

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY
REVIEW DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT
INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION
ISSUE 6: NETHERHAMPTON ROAD AND
LONGHEDGE
ON BEHALF OF
PERSIMMON HOMES AND
THE WILTON ESTATE**

Persimmon Homes Wessex
Verona House
Tetbury Hill
Malmesbury
Wiltshire
SN16 9JR

Telephone: (01666) 824721
Facsimile: (01666) 826152

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Q6.1 Netherhampton Road and Longhedge

What evidence is there to support the deletion of the site South of Netherhampton Road and part of the site at Longhedge as opposed to the other sites?

What alternatives to the deletion of these sites have been considered and why were they rejected?

- 6.1.1 Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate set out the following comments in relation to both the Inspector's questions above.
- 6.1.2 Persimmon Homes and Wilton Estate note that the Council have carried out two assessments to reach their current position. The original Topic Paper 19, Paper 2, sets out the analysis for the original site selection process. We agree with the Council that this sets the evidence base and the starting point for any review of these sites for the purposes of this Examination, although a wider review would be needed for subsequent reviews of the Core Strategy. It is not the purpose of this review into the effect of reduced housing numbers to begin the site analysis process all over again.
- 6.1.3 From this process, strategic sites were assessed and subsequently appeared as allocations in the Core Strategy. One question which remains is should those areas with potential scope for strategic allocation be re-assessed, along with the four allocated sites included in the review? Again, we support the Council's approach and do not think including those sites in the second review would serve any useful purpose. The aim of the Council's exercise is to address the reduction in housing numbers by taking sites out, not adding sites in. If the aim had been to find additional sites, the green areas should have been included, but it was not and an earlier analysis had already ruled those out as suitable allocations this time round.
- 6.1.4 The next question is whether the blue areas (areas with insufficient scope for strategic allocation, but some general potential) should have been included in the review. Again, we do not think areas which were excluded due to lack of strategic potential previously, need to be re-examined. They may have some scope for non-strategic allocations, but that is not the purpose of the Core Strategy.

- 6.1.5 The final group of sites which the Council did not include within its review are the brown field allocations. Should they have been reviewed against green field allocations? Again, our view is that no useful purpose would be served by this, because the green field and brown field sites are not directly comparable. Policy aims for brown field sites are different.
- 6.1.6 Therefore, Persimmon and Wilton do not consider it was appropriate to include additional sites in the Council's review. That is set out in Topic Paper 20 and the appraisal considers sustainability, landscape, heritage, transport, consultation, flooding and drainage, bio-diversity and place-shaping. It is therefore a comprehensive analysis of the issues likely to affect site selection. Persimmon and Wilton note that the Council's analysis reflects our own view of Fugglestone Red, that it constitutes the most appropriate site. Indeed, simplifying this extensive analysis into a simple ranking in Paragraph 12.1 of Topic Paper 20 clearly shows the order of the sites from "best" to "worst". If to meet the reduced housing numbers the Council needed to delete two sites, the answer would be clear cut. But that is not the case and the Council have chosen to take out half the Longhedge allocation and the whole of the Netherhampton Road site. In the case of Netherhampton Road, we think the Council's analysis provides sufficient evidence for deleting the whole of the site.
- 6.1.7 In the case of the reduction of the Longhedge site, we think the evidence set out in Topic Paper 20 is less clear cut. Paragraph 12.6 quotes the English Heritage comment relating to a flexible allocation of 360 to 800 dwellings, but accept that this degree of flexibility is not an appropriate solution. Paragraph 12.7 says "It is acknowledged that the area of this site could be reduced as suggested, without having a detrimental impact on the strategy", but in the previous paragraph, the quote from English Heritage says "The precise figure to be determined following a thorough and detailed site assessment and master planning process". We accept that the English Heritage assessment was based on a landscape appraisal and clearly the Council are relying on that as evidence, but that only produced the above conclusions that the site could accommodate between 360 and 800, with the precise number to be determined through a more detailed analysis. Therefore, the evidence the Council is relying on to justify their figure of 400 is less clear cut and this needs to be clarified.

6.1.8 Persimmon and Wilton consider there are two alternatives for dealing with this.

Either the whole of Longhedge should be included, on the basis that it is appropriate to over allocate in order to meet an overall housing figure, rather than under allocate. Or it should be taken out in its entirety and the numbers made up from other strategic or non-strategic sites. On the basis that the principal aim of the separate South Wiltshire Core Strategy is to meet short term housing needs, the other test to apply in deleting sites is whether they are available, or more immediately available than alternative sites. We have no comments in relation to this test on Netherhampton Road. However, Longhedge relies on links to the Old Sarum site and inevitably must follow provision of facilities there, as well as demonstrate that it can physically deliver those links.

6.1.9 Therefore, in response to the specific questions raised by the Inspector, we think that the Council's evidence set out in Topic Papers 19, Paper 2 and 20 provide the evidence base to support the deletion of these two sites and the evidence and the analysis demonstrates they were considered against the alternatives, but that the position in relation to Longhedge lacks clarity which can and should be addressed to ensure there are no soundness issues.