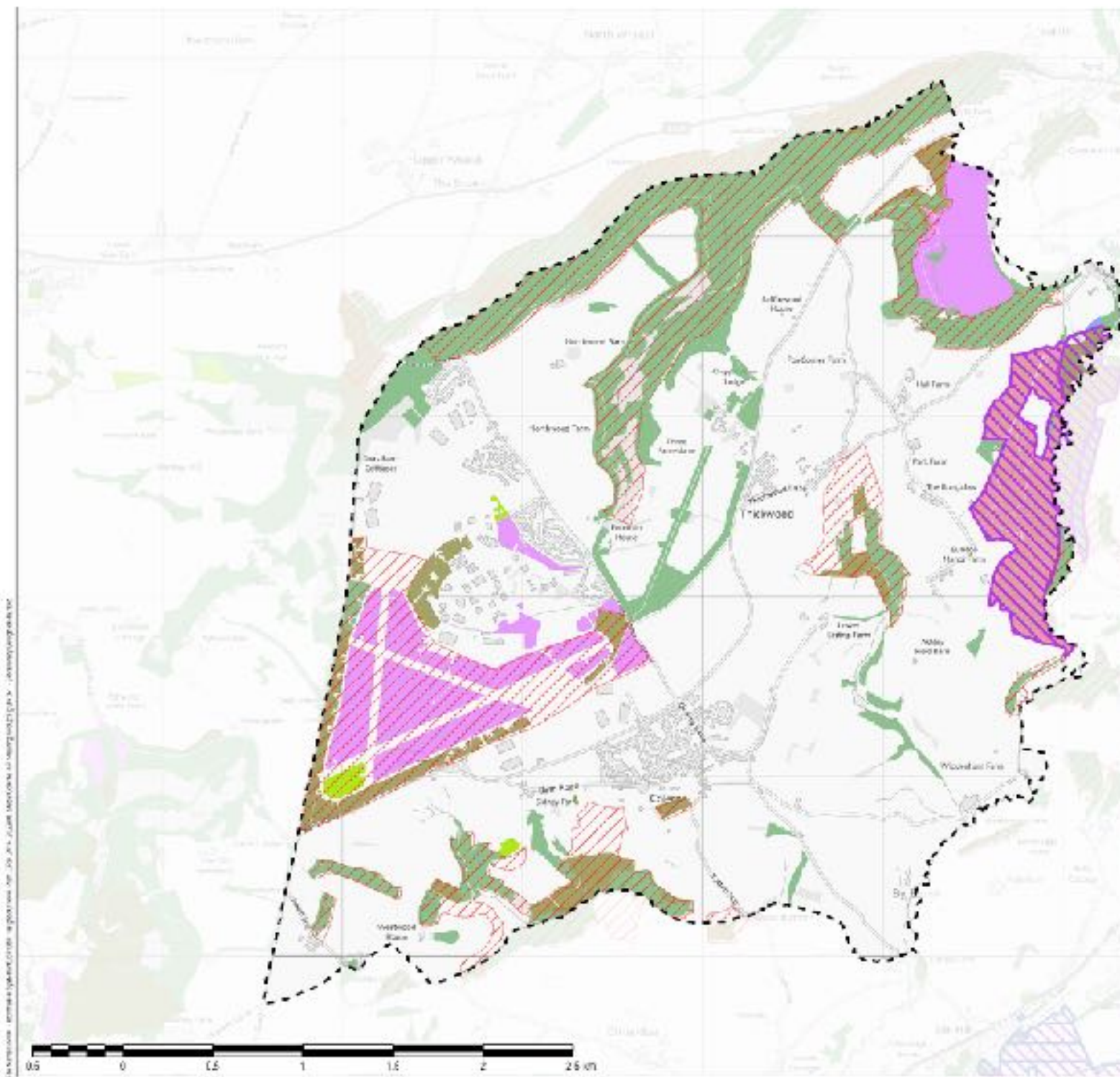
“Colerne Airfield is an area of limestone grassland at the side of the airfield with a fairly species-rich floral composition including pyramidal and bee orchids, and rich fauna including great crested newts, skylarks, golden plover and a good assemblage of butterflies; and Hanger & Garrick Wood, an ancient semi-natural woodland containing old coppice and supporting a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including ancient woodland indicators such as pendulous sedge, town hall clock and sweet woodruff, as well as abundant lichens and mosses.”

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats (BAPs)

There are a number of BAPs within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, notably there are significant areas of Priority Habitat Inventory - good quality semi-improved grassland at Colerne Airfield to the west of the Parish (coinciding with a CWS). In addition, there are smaller areas of priority habitats, scattered throughout the Parish, including:

- Lowland meadows;
- Good quality semi-improved grassland; and
- Lowland calcareous grassland.

The Parish's biodiversity resource is further set out in the figure overleaf.



Future baseline summary

Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the Plan area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, with the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

CWSs act as wildlife corridors and have the potential to be impacted by new development which can remove the connection between habitats for species such as birds. Ecological sites can also be impacted by poor air quality and water quality, and factors such as noise and lighting can disturb vulnerable species.

There is also the potential for new development to impact upon the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC, given the proximity of the Parish to Box Mine SSSI. Due consideration should be given to the mitigation requirements set out in the WCS and emerging Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance priority habitats but maintain the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised, both within the Plan area and in the surrounding areas.

Climate change

Context review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁴² (NPPF) include:

- Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.
- Inappropriate development in areas at high risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas of highest risk (whether existing or future).
- Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources.
- Plans should take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, considering a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- Plans should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbate the impacts of physical changes to the coast.

One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to 'contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment' including by 'mitigating and

⁴² MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

adapting to climate change' and 'moving to a low carbon economy.' 'The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

The Flood and Water Management Act (2010)⁴³ sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding, not just rivers and seas, are managed more effectively. This includes: incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

The UK Climate Change Act⁴⁴ was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- Commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. This includes reducing emissions from the devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), which currently account for about 20% of the UK's emissions. The 100% target was based on advice from the CCC's 2019 report, '*Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming*' and introduced into law through the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.
- The Act requires the Government to set legally binding 'carbon budgets'. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK's long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets, and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Act requires the Government to assess the risks and opportunities from climate change for the UK, and to prepare for them. The Committee on Climate Change's Adaptation Sub-Committee advises on these climate change risks and assesses progress towards tackling them. The associated National Adaptation Programme requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same.

The Committee of Climate Change published a 2012 report entitled 'How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk'⁴⁵ which emphasises the crucial role councils have in helping the UK meet its carbon targets and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It outlines specific opportunities for reducing emissions and highlights good practice examples from local authorities.

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and

⁴³ Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

⁴⁴ HM Government (2008): 'Climate Change Act 2008' [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

⁴⁵ CCC (2012) 'How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate risks' [online] available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/how-local-authorities-can-reduce-emissions-and-manage-climate-risks/>

the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report ⁴⁶ containing six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years:

- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
- Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
- Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals

The Clean Air Strategy⁴⁷ released in 2019 sets out the Government plans for dealing with all sources of air pollution. The strategy sets out proposals in detail and indicates how devolved administrations intend to make their share of emissions reductions, and complements the Industrial Strategy, Clean Growth Strategy and 25 Year Environment Plan.

The Committee of Climate Change published a 2012 report entitled 'How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk'⁴⁸ which emphasises the crucial role councils have in helping the UK meet its carbon targets and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It outlines specific opportunities for reducing emissions and highlights good practice examples from Local Authorities.

Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)⁴⁹ sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050.

In February 2020, the government announced a new £5 billion 5-year funding package to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.⁵⁰ This builds on the Government's determination to make buses work better for their passengers. The details of these programmes will be announced in the upcoming National Bus Strategy, to be published later in 2020, and follows the allocation of £170 million to support more electric buses, increase rural mobility and trial new 'Superbus' services.

Cycle routes will also see a major boost across the country with over 250 miles of new, high-quality separated cycle routes and safe junctions in towns and cities to be constructed across England, as part of the multibillion pound package announced.

Local

The Carbon Management Plan for Wiltshire 2013 – 2017 The Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan⁵¹ produced by Wiltshire Council sets out the following five key aims for addressing climate risks in the District:

⁴⁶ DEFRA (2017) 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017' [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017>

⁴⁷ HM Gov (2019) Clean Air Strategy 2019 [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf

⁴⁸ CCC (2012) 'How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate risks' [online] available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/how-local-authorities-can-reduce-emissions-and-manage-climate-risks/>

⁴⁹ Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876251/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf

⁵⁰ Department for Transport (2020) Major boost for bus services as PM outlines new vision for local transport [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-boost-for-bus-services-as-pm-outlines-new-vision-for-local-transport>

⁵¹ Wiltshire Council (2016) 'Wiltshire Council – Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan' [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/green-economy-climate-change>

- Wiltshire residents have adapted to the challenges of climate change and are supported by health and social care systems;
- Wiltshire businesses are prepared for the risks from a changing climate;
- Wiltshire balances the needs of fragile ecosystems with demand for resources for development;
- Wiltshire Council has effective plans, policies and resources in place to respond to severe weather events; and
- New infrastructure is planned and designed to account for the projected changes in climate.

Current baseline summary

Climate change adaptation

Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team.⁵² UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change (under medium emissions scenarios 50th percentile and RCP6) for the South West during the period 2020-2039 compared to the period 1981-2000 are likely to be as follows:⁵³

- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 0°C and 1°C; and
- A central estimate of change in mean precipitation of 0 to +10% in winter and 0 to -10% in summer.

Flood risk

With regards to fluvial flood risk, Environment Agency flood mapping identifies that the risk is limited to the stretch of the By Brook River, extending along the east and south east boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area. A small area of flood risk exists to the north of the Neighbourhood Plan area, coinciding with Doncombe Brook.

Similarly to fluvial flood risk, areas of surface water flood risk predominately follow the By Brook River and Doncombe Brook. There are areas less prominent areas of medium/ high surface water flood risk scattered throughout the Parish, notably following the tributaries of the By Brook River, to the east and south east of the main settlement.

The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Wiltshire⁵⁴ has an overarching vision of '*working together to manage local flood risk in Wiltshire*.' A number of strategic measures are identified to address the following five objectives:

- Improve knowledge regarding flood risk;
- Improve protection from flooding;
- Improve resilience to flooding;
- Improve the environment; and
- Impact communications about flooding issues.

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the climate change theme:

⁵² The data was released on 26th November 2018: Available from: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/>

⁵³ Met Office (2018): 'Land Projection Maps: Probabilistic Projections', [online map] available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/land-projection-maps>

⁵⁴ Wiltshire Council (2015) 'Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy' [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/comm-local-flood-risk-management-strategy.pdf>

- Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy
- Core Policy 42: Standalone Renewable Energy Installations
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 67: Flood Risk
- Core Policy 68: Water Resources

Ecosystem services

The Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the Cotswolds National Character Area (NCA). The Cotswolds NCA provides a wide range of benefits to society, each derived from the attributes and processes (both natural and cultural features) within the area. These benefits are known collectively as 'ecosystem services'. Of these ecosystem services, the following regulating services (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation) have been identified for the Cotswolds area:⁵⁵

Regulating soil erosion: The main soils of this area are free draining, base rich and relatively shallow. When these are protected by semi-natural habitats such as limestone grassland, or managed through good soil husbandry, erosion rates can be low. However, when exposed or when vegetation cover is lost, they can be highly prone to erosion, compaction and wind blow, which can have an adverse effect on many other services.

Regulating soil quality: Historically, soils in this area provided good conditions for sheep grazing on the limestone grassland. More recently there has been an increase in arable cropping, taking advantage of the good quality soil. This can leave soils prone to thinning, compaction and nutrient run-off, especially from the application of artificial fertiliser which can, over time, reduce the value of this service. Sedimentation can damage salmonid fisheries and increase the maintenance of drainage features.

Regulating water quality: The area is important as a source of good quality drinking water for populations in the Cotswolds and in neighbouring areas with larger population centres downstream such as Oxford. This water is abstracted from a strategically important underlying limestone aquifer and from the area's principal rivers, particularly those which run south and eastwards forming the headwaters of the Thames. The majority of the rivers in the NCA are classed as having good chemical and ecological quality, except for the upper Evenlode, mid Windrush, the rivers Coln and Glyme and the Ampney Brook. Some smaller tributaries of the Thames in the south of the catchment also have problems associated with diffuse pollution. Around half of the area's groundwater is classed as being of poor quality, particularly in the north and west, due to pollutant inputs. Nitrate and pesticide pollutants are of particular concern for aquifer waters, and phosphates are high in some rivers, reducing not just water quality but biodiversity and fisheries interest.

Regulating water flow: In general this is not an area of high flood risk, although there are areas susceptible to localised flooding. Limestone forms the parent material within the majority of catchments, allowing precipitation to infiltrate to the groundwater, from where it can be released at a slower rate back into rivers, helping to mitigate flood risk but sometimes leading to low flows. Areas to the north-east around Banbury and to the north of Bath are susceptible to localised flooding. During periods of heavy rain – such as in July 2007 – rivers which supply the headwaters of the Thames can cause flooding of communities along the valleys and further downstream in the Thames catchment. Water company groundwater abstractions for drinking water supply can affect spring flows and reduce river levels in this area. To mitigate this, water abstracted from aquifers deep underground is discharged into the rivers to increase flow.

Climate change mitigation

Reducing greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions is widely acknowledged as a key element of climate change mitigation. CO₂ emissions in particular are associated with a changing climate and will become an area of even greater focus for mitigating climate change following Wiltshire County

⁵⁵ Natural England (2015) NCA Profile: 107 [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5900626>

Council's declaration of a climate emergency in February 2019, and pledge to make Wiltshire Council carbon neutral by 2030 (July 2019).⁵⁶

CO₂ emissions from the built environment are monitored and recorded at a Local Authority level. In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that Wiltshire has had broadly higher per capita emissions than the South West of England since 2005. However, the rate of emissions reduction for Wiltshire is higher than the rate for the South West region and England. Wiltshire has seen a 42.1% reduction in total emissions per capita since 2005, higher than Regional (38%) and National (40%) figures.

Emissions from transport

Road transport is the largest emitter of GHG, with cars contributing 55% of UK domestic transport emissions (68 Metric tonnes CO₂ equivalent (MtCO₂e)) in 2018. Wiltshire and Colerne specifically have high car ownership levels and a large proportion of the population commute by car (see Chapter 10). Private transport is also important for those living in rural areas in order to access services.⁵⁷ The uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' report (2018), it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and therefore aside from HGVs, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

Wiltshire Council have expressed that they are continuously exploring ways to reduce transport emissions, recognising that this is a crucial part of the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030. Key initiatives in this respect include:⁵⁸

- Electric vehicles;
- Piloting new technologies; and
- Encouraging more sustainable travel.

Electric vehicles (EVs) do not burn fuel and create almost no noise.⁵⁹ They are battery powered and have the potential to be 'zero-emission vehicles' (ZEVs) if powered by renewable electricity.

'Connecting Wiltshire' lists the location of fast and rapid charging locations across the County.⁶⁰ These charge points are part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund project, which will eventually link a network of charging points across Wiltshire and will feed into the national network.⁶¹

Given the location of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, bordering both Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) and Gloucester, it is recognised that the most accessible EV charge points in relation to the Parish may be outside of Wiltshire. 'Zap Map' is a UK-wide map of charging points and aims to help EV drivers locate and navigate to available charge points.

There are a number of charge points located to the south west of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, in BANES. The closest charge point to Colerne is at Lucknam Park Hotel, approximately 3km north east of the Parish.

Renewable energy

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority. The most recently published data is

⁵⁶ Wiltshire Council (2019) Climate Emergency [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/green-economy-climate-emergency>

⁵⁷ Wiltshire Council (2015) Energy Resilience Plan [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire-council-energy-resilience-plan.pdf>

⁵⁸ Wiltshire Council (2016) Green Economy – Electric Vehicles [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/downloads/13709>

⁵⁹ Wiltshire Council (2016) Green Economy – Electric Vehicles [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/downloads/13709>

⁶⁰ Wiltshire Council (2020) Connecting Wiltshire [online] available at: <https://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/getting-around/car/electric-vehicles/>

⁶¹ Wiltshire Council (2016) Green Economy – Electric Vehicles [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/downloads/13709>

for 2018 and shows that Wiltshire has a total renewable energy installed capacity of 613.3 megawatts. Renewable energy generation has grown in Wiltshire between 2014 and 2018 by 241.3%, as a result of significant increase in photo-voltaics (PV), i.e. solar electricity panels.

There remains significant potential for building integrated renewables at a commercial and domestic scale.⁶² Standalone renewable energy installations, such as ground-mounted solar PV, make a significant contribution to local energy generation in the County. Their siting involves careful consideration through the planning process, due to potential visual and landscape impacts, especially in designated or sensitive landscapes. Approximately 44% of Wiltshire's area is designated as 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB); including the entirety of Colerne Parish.

Future baseline summary

In line with UK trends and national commitments, emissions are likely to continue to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PV, become more widely adopted. Notably, the Government has consulted on changes to England's Building Regulations introducing a 'Future Homes Standard' and the Department for Transport recently published 'Decarbonising Transport; setting the challenge' a first step towards publishing a full transport decarbonisation plan later in 2020.

In the future, new development could have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk. It is further recognised that climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events such as enhanced precipitation, which can increase surface water runoff from the By Brook River and its tributaries. This has the potential to put residents, property and development at a high risk of flood exposure.

However, in line with the NPPF (2019) sequential testing is likely to ensure that development within areas at highest risk of flooding is largely avoided, and development is likely to deliver mitigation such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Landscape

Policy context

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁶³ (NPPF) include:

- Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [...]. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.
- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for 'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments 'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils;
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and
 - remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- The government attaches great importance to Green Belts, whose fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The general extent of Green Belts is established and can only be altered in exceptional circumstances through preparation or review of a Local Plan.

National Character Area (NCA) Profiles are published by Natural England and divide England in 159 distinct natural areas based on their landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic, cultural and economic characteristics.⁶⁴ NCAs follow natural features in the landscape and are not aligned with administrative boundaries. NCA profiles describe the features which shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan⁶⁵ states the intention to work with relevant authorities to deliver environmental enhancements within all 159 NCAs across England. Along with the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes', Goal 6 'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' of the Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" directly relates to the Landscape.

Local

The Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment was commissioned by Wiltshire Council and undertaken by Land Use Consultants between January 2004 and April 2005.⁶⁶ The main purpose of this assessment is to document the current status of the Wiltshire landscape, furthering the understanding of the landscape resource available in the area and giving an indication of areas in need of enhancement and of conservation. This enables better-informed decisions to be made on the future management of the landscape and provide an objective basis for developing policies and enhancement and restoration projects.

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the landscape theme:

- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Existing Environment

Current baseline summary

Designated landscapes

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are conserved and enhanced. The primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, as confirmed by Section 82 of the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act).

Cotswold AONB

⁶⁴ Natural England (2012) 'National Character Area profiles' [online] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁶⁵ HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

⁶⁶ Land Use Consultants (2005) Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-landscape-conservation>

The whole of the Neighbourhood Area is located within the AONB. The central feature of the Cotswold AONB is the Cotswolds Hills which rise from the upper Thames to an escarpment above the Severn Valley and Evesham Vale. The outstanding natural beauty of the area is derived from its remarkable visual unity, and yet scenic diversity. The unifying factor is the underlying geology.⁶⁷

The Cotswold AONB Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) provides a detailed review of the Cotswolds AONB landscape.⁶⁸ The LCA discussed the wide range of landscape features creating the overall character of the area, including:

- **Wildflower Grassland:** the Cotswold AONB contains a nationally significant proportion (over 50%) of the UK's total Jurassic unimproved limestone grassland. This type of grassland is home to a large number of rare and declining plants including many species of Orchid and other flowers including Pasque Flower and Cotswold Pennycress. Cotswold grassland also supports nationally rare butterflies such as the Chalkhill Blue and the Duke of Burgundy.
- **Woodlands:** Woodland cover in the Cotswolds AONB is estimated to be 20,657 ha (10.1% of the AONB area) and mainly comprises broadleaved woodland (65% of woodland cover), followed by coniferous woodland (15%) and mixed woodland (13%). 'Other' woodland includes felled woodland, shrub and young trees. Ancient woodland, especially beech, is a particularly distinct and prominent feature of the Cotswolds – particularly along the scarp and incised valleys. Part of this woodland is included within the Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- **Agricultural land:** In the Cotswolds AONB, agricultural land comprises 176,393 ha. This is 86% of all land within the AONB. The main land uses are crops and fallow (41.29%), permanent and temporary grassland (43.79%). Other key land uses are woodland on farm holdings (6.13%), set-aside (4.47%) and rough grazing (2.11%).
- **Geology:** The rocks that form the Cotswolds are made up of three different stages of the Jurassic period and date from between 210-140 million years ago. The Cotswolds are famous for the variety and abundance of fossils that can be found and the geology has a very strong influence on the landscape, vegetation and wildlife, as well as on the industry and heritage of the people living in the area.

The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment undertaken in 2002⁶⁹ has characterised the Cotswolds AONB landscape (outside of urban areas) into 19 Landscape Character Types. Three of these are present in the Neighbourhood Area: **Enclosed Limestone Valley, Dip-Slope Lowland Valley and High Wold Dip-Slope**.

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy notes the need to preserve the aesthetic amenities of the Cotswolds AONB in order to '*protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character*'. This is supplemented by the guidance set out in the AONB Management Plan 2018 – 2023.⁷⁰ The purposes of the AONB Management Plan are:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB; and
2. To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB.

While having regard to these two purposes, the Management Plan also seeks to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities within the AONB.

The AONB Management Plan 2018 – 2023 identifies the following key issues for the AONB:⁷¹

⁶⁷ Cotswold AONB Partnership (2002) Landscape Character Assessment [online] available at: http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/landscape_character_assessment/index.htm

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Cotswolds AONB Partnerships (2002) Landscape Character Assessment [online] available at: http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/landscape_character_assessment/index.htm

⁷⁰ Cotswold AONB Partnerships (2018) Cotswold AONB Management Plan 2018 – 2023 [online] available at: <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Management-Plan-2018-23.pdf>

⁷¹ Cotswold AONB Partnerships (2018) Cotswold AONB Management Plan 2018 – 2023 [online] available at: <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Management-Plan-2018-23.pdf>

1. Erosion of the natural beauty and special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB;
2. Lack of a consistent approach across the whole of the Cotswolds AONB; and
3. Lack of understanding of the benefits of AONB designation.

National Character Areas

The Neighbourhood Plan Area lies within the National Character Area (NCA): 107 **Cotswolds**.⁷² The Cotswolds form the best-known section of the predominantly oolitic Jurassic Limestone belt that stretches from the Dorset coast to Lincolnshire. The dominant pattern of the Cotswold landscape is of a steep scarp crowned by a high, open wold; the beginning of a long and rolling dip slope cut by a series of increasingly wooded valleys. The scarp provides a backdrop to the major settlements of Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Bath and provides expansive views across the Severn and Avon Vales to the west. Smaller towns and villages nestle at the scarp foot, in the valley bottoms and on the gentler valley sides at springlines. Scattered hamlets and isolated farmsteads are found on the higher ground. The limestone has been quarried and used locally in buildings and walls, bringing a distinctive harmony to the area. Settlements are linked by a complex network of roads and public rights of way.

Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

At the local level, the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) describes the variations in character between different types of area and landscape in the County.⁷³

The Neighbourhood Plan area is covered by two distinctly different landscape character types: **Limestone Wold (Cotswolds Dip-Slope)** and **Limestone Valleys (By Brook Limestone Valley)**. Cotswolds Dip-Slope follows the Parish boundaries, while By Brook Limestone Valleys covers the central area of the Parish.

The National Character Assessment, Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, and Cotswold AONB LCA have formed the basis for work undertaken at the Parish level.

Colerne is known locally as 'The Village on the Hill' and it is this elevated position, providing views out into the surrounding AONB countryside, which gives the parish its distinctive and valued character. Its perceived isolation and steep uphill access help create a sense of independence.⁷⁴

The views of the village from Rudloe and Kingsdown are examples of looking at an ancient English settlement that has evolved over centuries. The steep hills and valleys are ideally suited for livestock farming, leading to relatively small fields enclosed by hedge- rows and trees used for shelter and shade. The variation in planting increases biodiversity and encourages wildlife.

Colerne Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) – Statement of Landscape Character

The Neighbourhood Plan LCA (2018) supplements the Wiltshire LCA (discussed above), providing local knowledge and photographs to reiterate the locally distinctive landscape features, characteristics and special qualities of the areas. Key qualities identified by the local community are listed below:⁷⁵

- What makes Colerne and environs so special is that it's 'The Village on the Hill', surrounded by an AONB.
- It's perceived isolation and relatively difficult access help create a sense of independence, and maintaining that is extremely important.

⁷² Natural England (2015) NCA Profile: 107 [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5900626>

⁷³ Land Use Consultants (2005) Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-landscape-conservation>

⁷⁴ Colerne Parish Council (2019) Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement

⁷⁵ Colerne Parish Council (2019) Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base – Statement of Landscape Character

- The views looking north from Rudloe and Kingsdown are perfect examples of looking at an ancient English settlement that has evolved over centuries.
- The steep hills and valleys are ideally suited for livestock farming, meaning that many of the fields are relatively small. Maintaining the hedges and trees for shelter and shade, helping biodiversity and encouraging wildlife.

Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement (2019)

The Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement (2019) has generated 16 potential Character Areas covering the built settlements of the parish.⁷⁶ This is presented as three main areas, Colerne Village, Thickwood and North Colerne, comprised of 15 sub-areas, eleven for Colerne and two each for Thickwood and North Colerne. The sub areas in Colerne Village relate closely to the Conservation Area.

Future baseline summary

New development, including infrastructure development, has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape quality in and around the Neighbourhood Plan Area. In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan more speculative development may come forward within the open countryside or countryside setting, which could place increased pressure on local landscapes/ town/ villagescapes and their settings. This may negatively impact upon the landscape features which contribute to the distinctive character, special qualities and setting of the AONB and LCAs discussed above, which define the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

However, the identification of locally distinctive landscape features, characteristics and special qualities can be protected, managed and enhanced through the Neighbourhood Plan. New development that is appropriately designed/ masterplanned, and landscape-led, has the potential to support the area's inherent landscape character and quality. This may, for example, include regeneration and brownfield development that improves the village setting, delivering green infrastructure improvements and/ or new recreational opportunities and enhanced framing of key views.

Historic environment

Policy context

National

The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is a UK Act of Parliament that changed laws relating to the granting of planning permission for building works, with a particular focus on listed buildings and conservation areas.⁷⁷ It created special controls for the demolition, alteration or extension of buildings, objects or structures of particular architectural or historic interest, as well as conservation areas.

The Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 is an Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to ancient monuments; to make provision for the investigation, preservation and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest and (in connection therewith) for the regulation of operations or activities affecting such matters; to provide for the recovery of grants under section 10 of the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 1972 or under section 4 of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 in certain circumstances; and to provide for grants by the Secretary of State to the Architectural Heritage Fund.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Colerne Parish Council (2019) Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement

⁷⁷ UK Public General Acts (1990) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [online] available at: <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>> last accessed [28/08/19]

⁷⁸ UK Public General Acts (1990) The Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Acts 1979 [online] available at: <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46>> last accessed [28/08/19]

The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England⁷⁹ sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁸⁰ (NPPF) include:

- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for 'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments 'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Plans should set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss of less than substantial harm to its significance.

These messages are supported by the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁸¹ which itself includes the key message that local authorities should set out in their Local Plans a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment which recognises that conservation is not a passive exercise and that identifies specific opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes', Goal 6 'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'⁸² directly relates to the Historic Environment.

Historic England is the statutory body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment. Guidance and advice notes provide essential information for local planning authorities, neighbourhood groups, developers, consultants, landowners and other interested parties on historic environment considerations, and are regularly reviewed and updated in light of legislative changes. The following guidance and advice notes are particularly relevant and should be read in conjunction with the others.

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2019)⁸³ outlines ways to manage change that conserves and enhances historic areas in order to positively contribute to sustainable development and provides information on the relationship with local and neighbourhood plans and policies. Principally, the advice note emphasises the importance of:

⁷⁹ HM Government (2010) The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx>

⁸⁰ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

⁸¹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

⁸² HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

⁸³ Historic England (2019): 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Advice Note 1' [online] available from: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/>

- Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin the designations; and
- Recognising the value of implementing controls through the appraisal and/or management plan which positively contribute to the significance and value of Conservation Areas.
- Clearly identifying those issues that threaten the area's character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA): Historic England Advice Note 8 (December 2016)⁸⁴ provides support to all stakeholders involved in assessing the effects of certain plans and programmes on the historic environment. It offers advice on heritage considerations during each stage of the SA/SEA process and helps to establish the basis for robust and comprehensive assessments.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition) (December 2017)⁸⁵ provides general advice on understanding setting, and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated, as well as advice on how views can contribute to setting. Specifically, Part 2 of the advice note outlines a five stepped approach to conducting a broad assessment of setting:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings contribute to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 11 (October 2018)⁸⁶ outlines the importance of considering the historic environment whilst preparing the plan (section 1), which culminates in a checklist of relevant issues to consider, followed by an overview of what this means in terms of evidence gathering (section 2). Sections 3 to 5 of the advice note focus on how to translate evidence into policy, understand the SEA process and Historic England's role in neighbourhood planning.

Local

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the historic environment theme:

- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
- Core Policy 59: The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site and its Setting

⁸⁴ Historic England (2016): 'SA and SEA: Advice Note 8' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

⁸⁵ Historic England (2017): 'Setting of Heritage Assets: 2nd Edition' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/>

⁸⁶ Historic England (2018): 'Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/>

Current baseline summary

Historic evolution and character of Colerne Parish⁸⁷

Colerne provided the essentials for early settlement: a water supply, land that could be cultivated and grazed, shelter building materials and a defensible location. Signs of early settlement in the parish include three bowl barrows near Thickwood and an Iron Age hillfort, from around 100-200 BC. A Roman villa was found on the site of the present airfield showing Roman settlement and the 1086 Domesday Book recorded 28 households at Colerne and six at Thickwood, Lucknam and Euridge are also mentioned in the survey.

After the Norman Conquest Colerne became part of the Barony of Castle Combe. Colerne Park, today largely woodland, was created in the early 14th Century by William of Colerne, Abbot of Malmesbury. In 1384 William of Wykeham granted the Manor of Colerne to New College, Oxford. The College continued to have extensive ownership in Colerne until quite recently. While agriculture remained Colerne's major employer, from the 17th Century, water mills, powering woollen cloth manufacture, were also of importance.

Woollen cloth manufacture reached a peak in the late 18th century but then declined as industry moved to towns. However the 19th Century construction of Box Tunnel brought labourers into the parish and raised the population of the village from 1209 in 1841 to 844 in 1931. From the beginning of the 19th Century, stonework and quarrying became central to the wealth of the parish, while agriculture and paper milling maintained the activity of the three mills along the By Brook river at Slaughterford, Drewitts and Widdenham.

Heritage assets

Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains one Conservation Area, 95 Listed Buildings, three Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and one Grade II Registered Park or Garden. There are also some features of historic relevance on the land still currently owned by the Ministry of Defence, notably buildings and structures from World War II.

Heritage assets present within the Parish are identified in the figure overleaf and explored further in the subsequent sections.

⁸⁷ Colerne Parish Council (2019) Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement

Listed buildings

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains one Grade I, one Grade II* and 93 Grade II Listed Buildings. The majority are sited in Colerne village, the highest concentration being within the Conservation Area. The Grade I and II* Listed Buildings are:

- Church of St John the Baptist (Grade I Listed) – This Anglican parish church, c1200, c13, much rebuilt c1450 and heavily restored c1854 and in 1877 by Wilson, Willcox and Wilson of Bath.
- Daubneys (Grade II* Listed) – This farmhouse, now house, c1400 and C16, rubble stone with stone tiled roofs, coped gables, ridge stack and rear wall stack to main range.

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are sites of national importance and protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. According to the National Heritage List for England, there are three Scheduled Monuments within the Neighbourhood Plan area, as listed below:

- Bury Wood Camp hillfort and earthwork enclosure 750m north of Raffinwood House;
- Rampart of an Iron Age defended settlement 410m south west of Mount Scylla Farm; and
- Three bowl barrows in Colerne Park, 450m north of Keeper's Cottage.

Registered Parks and Gardens

The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 (1) authorises Historic England to compile a register of “gardens and other land” situated in England that appear to be of special historic interest. The emphasis of the Register is on gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces, such as town squares. According to the Register, there is just one Registered Park or Garden within the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, Ashwicke Hall. Ashwicke Hall is located adjacent to the Parish boundary, to the west.

Colerne Conservation Area

Conservation Areas are designated because of their special architectural and historic interest. Conservation Area appraisals are a tool to demonstrate the area's special interest, explaining the reasons for designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of its character - mentioned within the 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' advice note by Historic England. Ideally, appraisals should be regularly reviewed as part of the management of the Conservation Area and can be developed into a Management Plan.

Much of the original village of Colerne is within a Conservation Area which was designated in 1992. The Conservation Area covers the historic village core, including nearly all of the Bath Road area, The Lanes, and part of Silver Street, Grocyn Close, Trimnells, Vicarage Lane and Watergate (see Area A – Colerne Village (**Sections 5.27 - 5.35** of this Report)). Old Martins Croft, to the north of the estate is a detached part of the Conservation Area.

To date, no formal Conservation Area appraisal has been undertaken; therefore, it is not possible to readily determine the features of special architectural and historic interest and the pressures that they face. The Character and Design Statement produced by Colerne Parish Council (2019) seeks to take appropriate and proportionate account of the Conservation Area but it does not in itself constitute an appraisal.⁸⁸

Archaeology

The National Monuments Record (accessed through Heritage Gateway⁸⁹) identifies five archaeological records in Colerne Parish as follows:

⁸⁸ Colerne Parish Council (2019) Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement

⁸⁹ Heritage Gateway [online] available at: <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results.aspx>

- Hangers 18-2-, Colerne Industrial Park;
- RAF Colerne Geotechnical;
- Land at SGS;
- Daubeneys, High Street; and
- West of Lucknam Lodge.

HE PastScape is also accessible via Heritage Gateway. The information within PastScape is taken directly from the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE). The NRHE contains over 410,000 records on the archaeology and buildings of England and its territorial waters. HE PastScape identifies eight archaeological and architectural heritage records within the Parish:⁹⁰

- Monument No. 208491 – A Roman villa discovered in 1838;
- Monument No. 208494 – Barrow;
- Monument No. 208551 - Surface collections of Neolithic and Bronze Age flints;
- Monument No. 867341 – A Neolithic polished flint axe;
- Church of St John the Baptist;
- Manor House;
- Daubeneys Farm; and
- Trimnells Farm.

Heritage at Risk

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. As of November 2019, the Heritage at Risk Register, has identified just one designated heritage asset in the Neighbourhood Plan Area at risk⁹¹:

- Three bowl barrows in Colerne Park, 450m north of Keeper's Cottage

Locally important heritage features

It should be noted that not all of the area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are seen as important by local communities.

Colerne Airfield

The airfield site includes features of longer-term heritage value including a number relating to its World War II historical significance.⁹² Throughout World War II, Colerne Airfield was a strategic centre for western defences and provided employment, accommodation and services for military personnel. The airfield played a major role in the War – the historical significance of which has since become widely recognised. An active RAF presence continued until relatively recently, though somewhat diminished; and still today the Azimghur Barracks, situated on the northern part of the old airfield, is home to the 21st Signals Regiment. In 2018, however, the MoD announced an intention to dispose of the site for development.

Romano-British villa, West of Lucknam Lodge

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Historic England (2018): 'Heritage at Risk Register' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>

⁹² Colerne Parish Council (2019) Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Statement

A Romano-British villa (West of Lucknam Lodge) was excavated in 1854 c. adjacent to the Satellite Ground Station (SGS) within the current airfield (HER MWI2305).⁹³ The villa was found to comprise at least 12 rooms with tessellated floors and a hypocaust.⁹⁴ Although not visible, the villa is a critical aspect of the Parish's history.

Future baseline summary

Colerne's nationally designated countryside and woodland landscape is potentially susceptible to insensitive design and layout from the development of new housing, employment and infrastructure within the area which may affect historic landscapes and historic landscape features. Additionally, the designated and undesignated heritage assets within the Plan area have the potential to be negatively impacted from development due to insensitive design, layout or massing.

In view of the special qualities which make up the architectural and historic character of Colerne Parish, the Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to ensure that future change in the built environment respects the character of the relevant area. There is the potential for future development to provide beneficial enhancement of heritage assets or their settings within the Plan area, particularly through public realm and access improvements; encouraging modern

Land, soil and water resources

Policy context

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁹⁵ (NPPF) include planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils.
- Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or 'brownfield' land.
- Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains.
- Planning policies and decisions should 'give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs', and 'promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.'
- Taking a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for water supply.

⁹³ Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record [online] available at: <https://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/HistoryEnvRecord/Home/Index>

⁹⁴ Cotswold Archaeology (2016) Hangars 18 – 20, Colerne [online] available at: <https://legacy-reports.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/content/uploads/2017/01/5965-hangars-18-20-colerne-eval-report-final.pdf>

⁹⁵ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

- Prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.
- Ensure that, wherever possible, development helps to improve local environmental conditions including water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.

Since July 2017 the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) requires Local Planning Authorities to publish a Brownfield Land Register, and review it at least once a year, in order to identify all previously developed sites with potential for delivering new development. This is to help achieve maximum planning value and efficiency from available land, whilst avoiding unnecessary land take at greenfield sites.⁹⁶ Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.⁹⁷

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan was published in 2018 and presents the 'goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it'.⁹⁸ The implementation of this plan aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water, reduced risk from environmental hazards, and managed exposure to chemicals. Specific policies and actions relating to environmental quality include:

- Improving soil health and restoring and protecting our peatlands;
- Respecting nature in how we use water;
- Reducing pollution; and
- Maximising resource efficiency and minimising environmental impacts at end of life.

Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England⁹⁹ sets out a vision for soil use in England which includes better protection for agricultural soils, protecting stores of soil carbon, improving the resilience of soils to climate change and preventing soil pollution. The essential message in relation to development is that pressure on soils is likely to increase in line with development pressure and the planning system should seek to mitigate this.

The Water Framework Directive¹⁰⁰ (2000) requires a management plan to be prepared for water catchment areas to inform planning and help meet objectives and obligations in areas such as water efficiency and sustainable drainage.

The Water White Paper 2011¹⁰¹ sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

The Government's Water Strategy for England¹⁰² (2008) provides strategy for the water sector up until 2030, which aims to sustainably deliver secure water supplies and an improved and protected water environment. It sets out actions within the following areas:

- Water demand;

⁹⁶ MHCLG (2017) Guidance: Brownfield Land Registers [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/brownfield-land-registers>

⁹⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

⁹⁸ DEFRA (2018) 25 Year Environment Plan [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

⁹⁹ DEFRA (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england>

¹⁰⁰ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy.

¹⁰¹ Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

¹⁰² Defra (2011) Future Water: the Government's Water Strategy for England [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-water-the-government-s-water-strategy-for-england>

- Water supply;
- Water quality;
- Surface water drainage;
- River and coastal flooding;
- Greenhouse gas emissions;
- Charging for water; and
- Regulatory framework, competition and innovation.

Water for life¹⁰³ (2011) sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

The Severn River Basin District River Basin Management Plan (2015)¹⁰⁴ provides a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment. To achieve this, and because water and land resources are closely linked, it also informs decisions on land-use planning.

Local

The Wiltshire and Swindon Aggregate Minerals Site Allocations Plan (2013) discusses those sites that have been identified as being suitable for mineral working and includes; site specific issues, preferred restoration objectives and particular planning requirements that any applicant will have to address through any subsequent planning application process.¹⁰⁵

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the land, soil and water resources theme:

- Core Policy 56: Contaminated Land
- Core Policy 68: Water Resources

Current baseline summary

Soil resources

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into size grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 of poorer quality. In this context, there is a need to avoid loss of higher quality 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.

In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, no detailed classification of the Neighbourhood Plan area has been undertaken to date. As such, there is a need to rely on the national 'Provisional Agricultural Land Quality' dataset.

The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset¹⁰⁶ shows that the Neighbourhood Plan area is underlain by various agricultural land grades. The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is covered by Grade 3 agricultural land, with smaller areas of Grade 4 agricultural land to the north east, and non-agricultural land to the west of the Parish.

¹⁰³ Defra (2011) Water for life [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales (2015) Severn river basin district River basin management plan [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718336/Severn_RBD_Part_1_river_basin_management_plan.pdf

¹⁰⁵ Wiltshire Council and Swindon Council (2013) Wiltshire and Swindon Aggregate Minerals Site Allocations Plan [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/minerals-adopted-sites-local-plan-may-13.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Natural England (2018): 'Agricultural Land Classification map Eastern Region' (ALC008), [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/127056?category=5954148537204736>

However, without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether all of the Grade 3 agricultural land is considered to be 'best and most versatile'. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Contaminated land

There is potential for contaminated land to be present at the Colerne MOD site. This is given the sites history and current use (notably the active RAF presence). However, this is uncertain at this stage until ground investigations have been carried out.

Water resources

The main water course in the Neighbourhood Plan area is the By Brook River, extending along the east of the Parish boundary. Part of the northern boundary is the Doncombe Brook, a tributary of the By Brook, and part of the southern boundary is the Lid Brook, another tributary.

The EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. These areas are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and, as such, are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. In this regard, the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area; encompassing north Colerne, the west of Thickwood and extending south to Colerne village, is designated as an NVZ: 'Surface Water 568 - Doncombe Bk - source to conf By Bk NVZ'

Where land is within a NVZ, rules/ guidance set by the Environment Agency and Defra (2018) must be followed in relation to:¹⁰⁷

- Use of nitrogen fertiliser; and/ or
- Storage of organic manure.

Whilst the plan area lies partially within a surface water NVZ, the land uses being proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan are unlikely to increase the risk of pollution.

Water quality and supply

Colerne Parish is located within the Severn River Basin District, which covers over 21,000km², and lies both in England and Wales. It extends from the Welsh uplands, through the rolling hills of the Midlands and south to the Severn Estuary. Responsibility for planning the future of the Severn river basin district is shared between the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales.¹⁰⁸

The river basin district is divided into 10 catchments, with the Neighbourhood Plan Area falling under the 'Avon Bristol and Somerset North Streams' Management Catchment, and the 'Avon Rural' Operational Catchment. There are 75 water bodies located within the Avon Rural Catchment Area.

Based on the most recently completed water quality assessments undertaken in 2016, the Environment Agency's Catchment Data Explorer classifies 13 of the 75 water bodies as having 'Poor' ecological status. Additionally, one water catchment 'failed' the threshold for good chemical status. The 'reasons for not achieving good status' (RNAGs) are primarily attributed to poor agriculture and land management and issues within the water industry (~68% of cases).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Environment Agency and Defra (2018) Nitrate Vulnerable Zones [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nitrate-vulnerable-zones>

¹⁰⁸ Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales (2015) Severn river basin district River basin management plan [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718336/Severn_RBD_Part_1_river_basin_management_plan.pdf

¹⁰⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Avon Bristol Rural – Operational Catchment [online] available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3045>

The entire Plan area lies over a principle bedrock aquifer (underground layers of water-bearing permeable rock from which groundwater is abstracted) identified as of importance for water supply.^[1] Aquifers are sensitive to changes in water flows and water quality; notably the entire Plan area identified as being of 'high' groundwater vulnerability.^[2] Any development in the Plan area will therefore need to consider potential groundwater effects and sustainable drainage systems to manage infiltration.

Minerals

The most recent Wiltshire and Swindon Aggregate Minerals Site Allocations Local Plan (2013) indicated seven key sites for continuous mineral extraction up until the period of 2026 within the region.¹¹⁰ None of these sites lie within or are in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Future baseline

Future development has the potential to affect water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. Water companies are likely to maintain adequate water supply and wastewater management over the plan period, and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the Plan area and wider area. However, it will be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality and to contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

New development within the Plan area could result in losses of higher quality (best and most versatile) agricultural land. In this respect, the growth strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to minimise losses and impacts upon soil resources and maximise efficient land use.

Population and communities

Policy context

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹¹¹ (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship, whilst guarding against the unnecessary loss of community facilities and services.
- Retain and develop accessible local services and community facilities in rural areas.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Enable and support health lifestyles through provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' and taking a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Wiltshire Council and Swindon Council (2013) Wiltshire and Swindon Aggregate Minerals Site Allocations Plan [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/minerals-adopted-sites-local-plan-may-13.pdf>

¹¹¹ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)¹¹² identifies that:

- Local Planning Authorities should assess their development needs working with the other local authorities in the relevant housing market area or functional economic market area in line with the duty to cooperate. This is because such needs are rarely constrained precisely by local authority administrative boundaries.
- Local planning authorities should secure design quality through the policies adopted in their local plans. Good design is indivisible from good planning and should be at the heart of the plan making process.
- A healthy community is a good place to grow up and grow old in. It is one which supports healthy behaviors and supports reductions in health inequalities. It should enhance the physical and mental health of the community.
- Green infrastructure is a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Local Plans should identify the strategic location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks. Where appropriate, supplementary planning documents can set out how the planning, design and management components of the green infrastructure strategy for the area will be delivered.

The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report *Ready for Ageing?* (2013)¹¹³ warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report says that “*longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises*”. The report says that the housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for older people than is needed. Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people.

Local

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the population and community theme:

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 3: Infrastructure Requirements
- Core Policy 34: Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 35: Existing Employment Land
- Core Policy 36: Economic Regeneration
- Core Policy 38: Retail and Leisure
- Core Policy 39: Tourism Development
- Core Policy 43: Providing Affordable Homes
- Core Policy 44: Rural Exception Sites
- Core Policy 45: Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs
- Core Policy 46: Meeting the Needs of Wiltshire's Vulnerable and Older People
- Core Policy 47: Meeting the Needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- Core Policy 48L: Supporting Rural Life

¹¹² Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

¹¹³ Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) *Ready for Ageing?* [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/>

- Core Policy 49: Protection of Rural Services and Community Facilities

Current baseline

Population

Between the decade of 2001- 2011 the population of Colerne grew by 5.8%. However, this was comparatively less than growth for Wiltshire (8.8%), the South West (7.3%) and England (7.9%) over the same period.

The largest age band for the population is the 25-44 age group (30.2%), to a greater degree than proportions for the district (24.9%), region (24.6%) and England as a whole (27.5%). The majority of these residents are between the ages of 30 and 44 (21.9%). Further, the majority of residents in the Plan area are under the age of 45 (65.71%).

Deprivation

The proportion of households deprived in no dimensions (59.5%) is higher than comparative figures for Wiltshire (49.8%), the South West (44.8%) and England as a whole (42.5%). In comparison, overall levels of deprivation in Wiltshire (50.2%), South West (55.2%), and England as a whole (57.4%) are higher than levels for Colerne (40.46%).

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)¹¹⁴ are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. Colerne falls within two LSOAs; Wiltshire 017D and Wiltshire 017E.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights. For the two LSOAs covering Colerne Parish, the overall levels of deprivation are as follows:

- **Wiltshire 017E** - (20% least deprived overall IMD)
- **Wiltshire 017D** - (10% least deprived overall IMD)

The levels of deprivation for each LSOA by measure. Levels of deprivation in Colerne appear to be low, with the exception for 'Barriers to Housing and Services', where Wiltshire 017E falls within the 20% most deprived.

Housing tenure

The majority of residents in the Plan area own their own homes (65.7%), in line with figures for the County and region (67.5% and 67.4%), and higher than averages for England as a whole (63.3%). Further, a comparatively high proportion of residents privately rent in the Plan area (25.5%) in comparison to Wiltshire (15.4%), the South West (17.1%) and England as a whole (16.8%).

Education

The majority of residents in Colerne hold at least one qualification (95.9%), in line with figures for Wiltshire (95.9%) and the South West (95.53%), and the nation as a whole (95.5%). Further, a high proportion of residents hold at least a Level 4 qualification or above (29.5%) in comparison to figures for the South West (27.4%) and England as a whole (27.4%).

In terms of access to education, the offer within the Plan area includes one primary school (Colerne C of E Primary School), Calder House School (a co-educational day-school for children with learning disabilities) and the Old School Playgroup. The nearest secondary school is located in Corsham (Corsham Secondary School), 15 minutes from the Colerne village centre (via car).

¹¹⁴ DCLG (2019): Indices of Deprivation Explorer' [online] available from: http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html#

Employment, facilities and services

According to 2011 census data, the occupation of the majority of residents in the Plan area can be described as:

- Professional occupations (16.7%)
- Associate professional & technical occupations (14.7%)
- Managers, directors, senior officials (12.4%)

Colerne demonstrates a high proportion of residents in associate, professional and technical occupations and managerial, directorial and senior official positions (27.1%) in comparison to figures for the South West (23.2%) and the nation as a whole (23.7%).

The Colerne Business Survey Report (2018)¹¹⁵ was conducted to identify employment opportunities within the Plan area, including potential to increase employment and what constraints there are on existing and future employment. Results suggested the following:

- Only about seven businesses that employ more than 20 people, of which two have more than 100 employees.
- The most common concerns were poor access to the area for goods vehicles and commuting, lack of parking, and limited public transport. The broadband service was quoted as a disadvantage by several and as an advantage by an almost equal number.
- There is a clear desire for additional low cost housing to enable some current employees to move into the parish and to improve recruitment. However there does not appear to be a need for large numbers of houses or evidence that the lack of them is holding back existing businesses.
- Colerne is not an area that attracts new business. Of the larger businesses, most are here for historical reasons (Azimghur Barracks, Lucknam Park) or because they serve the local community (schools, doctors, shops). The minor businesses are here, almost without exception, because they are home based.

Results of the Business report¹¹⁶ suggested that Colerne is essentially a residential area rather than a centre for business and that this is unlikely to change in the near future unless the Neighbourhood Plan chooses to set employment growth as a priority. Specific issues noted include poor road access for existing businesses. A number of businesses suggested the need for a modest increase in low cost housing to assist their existing employees and to aid recruitment.

With regards to economic and social interlinkages within the Plan area, there are three key residential areas of the Plan area: Colerne village, North Colerne and Thickwood.¹¹⁷

Each of the three residential areas incorporates some facilities used by the whole Parish, which creates an active social and economic network between the areas. Taking each area in turn:

- **Thickwood:** Thickwood residents (who number approximately 400) routinely go to Colerne village for its range of facilities— doctors, schools, playgroup, shops and pubs , while villagers go to Thickwood for employment (five major employers - Lucknam Park, Calderhouse School, Carpenter Oak, Jetway, Euridge Manor) and for recreation (Lucknam Park facilities; dog walking/riding, running, cycling).
- **North Colerne:** The larger residential area of North Colerne consists of four named areas, Redwood, Southwood, Northwood, and Pinewood, and has a population of approximately 1,100. It is dominated by its current and historical links to the MoD site, to which it is entirely adjacent. The MoD has historically been a major local employer, and remains so to a lesser extent today.

¹¹⁵ Colerne Parish Council (2018): Colerne Business Survey [Version 2]

¹¹⁶ Colerne Parish Council (2018): Colerne Business Survey

¹¹⁷ Colerne Parish Council (2020): Design Plan

In addition, the MoD hosts a variety of sports facilities, including a swimming pool gym, sports hall, rugby, football and cricket pitches and a soft play area for children.

- **Colerne Village:** North Colerne residents, including service families, go to Colerne village to access the same facilities as Thickwood residents. Villagers travel to North Colerne for swimming/ badminton clubs (in the military facility but civilian run); employment; pop-up youth facilities (civilian run and open to all).

Additional local services and facilities

In addition to the community services mentioned above, Colerne hosts a range of community groups and societies, identified in the Colerne Community Facilities Report¹¹⁸ including the annual Colerne Musical Theatre group, Gardening Club, History Group and Women's Institute (all of whom meet quarterly). Additionally, the Parish hall hosts a variety of meeting rooms open to regular groups. Annual events hosted in Colerne range from the annual village festival 'Festival on the Hill' (maintained by the Six Bells & Fox & Hounds), the MoD open day and annual flower and cake show (hosted at the village hall).

In addition to the aforementioned MoD base provisions, additional sports facilities within the Plan area include Colerne Rugby Club, Colerne Football Club and Badminton Club.

Green Belt

The parish of Colerne is partially located within the Avon Green Belt (also known as the Bristol and Bath Green Belt), as shown in **Figure 8.8** overleaf. As such, the Colerne Village centre is bound by the Green Belt on the south and west sides.

As set out in the NPPF (2019) the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The preservation of the Green Belt in the South West has contributed the following benefits to the Wiltshire landscape:

- Safeguarding the surrounding countryside from encroachment;
- Preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- Preserving the setting and special character of villages, towns and historic cities; and
- Assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The particular objectives of the Western Wiltshire Green Belt are to maintain the open character of undeveloped land adjacent to Bath, Trowbridge and Bradford on Avon, to limit the spread of development along the A4 between Batheaston and Corsham and to protect the historic character and setting of Bradford-on-Avon.

¹¹⁸ Colerne Parish Council (2019): Community Facilities evidence

Future baseline

The suitability (e.g. size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of delivering the right mix of housing types, tenures and sizes in suitably connected places.

Increases in vehicle congestion brought about by development has the potential to put strain on the existing access issues faced by local businesses as outlined in the Colerne Business Survey (2018). As the population of the Plan area continues to increase and age, this could potentially negatively impact upon the future vitality of the local community and economy of certain parts of the Plan area, whilst also placing additional pressures on existing services and facilities either within the Parish or in the surrounding areas.

New development could, however enhance access to the local employment offer, and enable increased levels of working from home within the Plan area, depending on the exact location, design and layout of development. Consideration should also be given to access to schools and local services/ facilities in this respect, recognising the importance of connecting the Parish's three residential centres to deliver enhanced access and links to the community.

Overall levels of deprivation in the Neighbourhood Plan area are likely to remain low.

Health and wellbeing

Policy context

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹¹⁹ (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Help deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity to contribute to the health and well-being of communities.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)¹²⁰ identifies that local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making.

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

¹¹⁹ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

¹²⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

The Fair Society, Healthy Lives ('The Marmot Review')¹²¹ investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: *"overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities"*.

Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On (2020) has been produced by the Institute of Health Equity and commissioned by the Health Foundation to mark 10 years on from the landmark study Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review).¹²²

The report highlights that:

- people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health;
- improvements to life expectancy have stalled, and declined for the poorest 10% of women;
- the health gap has grown between wealthy and deprived areas; and
- place matters – for example living in a deprived area of the North East is worse for your health than living in a similarly deprived area in London, to the extent that life expectancy is nearly five years less.

Local

The Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)¹²³ provides a summary of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people in Wiltshire. This document is broken up into the following themes:

- Demography and overarching indicators;
- Burden of ill health and premature mortality;
- Health behaviours and improvement services;
- Health protection; and
- Wider determinants.

In addition to the JSNA, Wiltshire have also produced two supplementary Joint Strategic Needs Assessments: one for younger people¹²⁴ and another for older people¹²⁵ within Wiltshire.

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the health and wellbeing theme:

- Policy 38: Retail and Leisure
- Policy 46: Meeting the Needs of Wiltshire's Vulnerable and Older People
- Core Policy 58: Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 49: Protection of Rural Services and Community Facilities
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure

¹²¹ The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf>

¹²² Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years on (2020) <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on>

¹²³ Wiltshire Council (2017): 'Wiltshire Health and wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2017/18' [online] available at: <https://www.wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/key-issues/health-and-wellbeing/overview/>

¹²⁴ Wiltshire Council (2017): 'Wiltshire Health and wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for younger people 2017/18' [online] available from: <https://www.wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/key-issues/health-and-wellbeing/overview/>

¹²⁵ Wiltshire Council (2017): 'Wiltshire Health and wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for older people 2017/18' [online] available from: <https://www.wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/key-issues/health-and-wellbeing/overview/>

- Core Policy 55: Air Quality
- Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 66: Strategic Transport Network
- Core Policy 68: Water Resources

Current baseline

Health

General health in the Plan area is significantly higher than average figures for Wiltshire, the South West and England as a whole. Figures for those reporting at least 'good' health are 89.5% in Colerne, compared to 83.8% (Wiltshire), 81.42% (the South West) and 81.4% (England as a whole). Additionally, those reporting 'very good' health is high.

The health impact of day-to-day activities on residents with long term health conditions in the Plan area. 89.3% of residents' activities in the Colerne are not affected, higher than figures for Wiltshire (84%), the South West (81.6%) and England as a whole (82.4%).

With regards to access to healthcare services, there are two general practices (GP surgeries) within the Parish: The New Surgery (High Street) and The Firs Surgery (Cleaves Avenue).

The nearest hospital is located in Bath (Royal United Hospital), approximately 22 minutes' drive via car (8 miles) from Colerne village. The Royal United Hospital can also be accessed by the 228 bus service - however services are infrequent.

Key findings from the most recently published Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing JSNA¹²⁶ are provided below:

- The health of residents within Wiltshire is generally very good compared to national averages.
- Wiltshire has a higher life expectancy and health life expectancy, compared to the averages for the whole of England.
- Levels of deprivation, unhealthy lifestyles, crime, and unemployment are very low within Wiltshire.
- Inequalities due to deprivation exist within Wiltshire, as the most deprived 20% of areas have repeatedly poorer outcomes than the least 20% deprived.
- Wiltshire's population is increasing, and this increase will be particularly concentrated in the population aged 65 and over.
- Young people's mental health and wellbeing needs addressing as Wiltshire has been highlighted as having a high rate of unintentional and deliberate injury in 15-24-year olds, and nearly one in every three-year twelve further education students have low or very low mental wellbeing.
- Cancer remains the biggest cause of premature mortality in Wiltshire, with prostate cancer being the highest cause of mortality.
- Alcohol related hospital admissions for all ages have been increasing.
- Though vaccination rates in Wiltshire are often higher than the national average figure there are still certain areas where the target percentage is not being met (including flu vaccinations for 65 and over, 2nd dose MMR and HPV vaccinations).
- The percentage of women screened for cervical cancer has been declining.
- Some specific populations in Wiltshire are at risk of ill-health due to lifestyle choices.

¹²⁶ Wiltshire Council (2017): 'Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2017/18' [online] available at: <https://wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Wiltshire-Health-and-Wellbeing-JSNA-ONLINE-VERSION.pdf>

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- Inequalities due to deprivation exist within Wiltshire, as the most deprived 20% of areas have repeatedly poorer outcomes than the least 20% deprived.
- Wiltshire's population is increasing, and this increase will be particularly concentrated in the population aged 65 and over.
- Young people's mental health and wellbeing needs addressing as Wiltshire has been highlighted as having a high rate of unintentional and deliberate injury in 15-24-year olds, and nearly one in every three-year twelve further education students have low or very low mental wellbeing.
- Cancer remains the biggest cause of premature mortality in Wiltshire, with prostate cancer being the highest cause of mortality.
- Alcohol related hospital admissions for all ages have been increasing.
- Though vaccination rates in Wiltshire are often higher than the national average figure there are still certain areas where the target percentage is not being met (including flu vaccinations for 65 and over, 2nd dose MMR and HPV vaccinations).
- The percentage of women screened for cervical cancer has been declining.
- Some specific populations in Wiltshire are at risk of ill-health due to lifestyle choices.

Local green spaces

There is significant and growing evidence on the physical and mental health benefits of green spaces. Research shows that access to green space is associated with better health outcomes, and income-related inequality in health is less pronounced where people have access to green space.¹²⁸ Access to good quality green space is associated with a range of positive health outcomes including better self-rated health; lower body mass index scores, overweight and obesity levels; improved mental health and wellbeing and increased longevity in older people.

The Colerne Parish Playground Facilities report (2019) outlines the following nine open spaces within the Plan area:

- The Recreation Ground, Green Lane;
- Martin's Croft Play Area;
- Colerne Primary School;
- Colerne Old School Playgroup play area;
- Frank's Wood;
- Thickwood Estate;
- Lucknam Park Play Area;
- Southwood/Northwood Playground; and
- Pinewood Play Area.

¹²⁷ Wiltshire Council (2017): 'Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2017/18' [online] available at: <https://wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Wiltshire-Health-and-Wellbeing-JSNA-ONLINE-VERSION.pdf>

¹²⁸ Public Health England (2014) Local Action on Improving Health Inequalities: Improving Access to Green Spaces [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357411/Review8_Green_spaces_health_inequalities.pdf

Community consultations carried out (June 2018) identified the desire to develop more green spaces around and within housing developments, allowing community access. Notably, 99% of 536 respondents thought it *"extremely important/important"* that development should respect the natural environment and character of the Parish.

Future baseline

Housing growth in the Plan area should be supported by sufficient access to open, natural and play spaces in line with local priorities. Increasing the use of good quality green space for all social groups would likely improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities. It can also bring other benefits such as greater community cohesion, less social isolation, and increased active travel; leading to overall mental and physical health improvements.

Overall, residents are likely to maintain predominately good health, particularly given the existing healthcare facilities immediately available to residents, and relatively low levels of deprivation.

Transportation

Context review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹²⁹ (NPPF) include:

- Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:
 - a) The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
 - b) Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised;
 - c) Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
 - d) The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account; and
 - e) Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.
- 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. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)¹³⁰ identifies that it is important for local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing or reviewing their Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed to support the preparation and/or review of that Plan.

The Transport Investment Strategy - Moving Britain Ahead (2017)¹³¹ sets out the Department for Transport's approach for future investment decisions and priorities. At the local level, the strategy

¹²⁹ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

¹³⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

¹³¹ Department for Transport (2017) Transport Investment Strategy - Moving Britain Ahead [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-investment-strategy>

relies on devolved decision-making where local communities have the power and will be backed by funding. Investment aims to achieve a transport network that is reliable, well-managed, safe, and works for everyone. The transport system should also provide smooth, fast and comfortable journeys, and have the right connections in the right places.

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2016)¹³² sets out the objectives that the DfT are working towards to meet the following walking and cycling ambition for England:

"We want to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey"

The objectives and target set to measure progress towards the 2040 ambition are to:

- Double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of bicycle stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025;
- Reverse the decline in walking activity;
- Reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled, each year; and
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school.

Local

Each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. In this regard, Wiltshire's third Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (LTP3)¹³³ has a long-term vision *'to develop a transport system which helps support economic growth across Wiltshire's communities, giving choice and opportunity for people to safely access essential services. Transport solutions will be sensitive to the built and natural environment, with an emphasis on the need to reduce carbon emissions.* The plan identifies the following five challenges in delivering a sustainable transport system for the area:

- A largely rural County with many historic towns and villages;
- Relatively high car ownership levels and small, isolated pockets of access deprivation;
- The changing climate and the prospect of 'peak oil';
- Significantly lower funding for transport; and
- Increasingly elderly population.

In order to address these challenges, LTP3 sets out several strategic objects to help achieve the following five goals:

- Support economic growth;
- Reduce carbon emissions;
- Contribute to better safety, security and health;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

The following policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy directly relate to the transportation theme:

- Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61: Transport and Development;
- Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport Network

¹³² Department for Transport (2016) Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512895/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy.pdf

¹³³ Wiltshire Council (2011): 'Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026' [online] available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ltp3-strategy.pdf>

- Core Policy 63: Transport Strategies
- Core Policy 66: Strategic Transport Network

Current baseline

Road network and congestion

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the C151 is a main commuter route from Chippenham to Bath, carrying a significant proportion of traffic at peak times. To the south of the Parish, the A4 is further utilised for commuters, via Box Parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan area is constrained by particularly poor road connections. The roads in the parish are generally narrow and often without formal kerbs. Doncombe Hill northwards to The Shoe, the C151 eastwards to Ford, Tutton Hill to Box in the south and the C151/ Bannerdown Road to Batheaston to the west are all, at points, little more than country lanes, and all contain bottlenecks at points.

Local evidence indicates the roads are unable to deal with the size of modern HGVs and tractor traffic, which is causing road conditions to deteriorate. Traffic speed on the C151 has been highlighted as a major ongoing issue, with 50 and 40 mph limits now in place.

Rail network

There is no train station in Colerne, the closest stations are Chippenham and Bath Spa. From the centre of Colerne village, Chippenham is a 17 minute drive (8.5 miles), while Bath Spa is a 21 minute drive (8.1 miles). Travel time may however depend on the time of day, i.e. roads are often congested at peak times. Both stations can also be accessed by the 635/ 228 bus services - however services are infrequent.

Bus network

There are partial bus services linking the parish with other areas. From Colerne, there are infrequent services to Bath, Marshfield, Biddestone, Corsham and Chippenham and Bristol (services 635 and 228). Consequently, there are high levels of car ownership and car dependency, as discussed below.

Car ownership

2011 census data shows that in line with all other comparators, most households have access to one or two cars/ vans. Notably, there appears to be a significantly lower number of households in the Plan area that do not have access to a car/van; and a significantly greater number of households in the Plan area that have access to 2 cars/ vans than found at the County, regional and national levels.

Parking

Local knowledge indicates that high car ownership has emphasised the deficit in household car parking provision in the oldest areas of the Parish. Roadside parking is a considerable issue for the Parish, notably in Colerne Village, where parking on pavements and on double-yellow lines is the norm. Roads around the school entrance are particularly congested at arrival and departure times.

Travel to work

The most popular mode of travel to work is by far the private vehicle. While this is also the case for all other comparators, a significantly higher percentage of Colerne residents drive than that of Wiltshire, the South West and England. Despite this, a higher percentage of Colerne residents walk and cycle to work when compared to the County, region and nation. Locally however, it has been recognised that there is a lack of satisfactory public footpaths within the Parish, that support recreational walking routes (discussed further below).

Bus and train appear to be less favourable modes of travel to work for residents of the Plan area, with lower proportions of residents travelling by this mode than found at the County, regional and national levels.

Feedback from local community consultation further showed that Colerne's position facilitates daily commuting by car to Bristol, Bath and Swindon but that:

- Inadequate public transport links frequently make destinations other than Bath impossible to reach within reasonable times.
- Poor public transport provision restricts independence and can lead to isolation and impacts the social life of young people in the parish (no buses after 6 p.m.).
- It was noted that community bus schemes operate in other villages and that a community transport scheme is required for the whole parish – if only a shuttle bus to the A4 in Batheaston where frequent services offering a full range of destinations are available.

A Community Survey carried out (June 2018) provided data on road use by car commuters, identifying that 60% of respondents regularly work outside the parish and a further 22% commute but not regularly. This reflects the high percentage of Colerne residents seen to be working from home.

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Cycle and footpath network

Most homes in Colerne village are within easy walking distance of the village shop, the Post Office, village hall, doctors' surgeries, and school. However, residents of Thickwood are a 1.3 mile walk from the High Street, via a narrow pavement alongside a de-restricted section of the C151. Residents of the most distant parts of North Colerne at Pinewood are a 1.7 mile walk from the High Street, via a route that is incompletely provided with pavements. Despite the obvious safety concerns, during term-time, there is a significant twice-daily flow of pedestrians along these routes to the village school.

The public footpath network around and into the Parish is reasonably comprehensive. However, there is no provision for cycling other than along roads. Several adjacent areas of the main village are only indirectly connected by road, rather than by direct footpaths or alleyways. Where they do exist the passages and alleyways between houses are an important part of the pedestrian network within the three main settlement areas.

Community Consultations identified an incomplete provision of connecting paths, both within and between centres of population. Footpaths are often circuitous, adding to the time taken for working parents to take children to school or playgroup. In the absence of direct, safe, footpaths, many opt to use their cars for these daily journeys.

The Community Survey included a question about the redevelopment of the MoD site, which has all the housing groups comprising North Colerne along its western edge. Results showed:

- 67% wanted community amenities to be given priority; and
- of these, 64% identified new footpaths, cycleways and bridleways as a priority.

Summary of future baseline

In the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in the Plan area is likely to continue trends which favour the private vehicle as the primary mode of transport. New development therefore has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional localised congestion issues which in turn may reduce road safety, notably at 'pinch points' and 'bottlenecks' in the Plan area. Further to this, it is considered that public transport use is likely to remain low compared with private car use given the lack of accessible public transport options.

Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by the LTP3, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations;

supporting the higher than average proportion of residents that walk and cycle to work. The Neighbourhood Plan can further deliver positive effects through supporting small-scale infrastructure improvements and active travel opportunities that seeks to maximise support for pedestrian movement.

B. Assessment of reasonable alternatives

Reasonable alternative site options to deliver the short-term housing need for Colerne are established in **Chapter 4** of the main report. Seven site options are identified for assessment and this appendix presents the detailed assessment of those options. Summary findings are also presented in **Chapter 5** of the main report.

Methodology

For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework. **Green** is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst **red** is used to indicate significant negative effects. Minor effects are also identified with **light green** indicating minor positive effects and **amber** indicating minor negative effects.

Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.

Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a **rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with 1 performing the best.

Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations.¹³⁴ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives

The options established for assessment are set out in **Table AB.1** below:

Table AB.1 sites considered through the SEA process

Site no.	Name	Size (ha)
1	Bath Road	1.32
2	Rooks Nest Field #2	0.47
3	Slaughterford Mill	<2.8ha
4	Thickwood T2	0.36
5	Drill Ground, MoD (Northwood/ Southwood)	3.5
6	Constitutional Club	0.1
7	Hangar Site (former Colerne Airfield)	7.18

Table AB.2 overleaf presents the detailed findings for the assessment of these options.

¹³⁴ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Table AB.2 Assessment of alternative site options for short-term growth in Colerne

Biodiversity							
Options	1. Bath Road	2. Rooks Nest Field #2	3. Slaughterford Mill	4. Thickwood T2	5. Drill Ground, MoD	6. Constitutional Club	7. Hangar Site
Rank	2	2	5	3	3	1	4
Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	No	Uncertain

Discussion	As set out in Wiltshire's Planning Guidance (2015), all options are within or partially within 4km of a component Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) of the European designated Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (greater horse shoe foraging distance buffer). In addition to this all options are within or partially within 1.5km of the lesser horseshoe Core Area (1.5km from Core Roost). The Core Roost, regularly supporting over 100 breeding lesser horseshoe bats, is shown to be (Wiltshire Guidance - Plan 2 Inset Map) at or within the immediate vicinity of the Option 3. As a Core Roost, any impact through development at Option 3 has the potential to harm the integrity of the SAC and it is considered likely to be unsuitable for development in the long-term. Option 3 is therefore worst performing of the options in this respect. Development at all other options therefore has the potential to trigger impacts on the SAC by affecting sensitive features of the Core Roost. In addition to the roost itself, this includes foraging areas and commuting corridors between the network of underground sites which make up the SAC. While effects are unlikely to result from village centre infill Option 6, all other sites have features of potential interest for foraging and commuting bats, and as such development may lead to loss of functionally linked land. However, effects are uncertain at this stage. In terms of the wider underground sites comprising the SAC, these include four nationally important SSSIs, namely Box Mine, which is located 2.2km from the closest option (Option 2). None of the options fall within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential development. Where development proposals could potentially harm the integrity of the SAC, it is considered that in line with Wiltshire and Natural England Guidance, potential impacts will be addressed at an early stage to inform scheme design and suitable mitigation measures. In terms of other nationally designated sites, in the east of the parish lies Colerne Park, which includes Colerne Park and Monks Wood SSSI. Additionally, Honeybrook Farm SSSI is located adjacent to Colerne Park, to the east, approximately 1km from the parish. Site 3 (Slaughterford Mill) is approx. 200m from Colerne Park and Monks Wood SSSI, falling within an IRZ for 100 units. Given this exceeds the capacity of the site and identified short term housing need, development is not considered to warrant consultation with Natural England; nor is predicted to result in a residual adverse effect. All other sites are considerably further from the SSSIs in the east of the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan area also contains numerous County Wildlife Sites (CWSs). Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill) is located adjacent to a CWS to the east of the parish, which consists predominately of priority habitat Deciduous Woodland. The north of Option 7 (Hangar Site) coincides with a CWS and priority habitat (Lowland Calcareous/ Semi-Improved Grassland), and Option 1 and 2 are in close proximity to a CWS south of Bath Road. Option 5, while not constrained by a CWS, is located adjacent to an area of priority habitat (Lowland Meadow). There is the potential for development at all discussed options to lead to minor negative effects on biodiversity as a result of increased habitat fragmentation, disturbance, noise, light and air pollution; and this is considered most significant at Options 3 and 7 given proximity to the potentially affected habitats. While there are no priority habitats present within the 'red line' boundary of options, it is noted that Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill) contains areas of dense vegetation (mature trees, hedgerows, scrub, etc.) which are likely to hold a level of biodiversity value. To a lesser extent, Options 4 and 7 have dense trees lining at least one site boundary, and there are sparse mature trees within the boundary of Option 5. The potential to enhance biodiversity with supporting green infrastructure and habitat creation is recognised under all options, with those discussed above likely to perform more positively given the existing biodiversity resource present. For example, development proposals could focus biodiversity net gain requirements in creating ecological corridors and increasing habitat connectivity within and surrounding sites. Conversely it is considered that Option 6, being a small urban brownfield site is less likely to deliver significant net gains in biodiversity on site. Overall, it is considered that all options have the potential to lead to negative impact on biodiversity assets if development is located inappropriately with poor design and layout. However, it is likely that development schemes would be landscape led, comprising green infrastructure where possible; with the potential for positive effects through enhancing the local biodiversity resource and supporting wider connectivity. In terms of ranking the options, Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill) is constrained by nearby internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity, in addition to valued habitats on site, and is therefore considered worst performing of the options. It is difficult to differentiate options otherwise in terms of potential impact on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC; although potential for effects are lessened under Option 6. Option 6 is best performing of the options given it is a small, brownfield site located in the village centre adjacent to existing built form, with limited potential to support key biodiversity habitats. Site 7 is constrained by locally designated sites and nearby priority habitat so performs less strongly than other remaining options. Options 4 and 5 perform similarly given they are not constrained by designated sites but have the potential to support biodiversity value on site. Option 1 and 2 perform similarly, with no potential for significant effects identified at this stage.
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Climate change							
Options	1. Bath Road	2. Rooks Nest Field #2	3. Slaughterford Mill	4. Thickwood T2	5. Drill Ground, MoD	6. Constitutional Club	7. Hangar Site
Rank	2	3	6	4	5	1	5
Significant effect?	No	No	Uncertain	No	No	No	No
Discussion	In terms of climate change adaptation, all options with the exception of Option 3 are located in flood zone 1 which is of low risk of flooding. Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill) is partially within flood zone 3 to the north east, and is therefore worst performing of the options in this respect. Option 3 is also at high risk of surface water flooding, aligning similarly with the areas at risk of fluvial flooding. There are also very small areas of medium surface water flood risk at Options 5 and 7, however these are not considered to be significant. Nonetheless, it is recommended that mitigation, including Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), is provided alongside development at both Options 5 and 7. All other options are therefore less constrained by flood risk and largely avoid negative effects, though SuDS are still recommended to manage surface water run-off in new development. It is considered that a number of options are reasonably well located in terms of supporting connectivity between green infrastructure features/ habitats in and around the parish, maximising the multifunctionality of biodiversity in terms of adapting to climate change. Option 7 performs most positively in this respect given its location adjacent to substantial areas of woodland (much being locally designated). Conversely, Option 6 performs least positively given its urban nature, distant from the existing green infrastructure resource and adjacent to residential and commercial units. A significant bearing on per capita emissions relates to transport and accessibility. Option 6, followed by options 2 and 1 are best performing in this respect given their location adjoining the village core and providing suitable access. As such these options are considered to best promote accessibility to local services and facilities, and local public transport connections that are available within the village. Option 7 is less well connected to the village centre, being outside the settlement boundary and across the very clear settlement edge formed by the main C151 road. However, Option 7 performs least positively given it is isolated in nature located along the north eastern parish boundary, distant from the High Street/ village core. Nonetheless, given the relatively poor existing public transport connections, and high reliance on the private vehicle, it is likely that new residents under all options will continue this trend (relying on the private vehicle) to some degree. It is considered that all options perform negligibly in terms of ability to achieve ambitious building emissions standards in support of decarbonisation. This is given all sites are modest in size, and the short-term housing need is identified as just ten new homes. It is considered that as economies of scale are achieved, opportunities to achieve higher building standards are capitalised upon. Overall, it is considered that development of any option alone is not likely to have a significant negative effect on climate change, which is a global issue. However, development located with good access to services/ facilities/ employment and public transport, will help to reduce contributions from per capita emissions. Options 6, followed by Options 1 and 2 therefore perform most positively of the options; particularly given all are in low flood risk areas. Option 3 is worst performing of the options in light of flood risk issues; however, it is noted that option 3 is endorsed for its green infrastructure resource from an adaptation perspective.						

Landscape							
Options	1. Bath Road	2. Rooks Nest Field #2	3. Slaughterford Mill	4. Thickwood T2	5. Drill Ground, MoD	6. Constitutional Club	7. Hangar Site
Rank	5	3	7	2	4	1	6
Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	No	Yes - Negative

Discussion	Colerne parish is predominantly rural, lying mainly on high ground surrounded on three sides with deep valleys with the By Brook, Doncombe Brook and Lid Brook containing the parish boundary. The whole of the Neighbourhood Area is also located within the Cotswold AONB. The Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2005) describes the variations in character between different types of area and landscape in the parish, with all options except for Option 3 falling within the Cotswold Dip Slope character area. The overall condition of the Cotswold dip landscape is perceived to be moderate. In terms of overall condition, the LCA states that “<i>Traditional settlement is generally contained well in nucleated villages. Although, newer development around the military barracks, is visually intrusive.</i>” It is therefore considered that smaller greenfield development within the settlement boundary that will maintain the village core performs more positively than both the isolated greenfield sites distant from the village centre, and when compared with the identified MoD sites. It is however recognised that where Option 7 is visually intrusive from all directions outside the airfield and disconnect by the C151 road, Option 5 is a flat open area, largely brownfield, with some peripheral grassland and no anticipated visual impact. Option 5 lies between two sites already developed as residential housing which are now occupied by a mix of private and military tenants. It is therefore considered that Option 7 is worse performing than Option 5. Option 3 falls within the By Brook Limestone Valley landscape character area, where the overall condition of the landscape is perceived to be good. While the landscape condition is good, inherent sensitivities include the rural character of the valleys, extensive areas of ancient woodland, and the valley sides and skyline which are largely free from development. Furthermore, broad management objectives include “<i>to retain the distinctive character of the villages by restricting development that encroaches the valley sides</i>”. The development of Option 3 therefore has the potential to lead to negative effects given the valley bottom development adjacent to extensive woodland. While the site arguably has limited visibility (mainly as a result of vegetative screening), there are some open areas which may be adversely impacted i.e. in relation to rural setting and landscape character. The Colerne Valued Views Report (2019) identifies the parish’s extensive views, many over the AONB. In terms of the options: • Option 1 includes a ‘valued view’ along Bath road extending south of the option towards Bath. • Option 7 includes a ‘valued view’ extending north of the parish. Option 1 performs similarly to that of Option 5, given both are flat, greenfield sites adjacent to existing built form. However in terms of views, Option 5 is better contained by surrounding development than Option 1, with visibility low. In terms of Options 2 and 4, both are not identified as having key views, and are small sites on the edge of existing built form. Dense vegetation (trees) limits visibility into and out of Option 4, and while there are some views from the north east, otherwise views are screened. It is considered that Option 4 would be relatively in keeping with the overall settlement pattern of Thickwood. However, Option 2 is open in nature, and highly visible across the valley, sloping from north to south. Option 2 is therefore less likely to integrate positively with the settlement pattern of Colerne. Option 6 is a small, flat site in the village centre currently occupied by the Constitutional Club and its adjoining car park. Option 6 therefore performs most positively of the options overall. It is considered that all other options would lead to partial/ wholly greenfield development within the Cotswold AONB, with the potential for significant long term negative effects on character, setting and intrinsic qualities. Mitigation is unlikely to significantly reduce the extent of negative effects given that options would lead to development in previously undeveloped areas within the AONB. In terms of ranking the options, Option 3 is worst performing given the sensitivities identified through the Wiltshire LCA and the location of the site on the edge of the parish, distant from the settlement boundary. Option 7 also performs notably poorly given the potential visual impacts and likely precedent that would be set for further development north of the C151 – leading to urban sprawl. It is further noted that the Wiltshire LCA highlights the need to “<i>retain the distinctive character of the villages</i>”. Option 1 also performs poorly given the valued views present. Option 5 performs reasonably well in light of surrounding built form and that the site does not impact on local views. However given the size and nature of the site, performs less well than Options 2, 4 and 6.
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Historic environment							
Options	1. Bath Road	2. Rooks Nest Field #2	3. Slaughterford Mill	4. Thickwood T2	5. Drill Ground, MoD	6. Constitutional Club	7. Hangar Site
Rank	1	4	3	4	3	2	3
Significant effect?	No	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Discussion	In terms of designated heritage assets within the parish, Option 6 falls within Colerne Conservation Area and is located adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building (5, High Street), while Option 2 is adjacent to both the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings (within 80m). In terms of Option 6, given the site is small, brownfield and currently occupied by the Constitutional Club, it is considered to have mostly limited potential for effects in relation to the historic environment. Option 2 is an open greenfield site, sloping in nature and highly visible across the valley. As such, given the surrounding heritage assets, Option 2 has greater potential impact upon the visual and historic integrity and setting of assets, with the potential for residual adverse effects. It is however noted that there is an element of uncertainty at this stage with regards to both sites, depending on the design and layout of development. It is further recognised that development at Option 2 has the potential to lead to positive effects overall; for example, through improvements to the urban realm, increased access, or opportunities to better reveal the significance of heritage assets. Option 4 is located in close proximity to Lucknam Park which includes three listed buildings and two Scheduled Monuments. Any development at the site has the potential to impact upon the overall character, setting and intrinsic qualities of the listed Lucknam Park estate; with the potential for long term negative effects. However as discussed above under landscape, it is recognised that dense vegetation (trees) limit visibility into and out of Option 4, and while there is some visibility from the north east, otherwise views are screened. This will help to mitigate residual effects to some extent. In terms of non-designated heritage assets, local survey work suggests Option 3 includes some known (industrial) heritage, which is likely to be significant. In line with Historic England guidance, any development at this option will likely be required to show how the sites industrial heritage has been assessed, protected and enhanced. Options 5 and 7, Ministry of Defence (MoD) owned land, are also considered to be of historic interest. Historic England highlight that much of the land occupied by the MoD is a closed estate and the historic assets within are less well documented than in other areas of the country. In line with Historic England guidance, significant historic structures and areas of archaeological interest should be identified and assessed for protection. Local knowledge suggests Option 5 is part of a WW2 airfield, while Option 7 is currently occupied by three former WW2 aircraft hangars now used for storage. The Interactive HER for Wiltshire & Swindon shows there is a site of an undated burial mound in the north eastern corner of Option 7. Development at Option 7 therefore has the potential to lead to adverse effects on the monument and its setting, or on buried remains. It is considered that any proposal at both Option 5 and 7 should seek to identify potential impact upon historic structures and the existence of archaeological remains which may be affected by their proposals, so that appropriate mitigation strategies can be designed at an early stage. This would reinforce management objectives for the area, as set out within the Wiltshire LCA (2005); notably to <i>“Protect the remaining sites of historic interest and above ground archaeological features.”</i> Furthermore, any development proposal should seek Historic England’s advice on master planning and recording of assets. Overall, it is considered that Option 1 performs most positively of the options as it is least constrained by designated or non-designated heritage assets. In terms of Options 2, 4 and 6, there is potential for residual negative effects given the proximity to assets; however, these are uncertain at this stage and will depend on the design approach taken at the site level. It is also noted that there is the potential for options to lead to positive effects overall, specifically in relation to Option 6 given its existing use and location. In terms of potential impact on non-designated heritage assets, it is difficult to differentiate between options 3, 5 and 7, as all have the potential to impact upon locally significant heritage. Furthermore, residual effects will depend largely on the design and layout of proposals, in addition to appropriate identification and protection of assets. Early engagement with Historic England will likely be important to avoid disturbance of remains, or to minimise potential damage; and explore opportunities to preserve remains for the future.						

Land, soil and water resources							
Options	1. Bath Road	2. Rooks Nest Field #2	3. Slaughterford Mill	4. Thickwood T2	5. Drill Ground, MoD	6. Constitutional Club	7. Hangar Site
Rank	5	4	2	3	2	1	2
Significant effect?	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Uncertain	No	Uncertain
Discussion	Options 1, 2, 4 and 7 are partially or wholly located on greenfield land; the loss of which has the potential for minor long-term negative effects with regards to efficient land use. Options 3, 5 and 6 are brownfield sites and therefore perform positively in this respect. There is known contamination at Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill), and the MoD owned land is assumed to have some level of contamination (Options 5 and 7). This is given the sites history and current use (notably the active RAF presence). Options therefore perform negatively as a result of the potential risk from pollution and the implications for the land and the wider environment. It is however recognised, in terms of Options 5 and 7, that effects are uncertain at this stage until ground investigations have been carried out. In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan area. Post-1988 Agricultural Land Classification is available for small sections of Wiltshire but this does not include the Neighbourhood Plan area. A detailed survey has however been undertaken at Option 4 (2014), which determines the site to be of Grade 4 quality. The survey concludes <i>“that the site comprises no loss of “best and most versatile agricultural land” and consequently its development will not impact on the national resource of best quality farm land.”</i> In terms of all other options, there is a need to rely on the Pre-1988 Agricultural Land Classification to provide an indication of the land classification; notably the presence of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (Grade 1, Grade 2 and 3a). The Pre-1988 classification identifies that Option 1 is wholly Grade 3, while Option 2 includes areas of Grade 3 and Grade 4. Option 3 is identified as Grade 4, while Option 5 and 7 are non-agricultural land. Option 6 given its village centre location is considered to be ‘urban’. Options 1, 2 and 4 are therefore the only options with the potential to lead to loss of BMV agricultural land, with the potential for long term negative effects in relation to this SEA theme. However, it is noted that Grade 3 land has the potential to be either Grade 3a (BMV) or Grade 3b (not BMV), and therefore a level of uncertainty exists in this respect. In terms of water resources, the entire Plan area lies over a principle bedrock aquifer identified as of importance for water supply. Aquifers are sensitive to changes in water flows and water quality; notably the entire Plan area is identified as being of ‘high’ groundwater vulnerability. Any development in the Plan area will therefore need to consider potential groundwater effects and sustainable drainage systems to manage infiltration. As a result, all options have the potential to lead to residual negative effects against this SEA Objective. Local evidence suggests the MoD areas within the parish are at greatest risk (including Options 5 and 7), given they are important water collection areas. Effects however are uncertain overall at this stage. Taking the above into consideration, it is concluded that Option 6 is best performing of the options given development would be an efficient use of brownfield land, with limited potential impact on water resources. All other options are constrained to some extent, and it is therefore difficult to apply ranking. However, given the permanent loss of greenfield land and potential loss of BMV agricultural land (if found to be Grade 3a), Option 1 is identified as worst performing of the options, followed by Option 2 (given the smaller proportion of potential BMV land), and Option 4 (due to loss of greenfield land). Of the remaining sites, while Option 3 performs negatively due to confirmed contamination issues, it is considered that this can be mitigated. Options 5 and 7, although contamination is not confirmed at the sites, are identified as having a greater potential impact on water resources. As such, options are ranked equally until further investigation has been carried out.						

Population and communities							
Options	1. Bath Road	2. Rooks Nest Field #2	3. Slaughterford Mill	4. Thickwood T2	5. Drill Ground, MoD	6. Constitutional Club	7. Hangar Site
Rank	1	1	4	3	2	1	4
Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive

Discussion	A key consideration for this SEA theme is the delivery of new homes to meet identified housing needs. Of the Options, only Options 3, 5 and 7 would be able to meet the full plan period housing needs in full (80 dwellings applying a standard of 30 dph). These options therefore perform most positively in terms of providing sufficient housing to meet the identified needs of the community. All options with the exception of Option 6 are able to meet the short-term housing need, and therefore also perform positively against this SEA theme. Option 6 is considered to perform less well on the basis that it does not have capacity to meet the short-term housing needs in full, being 0.1ha in size. In terms of mix of types and tenures of housing, it is considered that delivering the full 80 dwellings on one site is more likely to include opportunities to deliver affordable housing. While positive effects may be delivered in this respect through meeting the short-term housing need, given the low level of growth proposed (10 dwellings), effects are unlikely to be significant. Located along the High Street, Option 6 is the closest in proximity to the village centre, with Colerne C of E Primary School, shop, and village hall all within 300m. Option 6 therefore has the potential to lead to significant long term positive effects in terms of promoting social cohesion and accessibility. Options 1 and 2 are also well located in this respect, both approximately 400m from the village centre. Option 2 is more isolated from the main settlement to the south of Bath Road; however, it is more connected than Option 7 which, although just north of the main settlement, is physically separated by the main C151 road. It is considered that the hard boundary of the C151 may make it difficult for residents (under Option 7) to integrate positively with the existing community. In terms of Options 3, 4 and 5, all are outside of Colerne's settlement boundary, although may integrate with residents of Thickwood, Slaughterford/ Biddestone, and Northwood/ Southwood respectively. It is noted that Thickwood and Northwood/ Southwood residents routinely travel to Colerne village for its range of facilities. Access however is arguably difficult by foot, for example Thickwood is over a 2km walk to the High Street via a narrow pavement alongside a de-restricted section of the C151. Option 5 is slightly closer, approximately 1.5 km from the village centre. Option 3 performs least positively in this respect given its location on the north eastern edge of the parish (over 3km from the village centre). The nearest secondary school is located in Corsham (Corsham Secondary School), 15 minutes from the Colerne village centre (i.e. Option 6) via car. It is considered that options 1, 2, 6 and 7 to the south of the parish are best located in this respect, however overall it is difficult to meaningfully differentiate between options. In terms of access to employment, the parish is located equally distant from employment hubs in Chippenham to the north east and Bath to the south west, with car reliance high as a result of limited accessible public transport. It is however noted that there is a level of local employment provided within the parish in North Colerne and Thickwood. The main employer in North Colerne is the MoD, while Thickwood includes four major employers; Lucknam Park, Calderhouse School, Jetway, and Euridge Manor. Options 4 and 5 therefore perform most positively in terms of access to local employment opportunities, with the potential to reduce further out-commuting. Part of the parish (to the southeast of the main settlement) falls within the Avon Green Belt. This includes Options 1, 2 and 7; and as such options perform negatively given the potential to impact upon the Green Belt's integrity and openness. Overall, Option 6 performs most positively in terms of access to services and facilities in the village centre and integration with the community, although the option would not meet Colerne's long or short-term housing needs in full. Options 1 and 2 therefore are also identified as best performing as although located within the Green Belt, they are well located to the village centre and would deliver the short-term housing needs in full. Options 4 and 5 also perform positively given options are well connected to the 'sister' communities of Thickwood and North Colerne, and associated employment opportunities. Option 5 performs more positively than Option 4 as it is able to meet the long-term housing needs in full, with the potential to deliver a level of affordable housing. Although Option 7 can also deliver the long-term housing need in full, this option performs less well overall. This is given it is Green Belt, would not be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern, is detached by the main road, and is unlikely to integrate positively with the community, with accessibility limited. Option 3 also performs negatively overall given it is isolated from Colerne and its amenities, located on the north eastern extent of the parish. However the site would deliver Colerne's long-term housing need in full.
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Health and wellbeing							
Options	1. Bath Road	2. Rooks Nest Field #2	3. Slaughterford Mill	4. Thickwood T2	5. Drill Ground, MoD	6. Constitutional Club	7. Hangar Site
Rank	2	2	4	3	3	1	3
Significant effect?	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Uncertain
Discussion	With the exception of Option 5, all of the options provide opportunities to access the extensive Public Right of Way (PRoW) network extending throughout the village. PRoW can make a meaningful contribution to both health and wellbeing through regular exercise and access to the natural environment. Option 1 also has the additional benefit of directing growth within 200m of Colerne skate park and recreational ground, with village allotments beyond. Colerne Rugby Club is also accessible from the option, although access would require crossing the C151 main road. Option 7 is arguably better located to the Rugby Club (being on the same side of the C151); however, residents would need to cross the main road to access the skate park and recreational ground. Options 2 and 6 also have good access to the skate park and recreational grounds, being within 400m. To the east of Colerne village is Frank's Wood community woodland and Martins Croft play area, which are within 800m of Options 6 and 2, and only marginally further from Options 1 and 7. In Thickwood, Option 4 is closely located to Lucknam Park which is utilised for recreation including dog walking/riding, running and cycling. Southwood/ Northwood playground is accessible from Option 5, however access to recreation/ open space is limited otherwise. Option 3 performs most negatively in this respect, distant from the village offer. In terms of access to health services, Colerne Surgery is located along the high street within the village centre, and therefore Option 6 performs most positively of the options. Options 1 and 2 are also well located, in addition to Option 7 although access is notably more difficult given the presence of the C151. Options 3 and 5 are arguably equally distant from the surgery, with Option 3 performing least positively being located over 3km away on the north east parish boundary. As has been noted in relation to other SEA themes, Option 6, followed by options 2 and 1 deliver growth at locations that would enable walking and cycling to the village centre, including the village school and health centre to which a large number of regular journeys would likely be made. This could encourage residents to make healthy choices in relation to many of their regular journeys within the village. Options 4, 5 and 7 may encourage some healthy travel choices, although access is arguably constrained to some extent. While option 7 is constrained by the C151; for some residents the journey to the village centre from Thickwood/ North Colerne may be too far and considered unsafe for easy walking and cycling access. Option 3 performs most negatively in this respect, distant from the village offer with high reliance on the private vehicle for travel anticipated. Overall, Option 6 is identified as best performing given it has excellent access to the PRoW network and health and recreational facilities and would likely encourage the uptake of active travel for short journeys. Despite being slightly less well located to the village core Options 1 and 2 also perform well for the reasons set out above, with the potential for significant effects. Options 4, 5 and 7 are considered less likely to support healthy travel choices locally, although all are reasonably well located to health and recreational facilities; with residual effects uncertain at this stage. Option 3 performs least positively overall given it is distant from the village's health and recreation facilities, and will likely lead to high reliance on the private vehicle for travel.						

Transportation							
Options	1. Bath Road	2. Rooks Nest Field 2	3. Slaughterford Mill	4. Thickwood T2	5. Drill Ground, MoD	6. Constitutional Club	7. Hangar Site
Rank	2	2	4	3	3	1	3
Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Discussion	As noted in relation to several SEA themes, the options are likely to provide differing levels of support for walking and cycling, with Option 6, followed by Options 1 and 2, considered to perform most strongly in this regard on the basis of directing growth close to services and facilities at the village centre. This will help reduce the need to travel by ensuring that many day-to-day needs can be fulfilled without having to travel to other service centres. Focussing growth at Option 7 could enable walking and cycling connections to the village centre, though the site is disconnected by the C151 main road. Options 4 and 5 focus growth at Colerne's 'sister' communities of Thickwood and North Colerne, where there is pedestrian/ cycle pathways of variable quality to the central village. As such, there could be some uptake of active travel; however, for some residents the journey to the village core may be too far and considered unsafe for easy walking and cycling access. Option 3 performs least positively in this respect. In terms of access to bus and rail services, the nearest train stations are in Chippenham and Bath, and as such options cannot be differentiated between in this respect. Similarly, while there are partial bus services linking the parish with other areas (Bath, Marshfield, Biddestone, Corsham and Chippenham and Bristol), from Colerne services are locally described as infrequent and inconvenient, and as such weight is not given to options located in close proximity to a bus stop. Consequently, there are high levels of car ownership, which is likely to be a continued trend for all options to some extent. It is however noted that Options 4 and 5 are well located in relation to local employment opportunities, which has the potential to reduce the reliance on the private vehicle to some extent. Option 3 performs most weakly in relation to promoting sustainable transport and reducing the need to travel on the basis that it focusses growth at the site furthest from the village centre. Overall, it is considered that Option 6, followed by Options 1 and 2 perform most strongly in relation to the transport SEA theme. Options 4, 5 and 7 perform broadly on a par and Option 3 performs least strongly.						

Summary of assessment

The assessment finds that **Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill)** stands out as the weakest performing of the options. **Option 3 (Slaughterford Mill)** is found to be either the worst performing, or equally worst performing option in relation to every SEA theme other than land, soil and water (where it ranks second). This is given the location of the site distant from the settlement boundary within the Cotswold AONB, with the potential for impact on the setting and character of Colerne village (as set out in the Wiltshire LCA), in addition to the flood risk present at the site, and the potential impact on nearby internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites.

The assessment finds that **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)** is the strongest performing option overall, ranked highest against every SEA theme other than historic environment. Uncertainty exists in relation to the historic environment as **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)** is located within the Colerne Conservation Area and adjacent to Grade II Listed Buildings. However, the nature and significance of the residual effect will be dependent on the final design and layout of development. There is the potential for a long term positive effect given the brownfield nature of the site. **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)** performs most positively against all other environmental objectives given that it is a small, urban brownfield site, with limited potential for impacts on the parish's high quality landscape, biodiversity, soil and water resource. Despite not meeting Colerne's short-term housing needs in full, **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)** is anticipated to deliver positive effects of the greatest significance against social and economic objectives. This is given its village centre location, with excellent access to local services and facilities, which in turn will support health lifestyles.

In terms of the remainder of the options, **Option 7 (Hangar Site)** performs poorly against environmental objectives due to potential impact on locally designated biodiversity sites and nearby priority habitat, in addition to potential landscape and historic environment impacts as a result of development within the AONB. **Option 7 (Hangar Site)** performs reasonably against social and economic objectives as it is relatively well located in terms of distance to the village core; however, the C151 main road creates a physical barrier for residents, which is likely to reduce positive integration with the community, and may support continued car reliance. **Options 4 (Thickwood T2)** and **5 (Drill Ground, MoD)** perform on a par with **Option 7 (Hangar Site)** against socio-economic objectives, however it is noted that both **Options 4 (Thickwood T2)** and **5 (Drill Ground, MoD)** are likely to have negative effects on landscape and land, soil and water resources themes given the loss of greenfield land in the AONB. Overall **Option 4 (Thickwood T2)** performs more negatively than **Option 5 (Drill Ground, MoD)** given the loss of greenfield land and potential adverse effects on designated historic assets.

Options 1 (Bath Road) and **2 (Rooks Nest Field #2)** perform well against the socio-economic objectives, after **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)**, as a result of good accessibility and potential support for active travel uptake. **Options 1 (Bath Road)** and **2 (Rooks Nest Field #2)** also perform well, after **Option 6 (Constitutional Club)**, against the biodiversity SEA theme; however, both do not perform well against the land, soil and water resources SEA theme due to the potential loss of BMV/ greenfield land. **Option 1 (Bath Road)** is best performing of all options in relation to the historic environment, given it is not constrained by designated or non-designated heritage assets. **Option 1 (Bath Road)** therefore performs more positively than **Option 2 (Rooks Nest Field #2)** overall.

