

CHIPPENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2023 - 2038

**The Report of the Independent Examiner to Wiltshire Council on the
Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan**

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Independent Examiner
31st January 2024**

Summary

I was appointed by Wiltshire Council, in agreement with Chippenham Town Council, in August 2023 to undertake the Independent Examination of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.

The Examination has been undertaken by written representations. I visited the Neighbourhood Area on 11th December 2023 after resolving my initial enquiries of the Qualifying Body.

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes a local range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the Chippenham Neighbourhood Area. There is an evident focus on safeguarding the very distinctive, local character of the area whilst accommodating future change and growth.

The Plan has been underpinned by extensive community support and engagement. The social, environmental and economic aspects of the issues identified have been brought together into a coherent plan which adds appropriate local detail to sit alongside the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015).

Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this Report, some of more significance than others, I have concluded that the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.

I recommend that the referendum should be held within the Neighbourhood Area.

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Introduction

This Report sets out the findings of the Independent Examination of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan 2023 - 2038. The Plan was submitted to Wiltshire Council by Chippenham Town Council in its capacity as the 'Qualifying Body' responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently incorporated within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and this continues to be the principal element of national planning policy. A new NPPF was published in December 2023 whilst this Examination was being conducted. A comparison with the July 2021 NPPF shows that no changes are material to the content of the Neighbourhood Plan or the conduct of this Examination. Since I have not identified any conflicts with the content of the latest NPPF, for my Report I have used references to paragraph numbers from the December 2023 NPPF. However, I am recommending that, given when the Neighbourhood Plan was written, it is noted at the beginning of the Plan that references are to the July 2021 NPPF.

This report assesses whether the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan is legally compliant and meets the 'basic conditions' that such plans are required to meet. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends modifications to its policies and supporting text. This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome, the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan would then be used in the process of determining planning applications within the Plan boundary as an integral part of the wider Development Plan.

The Role of the Independent Examiner

The Examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the legislative and procedural requirements. I was appointed by Wiltshire Council, in agreement with Chippenham Town Council, to conduct the Examination of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan and to report my findings. I am independent of both Wiltshire Council and the Town Council. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.

I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I have over 40 years' experience in various local authorities and third sector bodies as well as with the professional body for planners in the United Kingdom. I am a Chartered Town Planner and a panel member for the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS). I am a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

In my role as Independent Examiner I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the Examination:

- the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
- the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
- the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. If recommending that the Neighbourhood Plan should go forward to referendum, I must then consider whether or not the referendum area should extend beyond the Neighbourhood Area to which the Plan relates.

In examining the Plan, I am also required, under paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to check whether:

- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated Neighbourhood Area in line with the requirements of Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the 2004 Act (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area);
- the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by Qualifying Body.

These are helpfully covered in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement and, subject to the contents of this Report, I can confirm that I am satisfied that each of the above points has been properly addressed and met.

In undertaking this Examination I have considered the following documents:

- Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan 2023 – 2036 as submitted
- Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement (June 2023)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Report (April 2022)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan SEA Scoping Report (August 2022)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (May 2023)
- Wiltshire Council's Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening (June 2023)
- Content at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood-latest-news#C
- Content at: <https://chippenhamneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/>
- Representations made to the Regulation 16 public consultation on the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan
- The Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) adopted in January 2015
- Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP), adopted 25 February 2020.
- The Wiltshire Local Plan Review (including Planning for Chippenham 2021)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
- Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (March 2014 and subsequent updates)

I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Neighbourhood Area on 11th December 2023. I looked at all the various sites and locations identified in the Plan document in their rural setting. This visit gave rise to some further queries that I raised with the Qualifying Body.

The legislation establishes that, as a general rule, Neighbourhood Plan examinations should be held without a public hearing, by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan which I felt made their points with clarity, I was satisfied that the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan could be examined without the need for a public hearing and I advised Wiltshire Council accordingly. The Qualifying Body and the Local Planning Authority have helpfully responded to my enquiries so that I may have a thorough understanding of the facts and thinking behind the Plan, and the correspondence is being shown on Wiltshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning website for the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.

Chippenham Neighbourhood Area

A map showing the boundary of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Area has been provided within the Neighbourhood Plan. Further to an application made by Chippenham Town Council, Wiltshire Council approved the designation of the Neighbourhood Area on 2nd August 2021 (boundary changes resulted in revisions to the Neighbourhood Area designated in 2018). This satisfied the requirement in line with the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan under section 61G(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Consultation

In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Qualifying Body has prepared a Consultation Statement to accompany the Plan.

The Planning Practice Guidance says:

“A qualifying body should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan [or Order] and ensure that the wider community:

- is kept fully informed of what is being proposed
- is able to make their views known throughout the process
- has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging Neighbourhood Plan [or Order]
- is made aware of how their views have informed the draft Neighbourhood Plan [or Order].” (Reference ID: 41-047-20140306)

The submitted Consultation Statement notes that it was in May 2018 that the Town Council agreed to constitute a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP). This group produced and distributed flyers to publicise the commencement of the Neighbourhood Plan and explain its purpose; a soft launch of the initiative followed in September 2018 at Chippenham Town Hall, attended by 41 key stakeholders in the community. Application forms to join the Steering Group were handed out to attendees and an article in the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald publicised the commencement of the Neighbourhood Plan and advertised available public member positions on the Steering Group.

One of the first tasks of the new Steering Group was preparing a Communication and Engagement Strategy to help guide the process of community and stakeholder engagement needed to produce an informed and relevant community-led Neighbourhood Plan for Chippenham. A very well-presented Neighbourhood Plan website was launched to explain what a Neighbourhood Plan is (e.g. FAQ section), keep the community up to date with progress and events promoting the various stages of the Plan and seek their participation; a logo and branding were designed in October 2018 in order to create a distinctive ‘community brand’ for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan’s Twitter and Facebook profiles went live in February 2019 adding public platforms for two-way engagement with the community. At April 2023 I note there were 289 followers on Twitter and 588 on Facebook.

The Steering Group decided to use an online survey as the first major public engagement and this ran for a three-week period in March 2019. As an alternative for those members of the community with limited internet access, stands and street stalls were set up at various locations and hard copies of the survey forms were made available. A wide variety of media and direct mailing were used to publicise the survey to the community. An encouraging 607 survey responses were received; the results of the survey were posted on the Neighbourhood Plan website, via social media and through Talk Chippenham, a Town Council magazine delivered to all households in the Parish.

The survey results enabled the Steering Group to produce Vision statements for seven different topic areas, each with its own set of objectives, to start the formulation of

neighbourhood planning policies. The Vision was published as a news post on the website and social media platforms. In addition, a presentation on the survey results and Vision was made at Wiltshire Council's Local Plan Review Workshop, held at Chippenham Town Hall in July 2019, potentially helping to influence the Local Plan Review.

Seven topic groups were then formed, aligned with the Vision themes, these being: Sustainability & Climate Change, Green Infrastructure, Housing, Town Centre, Transport, Community Infrastructure and Economy. Subsequently, application forms to join Topic Groups were submitted by 42 community stakeholders and formation of the Groups was completed by August 2019; an Induction Event for Group members was held at the Town Hall in September 2019. Topic Group meetings commenced in October 2019 but the COVID-19 Pandemic brought several challenges and delays to the process, which concluded in September 2020; Topic Groups had successfully adapted to meeting virtually via Zoom during this period. Topic Groups adopted a variety of engagement means to complete their work, including outreach to specialists, public workshops and additional surveys. In June 2020 'results reports' from each Community Survey, compiled by Community First Wiltshire, were emailed to all members of the local community who were originally notified of the surveys. Links to the 'results reports' were included in news posts on the website and via social media platforms; an article was published in the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald in September 2020.

By December 2020 a first version of the Draft Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan had been prepared. A number of targeted consultations then took place prior to the Regulation 14 Consultation period which commenced in February 2022 and ran for just over 6 weeks until April. Due to some pandemic restrictions remaining in force the Steering Group sought to ensure that people who lived, worked or carried out business in the Neighbourhood Area were aware of the consultation, how to comment and when by. This was done through a multi-channel approach reusing the many strands that had previously been used successfully. There was particular success with the one minute video produced to explain some of the key policies in the Draft Plan and encourage the public to read the Plan and comment on it; the video received 1.4k views on Facebook alone.

The main tool for collecting feedback from the Regulation 14 Consultation was an online questionnaire. A total of 483 responses were received to the Regulation 14 Consultation Questionnaire, which the Qualifying Body calculates as an overall response rate of 68%. All stakeholder comments received were summarised and tabulated, and then carefully considered and responded to by the Steering Group; where appropriate, amendments were made to the Plan and evidence base. The Regulation 14 Consultation was subsequently repeated with the addition of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) between February and April 2023. A total of 11 comments were received from the Repeat Regulation 14 Consultation, only one was from a member of the public, but the Draft Plan was further amended as a result.

Accordingly, overall, I am satisfied that the consultation process accords with the requirements of the Regulations and the Practice Guidance and that, having regard to national policy and guidance, the Basic Conditions have been met. In reaching my own conclusions about the specifics of the content of the Plan I will later note points of agreement or disagreement with Regulation 16 representations, just as the Qualifying Body have already done for earlier consultations. That does not imply or suggest that the consultation has been inadequate, merely that a test against the Basic Conditions is being applied.

Representations Received

Consultation on the submitted Plan, in accordance with Neighbourhood Planning Regulation 16, was undertaken by Wiltshire Council from Monday 24th July to Tuesday 5th September

2023. I have been passed the representations – 52 in total – which were generated by the consultation and which are included along with the submitted Plan on Wiltshire Council’s Neighbourhood Planning website. I have not mentioned every representation individually within this Report but this is not because they have not been thoroughly read and considered in relation to my Examiner role, rather their detail may not be relevant to ensuring that the Basic Conditions are met.

The Neighbourhood Plan

Chippenham Town Council is to be congratulated on their extensive efforts to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their area that will guide development activity over the period to 2038. I can see that a sustained effort has been put into developing a Plan around a vision that by 2038:

“Chippenham will capitalise on its rich history, good transport links and beautiful surrounding countryside to maintain itself as an attractive and vibrant, riverside market town in which to live, work and for people to visit. Its future growth will be appropriate in scale, of high quality design, be environmentally sustainable and planned so as to mitigate the causes, and be adapted to the impacts of, climate change.”

The Plan document is well presented with a combination of text, maps and policies that are, subject to the specific points that I make below, well laid out and helpful for the reader. The Plan has been kept to a reasonably manageable length by not overextending the potential subject matter and the coverage of that.

It is an expectation of Neighbourhood Plans that they should address the issues that are identified through community consultation, set within the context of higher-level planning policies. There is no prescribed content and no requirement that the robustness of proposals should be tested to the extent prescribed for Local Plans. Where there has been a failure by the Qualifying Body to address an issue in the round, leading to an inadequate statement of policy, it is part of my role wherever possible to see that the community’s intent is sustained in an appropriately modified wording for the policy. It is evident that the community has made positive use of “direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area” (Planning Practice Guidance Reference ID: 41-001-20140306).

Individually, I can see that the Policies address legitimate matters for a Neighbourhood Plan as identified with the community. I will later look at the Policies in turn so as to ensure that the Basic Conditions are met, which include an obligation to be in general conformity with Core Strategy strategic policies. Having considered all the evidence and representations submitted as part of the Examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It works from a positive vision for the future of the Neighbourhood Area and promotes policies that are, subject to amendment to variable degrees, proportionate and sustainable. The Plan sets out the community’s priorities whilst seeking to identify and safeguard Chippenham’s distinctive features and character. The plan-making had to find ways to reconcile the external challenges that are perceived as likely to affect the area with the positive vision agreed with the community. All such difficult tasks were approached with transparency, with input as required and support from the Wiltshire Council.

However, in the writing up of the work into the Plan document, it is sometimes the case that the phraseology is imprecise, not helpful, or it falls short in justifying aspects of the selected policy. This is not uncommon in a community-prepared planning document and something that can readily be addressed in most instances. Accordingly, I have been obliged to recommend modifications so as to ensure both clarity and meeting of the ‘Basic Conditions’. In particular, Plan policies as submitted may not meet the obligation to “contain policies that

are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals” (NPPF para 16). I bring this particular reference to the fore because it will be evident as I examine the policies individually and consider whether they meet or can meet the ‘Basic Conditions’.

Basic Conditions

The Independent Examiner is required to consider whether a Neighbourhood Plan meets the “Basic Conditions”, as set out in law following the Localism Act 2011; in December 2018 a fifth Basic Condition was added relating to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Since this Examination commenced the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 has been published which includes provisions amending the Basic Conditions; however, no commencement date has yet been fixed. Therefore, it remains the case that, in order to meet the Basic Conditions, the Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Plan for the area;
- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations;
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(d).

The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has very helpfully set out to address the issues in relation to these requirements in the same order as above and has tabulated the relationship between the policy content of the Plan and its higher tier equivalents. The NPPF published in July 2021 has been the basis for the submitted Basic Conditions Statement and it is against the content of that NPPF that the Plan is examined. New versions of the NPPF were published in September and December 2023, but my interpretation of paragraph 230 of the latest NPPF is that those are not to be applied retrospectively to Plans already submitted for Examination.

I note that the local strategic policies are set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted in 2015. A Local Plan Review has recently been published for public consultation but, whilst some data prepared for the Review may be relevant for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Basic Conditions do not require me to assess any conformity with the in-progress Review. From the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Screening, I will later address whether the making of the Plan will breach the Basic Condition relating to the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

I have examined and will below consider the Neighbourhood Plan against all of the Basic Conditions above, utilising the supporting material provided in the Basic Conditions Statement and other available evidence as appropriate.

The Plan in Detail

I will address the aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan content that are relevant to the Examination in the same sequence as the Plan. Recommendations are identified with a bold heading and italics, and I have brought them together as a list at the end of the Report.

NPPF References

The Plan was prepared prior to the 2023 revisions of the NPPF. It will aid the readability, and therefore the useability, of the Plan if a statement is included early in the Plan – perhaps on the Content page - noting that ‘This Plan was prepared before the publication of the 2023 versions of the NPPF and therefore the paragraph numbers derive from the NPPF July 2021.’

Front cover

A Neighbourhood Plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect. I note that there is a prominent reference to the Plan period 2023 – 2038 on the front cover. The references to “Submission Version” can now be removed.

Executive Summary

No comments.

Preface

An updated Preface may be appropriate for the Referendum document. The colour-coding of Policy sections is helpful to the readability of the Plan.

Acknowledgements

No comments.

Contents

The listing is helpful but will need review in the light of the Recommendations in this report.

Recommendation 1:

1.1 Add a note early in the Plan document as follows: ‘This Plan was prepared and submitted before the publication of the 2023 versions of the NPPF and therefore the paragraph numbers derive from the NPPF July 2021.’

1.2 On the front cover remove references to “Submission Plan”.

1.3 Update the Preface for the purposes of a Referendum document.

1.4 Review the Content listing in the light of the Recommendations in this Report.

1. Legal and Planning Framework

The Role of Neighbourhood Plans

No comments.

Document Structure

This is a helpful section that will assist readers of the Plan. The colour-coding for Policy sections is also helpful to the readability of the Plan.

The Qualifying Body agreed that the Appendices are of two varieties: documents that are vital to the application of the Plan Policies eg Annexes and Appendix 9 – Local Green Spaces Maps, and documents that show the trail of thinking that has culminated in the Submission Plan eg Appendix 2 – Topic Group Proformas. I believe it would be helpful to be consistent across the two groups, adding the former to the Annexes.

Neighbourhood Plan Period

No comment.

Neighbourhood Plan Area

No comment.

Recommendation 2:

Move the listing of “Appendix 9 – Local Green Spaces Maps” to become Annexe 5 in paragraph 1.15.

2. Preparing the Plan

No comment.

3. The Local Context

Whilst this section is largely descriptive, the last sub-section suggests it is looking at “Future Direction”. However, apart from noting Wiltshire Core Policy 1, little strategic context/evidence is provided to justify comments about, for instance, “high quality agricultural land” in the locality, estates that are “poorly connected to the town centre and its facilities, including those located on the western edges of the town”, “The town cannot afford to become a dormitory settlement” and the alleged plight of “surrounding villages”. I noted to the Qualifying Body that, if these are important tenets of the Plan, evidence and the support of national and/or Core Strategy policy may be vital to establish.

The Qualifying Body responded with more specific references and evidence that could well be significant to establishing the context for the Neighbourhood Plan policies; my Recommendations therefore pick up from these responses.

Paragraph 3.28

I note that the Qualifying Body has agreed that “the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre and Chippenham Library are important and valuable cultural assets in the town” and therefore they should be referenced in Paragraph 3.28.

Recommendation 3:

3.1 Add reference to the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre and Chippenham Library Paragraph 3.28.

3.2 Within section 3 under the sub-heading “future Direction”:

3.2.1 Add a new paragraph 3.45 as follows:

‘The Chippenham Area Strategy in paragraphs 5.43-5.52 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the main issues and considerations facing Chippenham up to 2026. These are similar issues to the place-shaping priorities listed in Policy 6 of the current Wiltshire Local Plan Review Regulation 19 Version which will extend the timeframe to 2038.’ Adjust the numbering of subsequent paragraphs accordingly.

3.2.2 At the beginning of paragraph 3.48 replace “if” with ‘as’.

3.2.3 To the end of paragraph 3.49 add: ‘Place Shaping Priority 1 of Policy 6 of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review Regulation 19 Version recognises the existing levels of net out-commuting in Chippenham as being an issue’.

3.2.4 In paragraph 3.50 replace the second sentence with: ‘Some housing estates are poorly connected via sustainable transport modes to the town centre and its facilities’; delete the third sentence.

3.2.5 In paragraph 3.51 add: ‘Paragraph 1.2 of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan DPD recognises the fact that ‘In planning for the future growth of the town the proposals of this plan seek to: Respect the individual identities of villages within the landscape setting of Chippenham and their relationship to the town’.

4. Creating Vision & Objectives

The Six Topic Areas

I normally regard the vision and objectives statements as part of the historical record from community engagement. However, in this instance I expressed a concern to the Qualifying Body that some of the wording chosen has the distinct potential to mislead about what a Neighbourhood Plan can achieve. A Neighbourhood Plan does not have the capability to

“provide” green and blue infrastructure, to “manage” housing growth, or to “revive” the town centre.’ The Qualifying Body responded that, whilst it understands the concerns with regard to some of the wording, the term ‘Chippenham’, at the beginning of each Vision Statement, was intended to mean ‘Chippenham the town’ rather than ‘Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan’. Accordingly, the Vision statements were written literally - to be visionary/aspirational - reflecting what a 2038 Chippenham would look like as opposed to a Vision for the town which would be singularly delivered by the Neighbourhood Plan. Reflecting this clarification, it is appropriate that some further explanation is provided.

Recommendation 4:

Under the heading “4. Creating Vision & Objectives”:

4.1 In paragraph 4.1 replace “being able to prepare a ‘Vision’ and set of accompanying objectives for the Plan with the confidence that it reflected the wishes of the community” with ‘being able to prepare a ‘Vision’ for Chippenham from which objectives specifically for the Neighbourhood Plan are derived with confidence that these reflected the expressed wishes of the community’.

4.2 In the colour boxes which are part of paragraphs 4.2 and 4.4 replace “Objectives” with ‘Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan’.

4.3 Also in paragraph 4.4 replace “A Vision and set of objectives were then prepared for each topic area” with ‘A Vision for Chippenham and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan were then prepared for each topic area’.

5. Sustainability & Climate Change

I can see that the Qualifying Body has taken comprehensive steps to address a complex and therefore challenging area of planning policy. Relevant professional advice has been sought in order to try to ensure that the future development of Chippenham – which the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Local Plan Review indicate will continue to be extensive – are as environmentally responsible as possible. This responds to the NPPF expectation (para 157) that “The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate”. However, it remains the case that the Basic Conditions must be met and these require, inter alia, that “the Plan must: have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State”. Research reports and examples of policies from elsewhere, whilst they may present arguments suggesting new policy directions, don’t necessarily constitute “national policies and advice”, and furthermore, they may have no regard to the local context for Chippenham. But I accept that the Neighbourhood Plan must inform readers as to what its policies are about and pre-ambles help to do that.

In relation to paragraph 5.5, I challenged the assertion that “the Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to significantly reduce Chippenham’s carbon footprint and make a significant local contribution to the adaptation and mitigation of future climate change”. I did this on the basis that any Neighbourhood Plan, over its limited timespan and range of influence within an established built environment, might beneficially but not “significantly” impact Chippenham’s carbon footprint and its mitigation of future climate change. The Qualifying Body accepted the point and agreed to accept the word ‘beneficially’ as a more accurate reflection of the Neighbourhood Plan’s influence.

I had also queried why Policy SCC1 requires, at the planning application stage a “modelling [of] each building’s estimated regulated energy consumption” and then a remodelling “prior to first occupation” on the basis of in-property testing. I further queried whether any differences identified are likely to be significant, particularly if compared with the actual user experience, and also what applicants are supposed to do with the data obtained other than submit it with an “account for any differences”. I further queried whether it was expected that first occupation would be delayed whilst there is a dialogue between developer and LPA on

any feasible remedial measures for each building individually. The Qualifying Body indicated in their response that “We do not believe that a one stage modelling process at planning application stage would necessarily deliver net zero carbon development as there would be no checks and balances in place to ensure delivery”. But there are existing mechanisms in place within a local planning authority to check the accurate delivery of planning consents and then enforcement routes to address any failures. As noted earlier, as part of the Examination I am obliged to check whether Neighbourhood Plan policies “relate to the development and use of land”. My conclusion in this instance is that such procedural matters, which have the potential to delay the efficient determination of planning applications, are not within the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

In the context of climate change policy, the Qualifying Body has noted to me that “In our view national legislation and the NPPF is deliberately vague around on [sic] what policies a neighbourhood plan might include in order to encourage a bottom-up, community based approach to policy development, as long as these policies are non-strategic.” Even if this could be factually established, it would not absolve the community policy-makers from working within national policy constraints and in particular the requirement to provide “adequate and proportionate evidence” in support (NPPF para 31).

Part of the difficulty experienced by all Qualifying Bodies has been the lack of up-to-date guidance from Government on energy efficiency standards since a Written Ministerial Statement in 2015 (HC Deb, 25 March 2015, vol 584, cols 131-138WS). The introduction of the 2021 Part L uplift to the Building Regulations set national minimum energy efficiency standards that are higher than those referenced in the 2015 Statement, suggesting that the Government has seen the Building Regulations as the route to net zero. During the course of the Examination a new Written Ministerial Statement was published (Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update Statement 13th December 2023). Obviously the Qualifying Body did not have the benefit of this Statement when preparing their Neighbourhood Plan. However, it does confirm that “the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations. The proliferation of multiple, local standards by local authority area can add further costs to building new homes by adding complexity and undermining economies of scale.” Further, the Statement goes on to note that “Any planning policies that propose local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulation should be rejected at examination if they do not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale”, the criteria for the later having yet to be the subject of forecast Planning Guidance. The Statement adds: “Where plan policies go beyond current or planned building regulations, those policies should be applied flexibly to decisions on planning applications and appeals where the applicant can demonstrate that meeting the higher standards is not technically feasible”, indicating that technical considerations as well as financial viability considerations are material matters.

Given the opportunity to respond to this update the Qualifying Body has responded: “We wish to re-emphasise to the Examiner the important distinction between the rather narrow scope of the WMS, which relates to the fabric energy efficiency standards of new homes, versus the wider scope of Policy SCC1 which seeks to supplement fabric energy efficiency through other energy sources such as off-site renewables, or through carbon offsetting, things which the Building Regulations regime does not/will not regulate and which the planning regime can best secure at the current time.

The other key point we wish to make to the Examiner is that Policy SCC1 is not inconsistent with the WMS because the Policy does not insist that developers exceed Part L Building Regulations. The Policy leaves it up to the Applicant to decide whether they either wish to meet, or exceed, minimum Building Regulations fabric energy efficiency standards. The Qualifying Body suggest that it could update the supporting text accompanying Policy SCC1

to make it clear that the Policy does not require fabric energy efficiency standards that go beyond the minimum standards set out in Building Regulations. Policy SCC1 can be satisfied as long as the development achieves net zero carbon in its regulated operational emissions overall, which we have demonstrated through a robust and independent Viability Assessment would be viable in most circumstances in Chippenham. In fact, the Viability Assessment demonstrates that in Chippenham most major new development which meets fabric energy efficiency standards equivalent to the proposed Future Homes Standard (exceeding existing Part L Building Regulations) would also still be viable.

Notwithstanding the above, and in light of the Examiner's suggestions, we have further reviewed Policy SCC1 and suggest some alternative policy wording which we believe gives greater clarity around the policy intent for the development as a whole to achieve net zero carbon, but also builds in some greater flexibility where this is not possible to achieve because doing so would be economically unviable or technically unfeasible."

These are helpful points and I have accepted that, with some tweaks to the wording, Policy SCC1 can remain as a Neighbourhood Plan Policy. Whereas I might have further challenged the expectation of a specific "Energy Statement", I have noted that the draft Wiltshire Local Plan Review includes just such an approach and, although the Review has yet to be Examined, it is evident that the approach has local authority support. I also noted that such an open approach seemed to have significant support from within the housebuilders that responded to the consultations.

My conclusion on Policy SCC1 is therefore:

- The main, original thrust overconcentrated on process rather than land use policy.
- Given the national policy context, it is at this time not appropriate to oblige achievement of 'zero-carbon' development, whether by a single mechanism or combination of mechanisms, through a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Technical feasibility and financial viability should both feature as material considerations.
- The requirement that "New developments should not be connected to the gas grid" is beyond the scope of current, national policy or guidance.
- Accordingly, the Policy requires amendment before the Basic Conditions can be met.

Recommendation 5:

Under the heading "5. Sustainability & Climate Change":

5.1 In paragraph 5.5 replace "significantly" with 'beneficially'.

5.2 In paragraph 5.19 replace "achieve" with 'encourage' and add the following at the foot of the paragraph:

'The Policy does not require fabric energy efficiency standards that go beyond the minimum standards set out in Building Regulations. Its expectations can be satisfied as long as the development achieves net zero carbon in its regulated operational emissions overall, or future paths to net zero have been addressed'.

5.3 Delete paragraph 5.20 from "Carbon Offsetting" onwards as well as paragraph 5.21.

5.4 Reword Policy SCC1 as follows:

'Major development proposals for all new buildings will include an Energy Statement. This should demonstrate whether a development will achieve an annual operational net zero carbon emissions balance, by modelling each building's estimated regulated energy consumption and the site's overall renewable energy (electricity and heat) generation. A recognised industry calculation method should be used to calculate regulated energy

consumption. For all new dwellings this should be the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP). Numerical figures for both space heating demand and total regulated energy use should be provided in the Energy Statement. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified of any significant differences in the development's regulated energy consumption modelling data between planning application stage and building completion.

In seeking to achieve net zero carbon development, fabric energy efficiency should be prioritised as far as possible, in accordance with the Energy Hierarchy shown as Figure 5.1.

Where net zero carbon emissions are not being achieved through fabric energy efficiency, proposals will demonstrate the extent to which the remaining energy demand will be supplied from any of the following sources below, or it may be demonstrated that these are economically unviable or technically unfeasible (e.g. where there is an insurmountable constraint on grid capacity):

- a) renewable and/or low carbon heat supply (e.g. via connection to a low carbon district heating network where available and/or air or ground source heat pumps);*
- b) on-site renewable electricity generation (e.g. roof mounted or ground mounted solar photovoltaic); or*
- c) off-site renewable energy sources as part of an allowable solution, such as an approved community energy scheme or carbon offset fund, in agreement with the Local Planning Authority through a planning obligation.*

It should also be demonstrated that the development has been designed to, as far as possible, enable future occupiers to adopt low carbon technologies that it has not been possible to incorporate during construction (e.g. due to grid capacity constraints).'

As amended Policy SCC1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Sustainable Design and Construction

The NPPF supports the principle of sustainable design and construction: "Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions" (para 9) and "The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve" (para 131). As noted within the Neighbourhood Plan, Wiltshire Core Policy 41 is, in some respects, dated. My concern about Policy SCC2 is that, as with SCC1, it concentrates more on process than land-use-related content, which is what Neighbourhood Plans are expected to cover. It is unclear what present failing suggests that a separate "Sustainability Statement" document is required because, unless adopted also by Wiltshire Council, this document will not be part of the application validation checks when planning applications are submitted. Design and Access Statements already exist where design decisions are justified. The Qualifying Body responded that "Policy SCC2 is all about getting developers to reflect, through their Sustainability Statement, on the sustainability of their choices in designing and constructing buildings". I don't see any justification for a separate document to encourage this.

I further raised a concern that a pre-application submission is not presently a requirement, as is suggested in the Policy, although public consultation phases might be something of an equivalent. The Qualifying Body responded that "The intention of policy wording here is to try to help developers, making sure that they think about sustainable design and construction at the earliest stages possible" but they added "We would not object to the Examiner relocating the reference to encouraging submission of a Sustainability Statement at pre-application stage to the supporting text as opposed to the policy text"; I agree that is the appropriate approach.

I note that Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy already requires that all non-residential development is required to achieve the relevant BREEAM 'Excellent' standards from 2019. I agree, however, that it is worth including here for completeness.

Recommendation 6:

Under the heading "Sustainable Design and Construction":

6.1 Merge paragraphs 5.24 and 5.25 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly) to become:

'Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy encourages new development, building conversions, refurbishments and extensions to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand. Its reference to the Code for Sustainable Homes is now obsolete since the Code was abolished by the Government in 2015 and there is currently no replacement until such time as the Future Homes Standard is introduced in 2025. All non-residential development is required to achieve the relevant BREEAM 'Excellent' standards from 2019.'

6.2 Replace paragraph 5.27 with:

'Rather than focusing on different recognised building construction standards/ accreditations (which are useful but not always comparable with each other and can cover aspects unrelated to sustainable construction materials and techniques), Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC2 ensures a tighter focus on producing sustainable design, construction materials and construction methods on major development schemes. To that end it goes as far as possible towards ensuring the delivery of net zero carbon development in Chippenham through sustainable design and construction⁴³. The Design and Access Statement will be expected to cover all the aspects set out in Figure 5.2. Applicants are encouraged to present these details at pre-application consultations to ensure measures are incorporated early in the design process.'

6.3 Amend the title to Fig. 5.2 to read: 'Aspects to be addressed though Policy SCC2'.

6.4 Amend Policy SCC2 to read:

'Proposals for major developments will demonstrate optimised sustainability credentials in terms of a) design, b) construction materials and c) methods of construction, minimising or avoiding emissions and other environmental impacts.'

All major non-residential developments will be required to meet BREEAM 'Excellent' standard.'

As amended Policy SCC2 meets the Basic Conditions.

Standalone Renewable Energy

The NPPF says "Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning" (para 161). However, it is evident that Policy SCC3 falls short of identifying specific proposals. The Qualifying Body explained: "Not through want of trying, unfortunately Policy SCC3 was not as Chippenham specific as we had originally envisaged it might be".

The local authority has commented: "Officers feel there is a missed opportunity to address renewable energy that is not stand alone and be positive regarding large scale building mounted renewable energy. This would reduce the need for greenfield renewable energy projects in meeting climate change targets." This suggests that Policy SCC3 is not as balanced as it should be between sources of renewable energy. The Qualifying Body has commented: "we would not object to the Examiner adding reference to the support for building mounted renewable energy if he considered this necessary"; however, I feel that

would be a significant change that would need to have been part of the public consultations. Instead, some appropriate rewording of the Policy is required.

I asked the Qualifying Body what evidence suggests that there are sites/locations within the Neighbourhood Area that would be suitable for renewable energy installations. The Neighbourhood Plan notes (p17) that “Approximately two thirds of the Neighbourhood Area comprises of [sic] the town itself”, emphasises that agriculture is a valued local feature and that the landscape setting of Chippenham is of high quality. As a consequence, are significant installations a realistic prospect?’ The Qualifying Body referenced the ‘Wiltshire Renewable Energy Assessment’, which supports the Wiltshire Local Plan Review Regulation 19 Version. Figures 4.14-4.17 of this document provide maps showing the landscape sensitivity and technical potential for different scales of ground mounted solar pv installations across Wiltshire. Land to the south and west of Chippenham is mapped as having lesser landscape impact for small and medium sized installations. This evidence is helpful to establishing a fair potential for delivery of Policy SCC3.

Recommendation 7:

Amend Policy SCC3 as follows:

7.1 In the Policy pre-amble add ‘robustly’ before “demonstrated”.

7.2 Add two additional criteria (renumbering subsequent criteria accordingly) as follows:

‘a) The costs and benefits compare favourably with potentially less intrusive options, such as large scale building mounted renewable energy.

b) A comprehensive landscape impact assessment has been undertaken which has informed the proposals for the location of new infrastructure and all mitigation measures identified in that are implemented.’

7.3 Delete the existing criterion c) for want of clarity.

As amended Policy SCC3 meets the Basic Conditions.

6. Green and Blue Infrastructure

Biodiversity

The NPPF (para 180) says that “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment”. This commitment has been developed further through the Environment Act 2021. There is therefore in principle support for Policy G11. However, I expressed a concern to the Qualifying Body that the “retained” or “incorporated” format of the opening paragraph doesn’t work well; if there is no ancient tree or hedge these can neither be retained nor incorporated; existing areas of wildflowers might be retained as such rather than overplanted. Although tree planting is addressed in more detail later it would seem to be an odd omission from the listing here. Similarly bat habitats are mentioned in the preamble but consideration for them within the Policy is reduced to bat-boxes. The second paragraph of Policy G11 suggests that a planning proposal might be solely judged on its BNG proposals, which is not correct. In the third paragraph it is really not of interest that proposals “can provide” but rather that they ‘do provide’. The fourth paragraph should be positively worded, in line with the NPPF expectation (para 16). The Qualifying Body broadly agreed with these points and my Recommendations are derived from the email exchange.

Recommendation 8:

Amend Policy G11 as follows:

8.1 Replace the pre-amble sentence with the following:

‘Features of significant biodiversity value should be retained and enhanced as follows:’

8.2 Amend to the listing of features as follows:

- i) Retain ancient trees and hedgerows and/or trees and hedgerows of arboricultural value, additional planting should extend tree cover.*
- ii) Retain blue infrastructure and where sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are being created these should be multi-functional.*
- iii) Retain native plants and wildflower areas and extend through landscaping proposals.*
- iv) Protect bat habitats.*
- v) Incorporate into new construction:*
 - *Green/brown roofs (where appropriate)*
 - *Integrated bird and bat boxes*
 - *Swift bricks and bee bricks*
 - *13cm x 13cm holes in fencing for hedgehogs and other small mammals to pass through.*

*8.3 Replace the first sentence of the second paragraph with:
 'Major development proposals must demonstrate a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10%, secured for at least 30 years. Proposals are encouraged to deliver in excess of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.'*

8.4 In the third paragraph replace "can provide" with 'provide'.

*8.5 Replace the fourth paragraph with:
 'Accreditation of proposals as meeting Building with Nature standards will greatly assist their assessment against this Policy'.*

As amended Policy G11 meets the Basic Conditions.

Local Green Spaces

In my Initial Enquiries I expressed a concern to the Qualifying Body that insufficient attention had been given to the expectation, made clear in the NPPF criteria, that each Local Green Spaces is "*demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance*" [*my emphases added*]. Identifying a green space that "is valued by the local community and is worthy of protection" [as stated in the Plan] falls short of the NPPF criteria. Valued green spaces can be recognised for retention by other policy means (eg as incidental open space) but affording protection equivalent to that for a Green Belt is a significant protection reserved for significant spaces. The Qualifying Body responded that an extensive and thorough examination of the proposed Local Green Spaces, as evidenced in the supporting papers, had been undertaken and endorsed through community consultation. However, my initial concern about areas not fully meeting the NPPF criteria was borne out through my visit to the Neighbourhood Area. I identified a significant number of areas that are of no "particular local significance", and generally this is acknowledged within the Qualifying Body's tabulation. The Qualifying Body responded that their understanding of paragraph 101 of the NPPF [now amended to paragraph 106 in the latest revision] is that it is for the local community to judge whether an area is of 'particular local significance' to them. But the NPPF says that this must "demonstrably" be so – and the evidence presented, including the viewing of each site, showed only that some sites are of general, rather than "particular" local significance.

There were two specific cases where I was urged to reconsider my initial conclusion: LGS WW: My conclusion after my visit was that the area WW is indistinguishable from the adjacent agricultural fields and has no identifiable "particular local significance". The Qualifying Body responded that LGS WW is distinguishable from the adjacent agricultural fields by virtue of its clearly defined boundaries; but I do not assess those boundaries, including field hedgerows, as enclosing a space distinguishable by any further significance

than the adjacent fields, which have the same wildlife value, recreational value and beauty and tranquillity as open fields in general.

LGS SS: My conclusion after my visit was that area SS was, in common with a number of other areas, a straightforward amenity space with no “particular local significance”. The Qualifying Body responded that “Appendix S of the Consultation Statement explains that it ‘has a parkland character with manmade undulating topography interspersed with mature trees, and contains a children’s play area and adjacent community centre.’ Unlike some of the other smaller LGS the larger size of LGS SS and its varied topography suggests that it is not ‘left over land’ or was designed to provide amenity for surrounding residents (most houses do not front on to it) but designed with the intent to provide recreation space for local residents.” As I had already given a commitment to give the benefit of the doubt to areas with varied topography, I accept that there are some features within area SS that distinguish it from other areas of no particular character (although the fact that it is “adjacent” to a community centre is not relevant to the space itself).

I noted that several allotment areas are proposed for designation. It was not identified in the supporting material whether these are or are not statutory allotments. - where they are, they might be considered sufficiently well protected in law without the need for LGS designation. The Qualifying Body responded that “the Town Council manages all of the allotment sites proposed for LGS designation. Therefore, it is assumed that these are ‘statutory allotments’.” But that is not a correct assumption, hence I have left the allotment spaces for designation.

There are a couple of areas where substantial buildings have been included within the proposed area for designation. In the case of D the church building needs to be omitted; in the case of S the buildings are a large part of a distinct sub-area which therefore should be omitted as a whole. The Qualifying Body agreed that such amendments should be made.

In relation to the wording of the last paragraph of Policy GI2, development within a Green Belt is required to demonstrate very special circumstances but not “required to enhance [its] role and function”.

Recommendation 9:

Under the heading “Local Green Spaces”:

9.1 Move paragraph 6.37, the related photo and its caption on page 53 to follow paragraph 6.42; amend paragraph 6.37 to read as follows:

‘Where a green space does not meet the criteria for Local Green Space designation but the space is integral to the functioning of the residential area in which it is located, Policy GI3 (Green Amenity Areas) recognises these generally smaller green spaces, which can be just as much valued by the community that live within the immediate vicinity. Figure 6.2 identifies the Green Amenity Areas in Chippenham, with larger scale maps for each Green Amenity Area contained within Annexe 5.’

9.2 Amend Policy GI2 and the related Figure 6.2 as follows:

9.2.1 Add to the title for Figure 6.2: ‘Each Local Green Space has a more detailed map in Annexe 5’ [the renumbered Appendix 9].

9.2.2 Remove from the Policy list and amend the key for and the numbering of the following spaces on the map, and in the new Annexe, all except WW to become ‘Green Amenity Areas’ (and amend the remaining Local Green Spaces to a sequential numbering on the map and Policy List and in the new Annexe): F, G, H, J, L, O, P, Q, T, U, W, Z, AA, BB, GG, KK, LL, PP, RR., VV, WW.

9.2.3 From Figure 6.2 and the related maps in Annexe 5, remove the footprint of the Church from space D, and from space S remove the whole of the sub-space that is dominated by buildings.

9.2.4 From the last paragraph of Policy GI2, delete “and will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of that Local Green Space.”

9.3 Create a new Policy GI3 (and renumber subsequent Policies accordingly) as follows: ‘The areas listed below and identified on Figure 6.2 are recognised as Green Amenity Areas which are integral to the functioning of the residential areas in which they are located and should be retained. Proposals to improve the amenity and recreational value of these areas are supported in principle.’

[list here the following areas appropriately renumbered: F, G, H, J, L, O, P, Q, T, U, W, Z, AA, BB, GG, KK, LL, PP, RR., VV.]

As amended Policies GI2 the new GI3 meet the Basic Conditions.

Green Corridors

The NPPF says *inter alia* (para 185): “To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should: a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks”; which confirms that the approach to Policy GI3 is appropriate. However, by their nature, the “strategic” corridors which form part of the Policy are not capable of being defined with exact boundaries; their strategic nature should be indicated by double-ended, hollow arrows each equal in scale, indicating diagrammatically that individual spaces are or can be linked in various ways to form a nature corridor. These arrows should be numbered to match the listing within the related Policy. Although it is suggested in paragraph 6.49 that the corridors extend beyond the Neighbourhood Area boundary, the illustrative arrows should not. Beneath these arrows, green colouring should be extended to all currently recognised open spaces, including the river flood zone as recreation space, but not including agricultural spaces in general. The Qualifying Body has expressed a concern about lack of precision and a cluttered map – but, as they have acknowledged, “the Topic Paper does not specifically explain the approach taken by the Topic Group with regard to drawing boundaries of the corridors” and therefore the result is false precision.

I further noted that the wording of the Policy is awkward where it refers to “Neighbourhood” Green Corridors where, I surmised, the meaning is different from the ‘Neighbourhood’ in Neighbourhood Plan. The Qualifying Body agreed that the wording should be simplified to ‘Green Corridors’.

For practicality in use, I suggest that Figure 6.3 is moved to be adjacent to Policy GI3.

Recommendation 10:

Under the heading “Green Corridors”:

10.1 Amend Figure 6.3 as follows:

10.1.1 Delete the yellow shading but instead use green shading where the land is currently recognised open spaces, including the river flood zone as recreation space, but not including agricultural spaces in general.

10.1.2 Indicate diagrammatically the strategic corridors using double-headed, hollow arrows each equal in scale; number these corridors to match the numbers in Policy GI3; don’t extend the arrows beyond the Neighbourhood Area boundary.

10.1.3 Amend the map key to show the green shading as ‘Green Corridors’ and replace the yellow shading with an illustrative arrow.

10.1.4 Move Figure 6.3 to be adjacent to Policy GI3.

10.2 In paragraph 6.54 replace “Neighbourhood Green Corridors” with ‘Green Corridors’.

10.3 Within Policy GI3 - now renumbered as GI4:

10.3.1 In the second paragraph replace “remain intact, allowing” with ‘allow’.

10.3.2 In the third paragraph remove “Neighbourhood”.

10.3.3 From the fifth paragraph remove the heading “All Green Corridors”.

As renumbered and amended Policy GI4 meets the Basic Conditions.

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

The NPPF (para 180) says: “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:.....b) 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”. The approach to Policy GI4 is therefore appropriate. However, I commented to the Qualifying Body that I could not see proportionate evidence that provides a justification for a uniform 20m buffer zone around any and all tree groups and new buildings, especially when gardens are to be incorporated with the buildings not the buffer. I noted that the Qualifying Body’s suggested reduction to 15m, as a guide, would be in line with 2022 advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission. I also noted that the wording of part of the Policy overall requires, appropriately, that the developer should consider separations with care. In response the Qualifying Body, pointed to the evidence for a 20m buffer as set out in Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD (2018) (Box B6) produced by Basingstoke and Deane District Council, but that has a different context and is neither Wiltshire policy nor national policy or guidance.

I note that the purpose of the accompanying “Tree Planting *Guide*” is to offer *advice*, and on that basis the use of an example justified in an unrelated context may be acceptable. However, some guidance (eg about where to plant on existing estates) appears to be in the supporting text to the Policy rather than the Guide itself. The Qualifying Body expressed a concern that the issues might be lost/have less impact within the Guide, but since the Guide is referenced within the Policy it should actually have more impact.

I commented to the Qualifying Body that, since only one of the Wards listed presently achieves the 20% canopy cover, it seems a stretch to suggest that “This target of 20% tree canopy cover on new development sites is considered to be realistic and achievable for Chippenham”. The Qualifying Body had noted that ‘Green Infrastructure Standards for England’ (Natural England 2023) paragraph 6.11 advises that on an area wide basis “Urban Tree Canopy Cover is increased by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints.” It seems that the 20% figure is led more by a perceived target than opportunities and constraints. However, I note that it is accepted that alternative approaches may be required for practicality and, it has been conceded in the Qualifying Body’s comments on representations, viability. The Qualifying Body understood the concerns with regard to different sites starting at different baselines in terms of existing tree canopy cover and suggested instead using an alternative approach, which would be to increase the existing tree canopy cover figure by 6% on development sites of 0.5ha or more to move toward an average cover of 20% for Chippenham.

I further noted that it doesn't seem to be explained in the "Tree Planting Guide" how the canopy cover should be measured for immature planting nor how 'equivalence' in benefit might be measured between tree canopy and other green measures. The Qualifying Body agreed that the Guide should include information on calculating existing and future tree canopy cover on a development site, and set out what would be 'equivalent benefit' (e.g. species rich grassland, hedgerows, green roofs) in exceptional circumstances. The Qualifying Body suggested referencing 'Measure Existing Canopy' and 'New Tree Planting' in the Canopy Cover Assessment Guidance by Colchester City Council - <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/canopy-cover-assessment/>

Recommendation 11:

Under the heading "Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows":

11.1 In paragraph 6.68 replace the last sentence with:

'This target of 20% tree canopy cover on new development sites provides the basis for the expectation in Policy GI4.'

11.2 In paragraph 6.70 replace the last sentence with:

'For these reasons Policy GI4 requires developers to consider separation with care and, as a guide, expects a buffer of at least 15m between the edge of the woodland/tree belt and the development to provide a naturally graded edge to the woodland.'

11.3 In paragraph 6.73 replace "specify" with 'guide'.

11.4 Within Policy GI4 – now renumbered as GI5:

11.4.1 Replace the second paragraph with:

'Development proposals must consider with care the separation between construction and the edge of a woodland or tree belt and it must be satisfactorily demonstrated, through the detailed design process, that the proposal would have no adverse impacts on trees, ecology, people, or property. A buffer zone of at least 15m, consisting of semi-natural habitat, is considered appropriate between new construction and woodland.'

11.4.2 In the third paragraph replace "Development will be supported that takes the opportunities to:" with 'Development proposals should, appropriately to their scale':.

11.4.3 Replace the content after the heading "Tree Canopy Cover" with:

'Development proposals on sites outside of the town centre and greater than 0.5 ha in size should demonstrate an increase in site tree canopy cover of at least 6%. This will principally be achieved through planting of additional and replacement trees, but where it can be demonstrated that this is impractical, the use of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs) can be used to deliver equivalent benefit. On residential development sites, some of this tree canopy cover will be expected to be met through incorporation of new trees within rear gardens. Reference should be made to the advice set out in the Tree Planting Guide (Annexe 4).'

As renumbered and amended Policy GI5 meets the Basic Conditions.

Green Buffers

This section appears misnamed since only a single buffer is referenced.

Whilst Green Buffers are not specifically mentioned in the NPPF, the principle of protecting the countryside with Green Belts is well established (NPPF section 13). The local authority had noted that: "The area identified [within Policy GI5] is within the CSAP {Chippenham Sita Allocations Plan} Policy CH2 Rawlings Green strategic site allocation and is part of an area specifically identified as a country park. The policy requirements include submitting a

Landscape Visual Impact Assessment. CSAP Policy CH3 Chippenham Riverside Country Parks for which the primary aim is to improve access to and enjoyment of the countryside.” The local authority has further noted that “The CNP [Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan] should only shape and direct development that is outside of strategic policies (NPPF paragraph 13)”. The Qualifying Body however argued that “we consider Policy GI5 would both be in conformity with, and would strengthen, Local Plan policy in the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan”. My judgement, informed by a visit to the location covered by the proposed policy, is that the CSAP Policy, which is expected to be sustained within the Local Plan Review, would not be “strengthened”, and indeed might be weakened, through confusion arising from differences in boundaries and reasoning referenced in the CSAP and the Neighbourhood Plan.

In reaching this conclusion I addressed the Appeal referenced to me by the Qualifying Body - 230 houses on land at Barrow Farm (APP/Y3940/W/22/3309170). The Qualifying Body’s concern was for “the resulting loss of some of the open countryside between Chippenham and Langley Burrell”. But it is evident that the Inspector gave significant weight to existing policies on the countryside and the separation, whilst ultimately concluding that the tilted planning balance favoured development. Changes introduced with the NPPF December 2023 revision are likely to be of greater value than confusion around already well-stated strategic policies.

Recommendation 12:

Delete Policy GI5 and its related text.

7. Housing

The NPPF (para 60) acknowledges that “The overall aim [for plans] should be to meet as much of an area’s identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community”.

Because paragraph 7.3 had become dated with more recent figures presently available I invited the Qualifying Body to provide a revised draft and my Recommendation is based on that. I also noted to the Qualifying Body that, since the NPPF expects positive planning (paragraph 16), the final assertion in paragraph 7.4 is inappropriate and they agreed to a deletion.

Housing Mix and Types

There have been numerous challenges to the adequacy of the research behind the figures included within Policy H1. I agree with the Qualifying Body that there is no evidence to suggest that other current data might be considered any more reliable, but it must be accepted that the figures provided are a starting guide, not absolutes. Over time the research will inevitably become outdated and that must be acknowledged. The second paragraph of the Policy needs to apply to both sets of figures, mix and types, and the wording improved – it presently requires evidence of evidence. For example, “updated evidence of local need” might be replaced with ‘changes in local need’. The Qualifying Body agreed that the wording should be amended.

The local authority has requested that the different affordable housing tenures are expressed as a percentage of the affordable housing rather than as a percentage of the total housing as these percentages can then be applied in situations where (in accordance with policy) the affordable housing requirement is reduced e.g., through an agreed viability appraisal or Vacant Buildings Credit. The local authority has also requested that the unit size mix should not be specified for the affordable housing units as this varies on a site-by-site basis and is informed by current demonstrable need. However, I think it reasonable for the Policy to state figures as a starting point for discussion whilst the Policy (at the outset) should acknowledge the interests of the local authority in addressing demonstrable needs.

Housing Design

In effect the Annexe 1 Design Guide document is an integral part of the Policy and therefore part of the material to be Examined. The Design Guide appears to have an unresolved tension between ensuring that “new housing both assimilates with, and complements, existing housing” (p7) whilst expecting that new development will have “uniqueness” (p 25), “design uniformity” (the exemplars) and “Natural and high quality reconstituted stone as a defining feature throughout new development” (p56). Whilst it is inevitable that much of the content is generic, local examples are used helpfully and doubtless the process of producing the document will have been helpful for people thinking through the design process. The Qualifying Body responded with a clarification that could helpfully be added to the text early in the Guide section.

There are also a number of wording issues:

- P26: In the box headed “Masterplanning” the last line (“The Guide applies equally to smaller windfall developments in the Neighbourhood Plan period”) appears misplaced since smaller sites would not be masterplanned. The Qualifying Body agreed that this last sentence should be deleted.
- P27: I note that the Qualifying Body has already agreed that element 9 is to be amended to add ‘generally’ to the suggested block height restriction. Element 11 on this page reads “School provision is to be considered by the local authority” but I believe “by” should read ‘with’. The Qualifying Body agreed that ‘by’ should read ‘with’.
- P34: The comma in this sentence results in a different meaning from that which was probably intended: “A limited number of public car parking spaces, with electric vehicle charging”. The Qualifying Body agreed that the comma should be deleted.
- P44: There is no source reference detail provided for LTN 1/20. Also, at the foot of that page it is said that: “there should be a presumption in favour of providing a densely spaced network” but, in context, it is very unclear what this might mean. The Qualifying Body provided the appropriate reference details and agreed that the last sentence of Paragraph F5, referring to a ‘densely spaced network’ does not add anything further to the first sentence and could be deleted.
- With regard to point d) of Paragraph F8, the Qualifying Body agreed this could be amended to say ‘On new bus routes there should be sufficient carriageway width...’
- P46: A picture captions says: “New housing development should deliver frequent bus services” but again that is beyond the capability of a developer to ensure. New development may provide a customer density that is more attractive to bus service providers. The Qualifying Body agreed that the caption should be amended.
- P49: The note that “New housing development will be expected to comply with the standards and provisions of that policy” is incorrect since the Policy provides guidelines. The Qualifying Body suggested that reference to ‘standards’ be deleted from this sentence.
- P50 (and also P55): These elements are not appropriate for a “Design Guide” –
a. Energy generation which shall meet all or most of the demand created.
b. Battery storage on each estate that has sufficient capacity to retain unused locally generated energy for later use by residents. This can either be within individual dwellings or for groups of dwellings.” These are prescriptive as to energy infrastructure without evidence of viability. The Qualifying Body suggest merging point a. and b. to simply state ‘a. Renewable energy installation(s)’.
- P55: “The land shall be kept in a tidy and pleasant state until take-up and be capable of being connected to necessary utilities. The use class of the land will be expected to remain as such in the future” – these are not design matters and are unlikely to be matters within the control of the developer after the building/site has been sold on. The Qualifying Body agreed to deleting this text.

- P56: Although it has been associated with NPPF content, this expectation goes significantly beyond what the NPPF says: “The design of schemes should be architect-led from conception through to construction to ensure that what is delivered on site is not ‘dumbed down’ or value engineered.” The Qualifying Body accepted the deletion of reference to schemes being architect-led from conception to construction, but also suggested a more positive phrase reiterating what is in Planning Practice Guidance on Design: Process and Tools (Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 26-015-20191001).
- P56: “Blank side elevations on to the public realm will not be acceptable” is prescription, not guidance. The Qualifying Body suggested a less prescriptive amendment.
- P58: Paragraph K10 seems to overstate and confuse the content of Policy SCC2 without adding any guidance on the practicalities of sourcing and reusing materials in a design context (although the illustrations are partially helpful). The term “Not using the material” is particularly puzzling. The Qualifying Body suggested deletions plus the addition of a reference for sourcing and reusing materials.
- P59: Paragraph L4 includes the phrase “Departures will only be allowed where ...” but the Plan cannot prejudice future planning decisions in that way. The phraseology needs to be along the lines of ‘Any proposals to depart from the approved Masterplan should demonstrate’

Policy H2 contains a reference to “Building for a Healthy Life” for which a footnote source reference is needed.

Recommendation 13:

Under the heading “7. Housing”:

13.1 Reword paragraph 7.3 as follows:

‘The Wiltshire Local Plan Review (Pre-Submission Draft, September 2023) indicates that the emerging strategy for 2020–2038 for Chippenham has an overall housing requirement of 5850 dwellings, which, after accounting for existing allocations, completions and permissions, would leave a residual requirement of 2090 dwellings to plan for.⁸⁰ In addition to this, a ‘neighbourhood area designation’ requirement of 200 dwellings is given for Chippenham.’

13.2 Within paragraph 7.4 delete “and less by speculative market demand”.

13.3 Within Policy H1:

13.3.1 Move the second paragraph to become the first and reword as follows:

‘Individual site circumstances, changes in local need and local authority priorities or achieving development viability may dictate variations from the guide figures below, in which case proportionate evidence shall be submitted to justify each variation.’

13.3.2 In the new second paragraph amend the tabulation to show:

‘Market Housing 60%

Affordable Housing 40% within which:

- *70% affordable housing for rent*
- *25% First Homes*
- *5% shared ownership’*

13.3.3 In the fourth paragraph replace “10” with ‘some’.

13.4 Within Annexe 1 Chippenham Design Guide:

13.4.1 On page 25 add a new paragraph 2 as follows (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly):

'On smaller sites/infill/Conservation Area, new housing should be designed to assimilate with existing housing. However, on larger sites or those which have few positive qualities to draw upon (e.g. greenfield sites) a contemporary approach should be taken and a new identity for the development centred around future sustainable lifestyles could be sought. In either scenario, natural and high-quality reconstituted stone is recommended as the defining local material.'

13.4.2 On page 26 in the box headed "Masterplanning" delete the last line: "The Guide applies equally to smaller windfall developments in the Neighbourhood Plan period".

13.4.3 On page 27 in element 9 add 'generally' to the suggested block height restriction; in element 11 in the sentence "School provision is to be considered by the local authority" replace "by" with 'with'.

13.4.4 On page 34 delete the comma in the phrase "A limited number of public car parking spaces, with electric vehicle charging".

13.4.5 On page 44:

13.4.5.1 Provide the source reference for LTN 1/20:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120

13.4.5.2 Delete the last sentence of Paragraph F5, referring to a 'densely spaced network'.

13.4.5.3 With regard to point d) of Paragraph F8, amend to 'On new bus routes there should be sufficient carriageway width to allow buses travelling in opposite directions to pass each other without needing to give way.'

13.4.6 On page 46 amend the picture caption to: 'New housing development should aim to deliver bus services which connect to key public transport hubs such as Chippenham Railway Station.'

13.4.7 On page 49 amend the note that "New housing development will be expected to comply with the standards and provisions of that policy" by deleting "standards and".

13.4.8 On page 50 (and also page 55): Merge the elements:

"a. Energy generation which shall meet all or most of the demand created.

b. Battery storage on each estate that has sufficient capacity to retain unused locally generated energy for later use by residents. This can either be within individual dwellings or for groups of dwellings." To become a new a. as follows:

'Renewable energy installation(s)'.

13.4.9 On page 55 delete: "The land shall be kept in a tidy and pleasant state until take-up and be capable of being connected to necessary utilities. The use class of the land will be expected to remain as such in the future."

13.4.10 On page 56:

13.4.10.1 Replace the last sentence of K1 with: 'It is important that design quality is not diminished as a permission is implemented, amended, or through discharge of conditions.'

13.4.10.2 Replace the last sentence of K8 with: 'Blank side elevations on to the public realm should be avoided and houses should properly turn corners

with active frontages on to the public realm including at least two significant 'habitable' room openings at ground and first floor.'

13.4.11 On page 58 within K10 retain only the first sentence and add a footnote reference to: <https://relondon.gov.uk/resources/guide-sourcing-reclaimed-construction-materials>

13.4.12 On page 59 within L4 replace the second sentence with: 'Any proposals to depart from the approved Masterplan should demonstrate that the original proposal is no longer deliverable or that a better and more sustainable solution is offered.'

13.5 Within Policy H2 for the reference to "Building for a Healthy Life" provide a footnote source reference: www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/building-healthy-life

As amended Policies H1 & H2 meet the Basic Conditions.

8. Town Centre

Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site

The NPPF says (paragraph 90) "Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation." This is reflected in Policy TC1. However, I expressed to the Qualifying Body a concern that confusion arises from separating Design Principles – which sit outside of the Policy – from the commentary on the "design parameters" illustrated in Figure 8.2 which makes up the body of Policy TC1. The local authority also expressed a view that less prescription may be appropriate "otherwise the site may never be developed thereby remaining a detrimental gateway to the town and Conservation Area". The Qualifying Body agreed that the Policy must acknowledge the need for some flexibility in assuring the viability of the development scheme. My Recommendations are that the Design Principles become the Policy content and the Policy content – which is essentially a Design Brief – becomes an Annex to the Plan, from where it can provide the basis for discussion with interested parties (perhaps through the Chippenham One Plan) rather than a rigid set of requirements. The Policy approach would be consistent with that for the Green Corridor.

The local authority has noted that the final sentence of paragraph 8.14 refers to the "wider secondary retail frontage area", identified in the Wiltshire Retail Study 2020. In line with the NPPF 2021, the emerging Local Plan identifies the town centre and primary shopping area boundaries. Officers recommend that the final sentence be amended to refer instead to the "defined town centre boundary", as identified in the emerging Local Plan.

Recommendation 14:

Under the heading "8. Town Centre":

14.1 In paragraph 8.14 amend the final sentence to replace "wider secondary retail frontage area" with 'defined town centre boundary'.

14.2 Create a new Annex 6 and remove the 12 elements of Policy TC1 and related Figure 8.2 to that with a new introduction of: 'As a basis for discussion with prospective developers the following Design Brief parameters suggest ways in which the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site might successfully be developed for the benefit of Chippenham Town Centre, subject to viability assessments.' Amend the following:

14.2.1 Amend the key to the Figure to remove references to Policy TC1.

14.2.2 Amend element 9 of the Brief to read: 'Provide a pedestrian link from the site to The Bridge'.

14.3 Move the content of the Design Principles box to sit under the introductory sentence in Policy TC1. Amend the following:

14.3.1 Replace Figure 8.2 with a simplified map showing in outline the two areas referenced in the title and removing the “Proposed” element of the key.

14.3.2 In the introductory sentence of Policy TC1 replace “in accordance with the General Design Principles for the Site and the following parameters as shown on Figure 8.2” with ‘in accordance with the following General Design Principles for the Site and having regard to the exemplar Design Brief parameters as shown at Annexe 2’.

14.3.3 Within the Design Principles merge L, M & N under new introductory words as follows: ‘Achieve a biodiversity net gain and:’.

14.3.4 Revise paragraphs 8.38 and 8.39 to appropriately reference the Annexe 2 for the content of the Brief parameters.

As amended Policy TC1 meets the Basic Conditions.

River-Green Corridor Masterplan

I note that Core Policy 9 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy refers to the River Avon Corridor being enhanced for leisure and recreation uses in an environmentally sensitive manner and developed as an attractive cycle/pedestrian route connecting the town centre with the wider green and blue infrastructure network, whilst conserving and enhancing its role as a wildlife corridor. The inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan of Policy TC2 is therefore appropriate in principle.

As with Policy TC1, Policy TC2 is divided into two sections, but TC2 identifies “objectives” and “design principles”. Again, it is unclear what purpose this separation is intended to serve, not least because there is some overlap and duplication. The Qualifying Body indicated that it would be happy for the ‘objectives’ and ‘design principles’ to be amalgamated into a single set. The Qualifying Body also acknowledged the need for wording changes, mainly in response to queries raised in representations.

The local authority has highlighted that flood maps indicate the flood risk to the area from the Avon. Officers recommend it would be prudent to also require that any development facing the river not only provides a pleasing backdrop for the river but integrates flood resistance and resilience measures within its construction. I note that the local authority has also requested that the reference to the Olympiad Leisure Centre be simplified to refer to the existing building being demolished and rebuilt sympathetically to the parkland setting and to the possibility of alternative provision being provided elsewhere within the town. Since the Qualifying Body is resistant to the latter alternative and it has not been the subject of consultation my Recommendations do not include that option.

Recommendation 15:

Reword Policy TC2 as follows bringing the annotation of Figure 8.3 into line with the Policy numbering:

‘Development proposals in the River-Green Corridor area will be supported where they accord with the Masterplan shown on Figure 8.3 and demonstrate regard, subject to overall viability assessments, to the following Design Principles:

A. Proposals must enhance the River Avon corridor as a defining connecting feature in the revitalisation of Chippenham Town Centre whilst recognising the environmental sensitivity of the River Avon Strategic Green Corridor and achieving a biodiversity net gain.

B. All development proposals on the River Avon frontage, or public/semi-public spaces with a functional connection to the River Avon, should demonstrate:

- i) active frontages;*
- ii) through photo-visuals, that the frontages, including any balconies and terraces, are of the highest quality design and will provide a pleasing backdrop for the River when viewed from the opposite bank;*
- iii) that flood resistance and resilience measures are integrated within the construction although any walls facing the river frontage should, where feasible, allow the development behind to be viewed from the opposite bank;*
- iv) improved pedestrian and cycle routes alongside the River between the Town Bridge and Gladstone Road, including, subject to feasibility, re-routing or improving the Avon Path to limit the risk from flooding and provide year-round access in the vicinity of Gladstone Road Bridge.*

C. In relation to Town Bridge development proposals should:

- i) consider replacement of the Town Bridge with a new bridge which enhances the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area;*
- ii) provide means to help wildlife to move over, under or through the Town Bridge, such as a wildlife underpass and/or improved landscaping of banks;*
- iii) examine the feasibility of providing shared space on the Town Bridge to improve the pedestrian experience and public realm.*

D. Proposals to redevelop Emery Gate Shopping Centre, should

- i) remain within its existing curtilage, with existing High Street facades retained, and with uses that continue to underpin the vitality and viability of the Town Centre;*
- ii) include predominantly for uses in Class E on the ground floor facing on to the River;*
- iii) retain a public car parking area located and designed to ensure that it is not visible from Monkton Park or, as far as practicable, from other surrounding areas of public domain;*
- iv) relocate the current vehicular access to the car park/service yard from the Town Bridge in order to resolve the traffic pinch point and improve public realm/access for pedestrians to Monkton Park.*

E. The inclusion at the north end of the High Street of a 2–3 storey high, quality landmark building in Bath Stone with active street and river frontages.

F. The riverside downstream of Gladstone Road to be enhanced for biodiversity, whilst providing attractive open space for the community to enjoy.

G. Replacement or removal of the radial gate weir in a manner that improves biodiversity and reduces flood risk; opportunities to provide renewable energy at any replacement weir structure should be embraced.

H. The creation of section(s) of level public access to the River within Monkton Park.

I. Retention of the Olympiad site for public indoor sport, recreation or fitness uses. Any new building fronting onto Monkton Park to be designed to be sympathetic to the parkland setting and to enhance the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area.'

As amended Policy TC2 meets the Basic Conditions.

Public Realm Improvements to Upper Market Place

The NPPF supports policies such as Policy TC3: "Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most

at risk through neglect, decay or other threats” (para 196). A concern I expressed to the Qualifying Body was about the feasibility of these proposals; this consideration needs to be added to the Policy wording.

Recommendation 16:

Within Policy TC3 in the opening sentence replace “which has been” with ‘and open feasibility assessments which have been’

As amended Policy TC3 meets the Basic Conditions.

Development within Chippenham Conservation Area

As noted above, the NPPF (para 196) supports positive strategies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including Conservation Areas. However, unlike the legislation that protects Listed Buildings, there is no legislative protection for the “setting” of Conservation Areas. Since Policy TC4 is about development *within* the Conservation Area itself, reference to the setting is in any case inappropriate.

Paragraph 1 of Policy TC4 references the “Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal” and elements (e) & (f) refer to the 2010 “Conservation Area Management Plan SPG”. Clearly there is a significant interdependence between these two documents, and it would appear that Wiltshire Council is satisfied that the two documents interlock satisfactorily. However there needs to be a source reference for the Management Plan SPG in the Character Appraisal.

Recommendation 17:

Under the heading “Development within Chippenham Conservation Area”:

17.1 Within Policy TC4 remove reference to the “setting of” Chippenham Conservation Area from the first and second paragraphs.

17.2 Within the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal provide a footnote reference for the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG.

As amended Policy TC4 meets the Basic Conditions.

Buildings of Local Merit

The NPPF (para 195) recognises that “Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites”. It is therefore appropriate that local knowledge is used to identify buildings of local historic value. These have been identified after an appropriate evaluation of their merits.

However, I note that in paragraph 8.87 it is suggested that the selected buildings are “locally listed” but that is a separate category of heritage asset and therefore the use of the term here will give rise to confusion. Whilst I note that there is a supporting document “Buildings of Local Merit Topic Paper”, I believe that the understanding of the Policy would benefit from an adjacent map/Figure locating the properties now selected for recognition. I also note that the list must now be reduced by deleting the now lost property (b).

Recommendation 18:

Under the heading “Buildings of Local Merit”:

18.1 In paragraph 8.87 replace “as ‘locally listed’ or being important non-designated heritage assets” with ‘locally important non-designated heritage assets’.

18.2 Provide an additional Figure (and alter the numbering of subsequent Figures accordingly) mapping the location of the properties now listed for recognition.

18.3 Within Policy TC5 delete property “b. Former Chippenham District County Technical and Secondary School, Cocklebury Road”.

As amended Policy TC5 meets the Basic Conditions.

Design of Shopfronts and Advertisements

The encouragement of design guidance is a particular feature of the new NPPF (para 134) and Policy TC6 references an associated Design Guide at Annexe 3. Since the related guidance document doesn't use “Advertisements” in its title and since advertisements are not being considered in general, just on shopfronts, it would be more appropriate to delete the “and Advertisements” from the title.

Since applicants would need to ‘demonstrate’ regard for Guidance, that would be the more appropriate wording for the Policy.

The Guide benefits greatly from the generous use of illustrations. However, it is a Guide and therefore the use of “will not be permitted” or a variant, is not appropriate. Planning decisions will be taken by the local planning authority and must balance a number of relevant factors; the Guide provides a basis of reasoning for decisions made case-by-case.

Recommendation 19:

19.1 Within the heading “Design of Shopfronts and Advertisements” remove “and Advertisements”.

19.2 Within Policy TC6 replace “must have” with ‘must demonstrate’.

19.3 Within the related Annexe 3 remove and replace as appropriate the words “will not be permitted” and variants of these.

As amended Policy TC6 meets the Basic Conditions.

9. Transport

Provision and Enhancement of Cycle Paths

The local authority has noted that in paragraph 9.2 the second to last sentence should be amended to clarify that developers must contribute to links outside a site. i.e., “...that safe and effective infrastructure for cycling and walking is incorporated within new development and developers improve links to key facilities outside the site through developer contributions.” This would mean the last sentence is then not needed and could be deleted. The local authority also recommends that paragraphs 9.7 and 9.8 be deleted are no longer necessary because LTN1/20 now says there should be no further shared use routes. It is also suggested that Paragraph 9.10 could be better worded to follow on from 9.9 i.e., “separate walking, cycling and vehicle routes are necessary when traffic speeds and volumes are higher. New shared-use paths will not generally be acceptable anymore, separate cycling and walking routes must be provided.” The local authority has further suggested that the last sentence of paragraph 9.15 could be amended to better reflect the up-to-date position.

The NPPF says that “Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals” (para 108). Within Policy T1 it is unclear to me why the qualifying terms “majority” in paragraph 1 and “particularly those for strategic housing sites” in paragraph 3 are needed. They tend to add less clarity than more clarity and the context does not seem to be explained in the pre-amble. The Qualifying Body explained that the term ‘majority of major development proposals’ was used in case there were any small-scale major developments, of 10 houses for example, where it may be considered unreasonable to have to prepare a cycling scheme. This can be addressed more straightforwardly.

As far as is reasonable, Policies need to be self-contained, so that they can readily be quoted in other documents, and therefore the reference to Appendix 22 should be omitted in favour of the earlier reference in the pre-amble.

Recommendation 20:

Under the heading “Transport”:

20.1 Within paragraph 9.2 replace the second to last sentence with the following:

‘In order to retain this momentum and shift to sustainable transport modes, and reduce the effects of climate change more rapidly, it is essential that safe and effective infrastructure for cycling and walking is incorporated within new development and developers improve links to key facilities outside the site through developer contributions.’; delete the final sentence.

20.2 Delete paragraphs 9.7 and 9.8 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly).

20.3 Amend paragraph 9.10 as follows:

‘Separate walking, cycling and vehicle routes are necessary when traffic speeds and volumes are higher. New shared-use paths will not generally be acceptable anymore, separate cycling and walking routes must be provided.’

20.4 Replace the last sentence of paragraph 9.15 as follows:

‘The work by CCNDG has fed into the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Chippenham. This is nearly complete, and Wiltshire Council will use it to bid for funding to improve infrastructure’.

20.5 Amend Policy T1 as follows:

20.5.1 In the first paragraph delete “large scale major development proposals, and the majority of”.

20.5.2 In the third paragraph delete “particularly those for strategic housing sites”.

20.5.3 In the final paragraph replace “will require” with ‘will be expected to make’; delete “and set out in more detail in Appendix 22 – High Priority Improvements to the Cycle Network”.

As amended Policy T1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Access to the Bus Network

It is not the function of a land-use plan to “strongly support[s] electric bus and hydrogen bus infrastructure” (paragraph 9.25) but it may be that the Town Council has offered support which might be noted; the Qualifying Body confirmed this was the case. In paragraph 9.31 it is stated: “Chippenham Bus Station will remain at its existing site unless an equivalent or improved facility can be provided on a new site that would also be located within the town centre”. It is unclear whether this is a record of a statement from the relevant authorities (source needed) or a statement of determination from the Steering Group: the Qualifying Body confirmed this was a view expressed by the Steering Group. On page 117, Footnote 109 suggests that Appendix 2 supports Policy T2, but that is a typo for Appendix 23.

In the first paragraph of Policy T2 it would be appropriate to add ‘evidenced non-viability’ to the reasons why reducing bus infrastructure might be accepted. The second paragraph says that major development should “prioritise [over what?] the inclusion of new on-site bus network infrastructure”, but the Qualifying Body suggested a rephrase. It also says that “such contributions *can*” [*my emphasis added*] whereas the Qualifying Body confirmed this should be ‘might’. I note that evidence to support the maximum walking distances included in paragraph 3 is provided in Appendix 23. However, there is no statutory requirement or

guidance underpinning these distances and therefore the beginning of that paragraph should say; 'As a guide,'

Recommendation 21:

Under the heading "Access to the Bus Network":

21.1 In paragraph 9.25 replace "the Neighbourhood Plan strongly" with "The Town Council".

21.2 In paragraph 9.31 at the beginning of the second sentence add: 'It is anticipated that'.

21.3 On page 117 amend the footnote reference from Appendix 2 to Appendix 23.

21.4 Within Policy T2:

21.4.1 In the first paragraph after "unless" add 'non-viability is evidenced or'.

21.4.2 Replace the first sentence of the second paragraph with: 'Major development that will add to demands on public transport should incorporate new on-site bus network infrastructure.' In the last sentence of the same paragraph replace "can" with 'might'.

21.4.3 At the beginning of the third paragraph add: 'As a guide,'.

As amended Policy T2 meets the Basic Conditions.

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

Given that the NPPF (paragraph 107) expects "an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles" and the relevant standards of provision are taken from the Building Regulations, it is difficult to see any particular purpose for Policy T3. The Qualifying Body acknowledged the recent update of the relevant Building Regulations but identified elements of Policy T3 that would still serve a local purpose.

Recommendation 22:

Under the heading "Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure":

22.1 Delete paragraphs 9.36 and 9.37 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly).

22.2 Within Policy T3 delete the first four paragraphs.

As amended Policy T3 meets the Basic Conditions.

Access for Disabled People and those with Reduced Mobility

This is an interesting inclusion helpfully highlighting guidance, although I suggested to the Qualifying Body that it might more appropriately be within the Design Guide. The Qualifying Body agreed with this suggestion.

I found that the Guidance is loosely worded in three respects:

Paragraphs 2 & 4 imply obligations on developers which, in practice, will fall to residents and/or landlords. The Qualifying Body responded that the issue is that maintenance does often unfairly fall to residents and/or landlords, when this is less likely to occur if a developer is required to provide a long-term management/maintenance plan with their development proposals. However, any agent appointed by the developer would need to recover costs via a service charge of some type from the residents. My Recommendation simply acknowledges the issue.

Paragraph 3 uses the word "likely" but that would not be an acceptable standard by which to judge obligations. The Qualifying Body suggested alternative wording.

The pre-ambule text highlights the issue of dogs in shopping areas; these seem to be the only locations where dogs are likely to be necessarily left alone, although the guidance doesn't recognise that. The Qualifying Body suggested alternative wording.

Recommendation 23:

Under the heading "Access for Disabled People and those with Reduced Mobility":

23.1 Move the whole section to the Chippenham Design Guide Annexe as a new section; reformat as necessary to remain in keeping with the style and format of the Guide.

23.2 Amend Policy T4 from "Policy" to 'Guidance' and amend the content as follows:

23.2.1 Reword the second paragraph as:

'Development proposals should consider the long-term maintenance, upkeep and repair of unadopted footways and footpaths.'

23.2.2 In the third paragraph replace "likely" with 'which will lead to'.

23.2.3 In the fourth paragraph replace "put in place" with 'devise'.

23.2.4 In the last paragraph replace "a development" with 'local centres'.

The altered Policy T4 meets the Basic Conditions.

Waymarking Signage on the Footpath and Cycle Network

As no specific planning consent would be required for waymark signage on new developments, I suggested to the Qualifying Body that this is another topic best placed within the Design Guide. The Qualifying Body agreed.

Recommendation 24:

Under the heading "Waymarking Signage on the Footpath and Cycle Network" move the whole section to the Chippenham Design Guide Annexe as a new section; reformat as necessary to remain in keeping with the style and format of the Guide.

The altered Policy T5 meets the Basic Conditions.

10. Community Infrastructure

Paragraph 97 of the NPPF confirms that: "To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments."

I noted that the Qualifying Body had agreed with a representation that reference should be made to the Arc Climbing Centre, playground and skatepark located on Westmead Sports Ground. The Qualifying Body suggested that reference to The Arc be added to paragraph 3.30, and the building described further in Chapter 16 of the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

I queried with the Qualifying Body that paragraph 10.10 says: "Research has proven that a strong arts and culture sector will have a positive impact on place shaping" but that lacks a source reference; the Qualifying Body provided that.

I also queried with the Qualifying Body whether the opening sentence of Policy CI1 would amount to anything less if it more simply said: 'Proposals for all major residential development shall demonstrate how' The Qualifying Body confirmed acceptance of the

suggestion if “the level of information/detail submitted would likely be similar regardless of whether this was submitted by means of a focused Community Infrastructure Statement”. My view is that what is “demonstrated” is more demanding of appropriate explanation than a “Statement”. The last paragraph of the Policy includes the phrase “that may have the capacity to be converted to community infrastructure”. I noted to the Qualifying Body that it is not possible, through a prospective Development Plan Policy, to instruct the Council to not permit proposals that are acceptable in planning policy terms. In effect this element is the negative form of paragraph 4 and, as such it is not needed and is inappropriate.

Recommendation 25:

25.1 Add a reference to The Arc at paragraph 3.30 in the Plan, and describe the building further in Chapter 16 of the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

25.2 Under the heading “Community Infrastructure”:

25.2.1 Provide a footnote source for the quote in paragraph 10.10.

25.2.2 In the opening sentence of Policy CI1 replace “Proposals for all major residential development shall include a Community Infrastructure Statement which demonstrates” with ‘Proposals for all major residential development shall demonstrate’.

*25.2.3 Replace the last paragraph of Policy CI1 with:
‘The potential of large buildings in the town centre to become community facilities for Chippenham’s growing population should be explored and be regarded as a priority use as buildings become vacant or present uses change.’*

As amended Policy CI1 meets the Basic Conditions.

11. Economy

Circular Economy

I commented to the Qualifying Body that it’s a stretch to suggest that the Circular Economy is a suitable topic for a land use plan. Further, the latter part of Policy E1 appears to be a matter of design/construction guidance – already addressed earlier – rather than an “economy” matter. The Qualifying Body responded that, on balance, there is merit in having such a policy. Although admittedly likely to be limited in its application, the Qualifying Body nonetheless considers it important that the planning regime supports/gives appropriate weight to planning applications where a building or structure is applied for that delivers circular economy benefits. I have therefore recommended retaining the Policy whilst suitably amending the wording. The Qualifying Body agreed that the third paragraph of Policy E1, relating to design, may sit more appropriately within Policy SCC2 or the Design Guide. My view is that the level of detail is appropriate for the Design Guide.

Recommendation 26:

Under the heading “Circular Economy”, within Policy E1:

26.1 In the first paragraph replace “in Chippenham” with ‘in principle’.

26.2 Replace the second paragraph with the following:

‘Development proposals from businesses are encouraged to demonstrate that they are designing-out waste and pollution wherever feasible.’

26.3 Remove the third paragraph and relocate it within the Chippenham Design Guide, page 25 as a new paragraph 3.

As amended Policy E1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Business Incubator Units

The NPPF (para 85) expects that “Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt”. The approach of Policy E2 is therefore appropriate. However, I noted that paragraph 11.28 asserts that there is “demand for smaller units of less than 5000 sq. ft. in the local area” but there is no source reference provided. The Qualifying Body advised that the source was a briefing provided to one of the topic groups. It therefore should be made clear that evidence has not been provided.

Within Policy E2 paragraph 1 says: “a range of unit sizes to suit the local needs and requirements of different sized businesses will be provided on the wider employment site” but evidence of demand may suggest more of the same rather than a widened range merely for the sake of variety. The Qualifying Body suggested alternative wording upon which my Recommendation is based.

In the second paragraph it is unclear what “units shall be fully serviced prior to being let” might mean. The Qualifying Body explained that the intention here is for ‘fitted out’ units which might include broadband, kitchenette, WC facilities, a 3-phase power supply, LED lighting and capped mains gas. However, they acknowledged that the wording could be a disincentive for start-up businesses or developers and that greater flexibility should be the aim.

Recommendation 27:

Under the heading “Business Incubator Units”:

27.1 In paragraph 11.28 replace “being demand” with ‘being some indications of demand’.

27.2 Within Policy E2:

27.2.1 In the first paragraph replace “a range of unit sizes to suit the local needs and requirements of different sized businesses will be provided on the wider employment site” with ‘the sizes and range of units are compatible with identified need and business requirements, which may include serviced plots and ready-to-occupy units.’

27.2.2 From the second paragraph delete the second sentence.

As amended Policy E2 meets the Basic Conditions.

12. Developer Contributions

Whilst the list of needs here is a good fit with the foregoing Plan, it is not clear that “Design proposals” would amount to infrastructure. The Qualifying Body agreed that this should be omitted.

Recommendation 28:

Under the heading “Developer Contributions”, from paragraph 12.6 delete the bullet point which commences “Design proposals for.....”.

13. Monitoring and Review

I noted that in response to a representation, the Qualifying Body had commented: “The most sensible and pragmatic approach is for a Neighbourhood Plan Review to be carried out once the Wiltshire Local Plan Review is adopted, to ensure both documents are in conformity”. But such a review is not mentioned in this section and the Qualifying Body agreed that a note should be added to the effect that the Neighbourhood Plan could be reviewed on adoption of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review.

Recommendation 29:

Add a new paragraph 13.2 (and amend the existing 13.2 to 13.3) as follows:

‘A Neighbourhood Plan Review could be carried out once the Wiltshire Local Plan Review is adopted, to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan remains in general conformity.’

Annexes and Appendices

As noted earlier, Annexes are documents to which users of the Plan may need ready access, Appendices cover matter of record and occasional references. As a result of earlier Recommendations, two new Annexes have been created, one from an Appendix and another from previous Policy content. There are now therefore six Annexes.

Other matters raised in Representations

A few representations to the Plan consultation included suggestions of other matters that the Plan might address. However, a neighbourhood plan must specifically address the development and use of land (Planning Practice Guidance ref: 41-004-20140306). And within that constraint there is no checklist of content that a Neighbourhood Plan must contain or subject matter that it must address; the range of content is entirely at the discretion of the local community and the local issues as they see them. It is not my role as Examiner to test the soundness of a Plan in terms of its topic coverage but rather to consider the content presented against the Basic Conditions. I cannot therefore recommend additional content in the manner that some representations have suggested.

European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Obligations

A further Basic Condition, which the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan must meet, is compatibility with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations.

Regulation 9 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations requires that the responsible authority (Wiltshire Council) shall determine whether or not a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. Wiltshire Council concluded in their Screening Report dated April 2022 that “Wiltshire Council considers that the Draft Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and accordingly a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.” This screening decision was sent to Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Historic England considered that an SEA may be required for this Neighbourhood Plan.

A Scoping Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken by AECOM in August 2022. The Scoping Report was the subject of consultation with the local authority and Statutory Bodies such that their comments could influence the subsequent work on the SEA. I note that there was a comment by the local authority on an instance of potentially misleading content in this Report, but I have concluded that is not a matter material to the Examination.

Accompanying the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan was Strategic Environmental Assessment by AECOM dated May 2023. The SEA concluded that “Overall, it is broadly considered that regeneration of key locations within the town centre to deliver high quality development that is appropriately designed will likely provide benefits for the historic environment. While Policy TC1 supports development up to four storeys in height (Zone 1 only), supporting evidence (namely Topic Papers) provided by the [Town] Council, alongside design guidance and policy requirements, seek to ensure adverse effects on existing built form are avoided. Neutral effects are therefore concluded at this stage. It is however considered that setting a reduced height for the Bath Road Car Park/ Bridge Centre ‘Zone 1’ would better align with the town, including designated assets.” I note that the Historic England response to the consultation on the Submission Plan was: “We have recommended

to the community that it seek guidance from your authority's conservation team in the drafting of the policies and in the provision of supporting heritage evidence. We understand that such liaison has taken place and that policies TC1 and TC3 should hopefully now meet with the approval of your conservation officers, to whom on this basis we would be happy to defer." I have taken note of the Council's latest comments on Policies TC1 and TC3 in making my Recommendations.

Wiltshire Council's Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening of June 2023 concluded, in relation to the European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), that "All parts of the NP have been screened for potential impacts which may arise from the plan alone or in combination with other plans and projects. None of the policies within the NP allocate sites for development or would lead directly to development, nor would any of the policies result in a likely significant effect on any European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. This is due to the nature, scope and scale of the proposals set out in the NP, and on account of the distance of the NP area from any European sites and the absence of a potential pathway for effect."

With regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, the Basic Conditions Statement that accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan notes:

"Those who are affected by the proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan have been adequately consulted and have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. The details of consultation that has been carried out on the Plan are outlined in full in the Consultation Statement. No issues have been raised in relation to the possible contravention of Human Rights in the preceding consultations, and given the conclusions on the Plan's general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan and regard to National Planning Policy, it is reasonable to conclude that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan should not breach human rights."

No evidence has arisen or been put forward to me to demonstrate that the Qualifying Body has not been mindful of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights in process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Taking all of the above into account, I am satisfied that the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan, as now significantly modified, is compatible with EU obligations and that it does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with, the ECHR.

Conclusions

This Independent Examiner's Report recommends a range of modifications to the Policies, as well as some of the supporting content, in the Plan. Modifications have been recommended to effect corrections, to ensure clarity and in order to ensure that the Basic Conditions are met. Whilst I have proposed a significant number of modifications, the Plan itself remains fundamentally unchanged in the role and direction set for it by the Qualifying Body.

I therefore conclude that, subject to the modifications recommended, the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan:

- has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Plan for the area;
- is compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations;
- does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(d).

On that basis I *recommend* to Wiltshire Council that, subject to the incorporation of modifications set out as recommendations in this report, it is appropriate for the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.

Referendum Area

As noted earlier, part of my Examiner role is to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. I consider the Neighbourhood Area to be appropriate and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore ***recommend*** that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the Neighbourhood Area as approved by Wiltshire Council on 2nd August 2021.

Recommendations: (this is a listing of the recommendations exactly as they are included in the Report)

Rec	Text	Reason
1	<p>1.1 Add a note early in the Plan document as follows: ‘This Plan was prepared and submitted before the publication of the 2023 versions of the NPPF and therefore the paragraph numbers derive from the NPPF July 2021.’</p> <p>1.2 On the front cover remove references to “Submission Plan”.</p> <p>1.3 Update the Preface for the purposes of a Referendum document.</p> <p>1.4 Review the Content listing in the light of the Recommendations in this Report.</p>	For clarity and accuracy
2	Move the listing of “Appendix 9 – Local Green Spaces Maps” to become Annexe 5 in paragraph 1.15.	For clarity and accuracy
3	<p>3.1 Add reference to the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre and Chippenham Library Paragraph 3.28.</p> <p>3.2 Within section 3 under the sub-heading “future Direction”:</p> <p>3.2.1 Add a new paragraph 3.45 as follows: ‘The Chippenham Area Strategy in paragraphs 5.43-5.52 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the main issues and considerations facing Chippenham up to 2026. These are similar issues to the place-shaping priorities listed in Policy 6 of the current Wiltshire Local Plan Review Regulation 19 Version which will extend the timeframe to 2038.’ Adjust the numbering of subsequent paragraphs accordingly.</p> <p>3.2.2 At the beginning of paragraph 3.48 replace “if” with ‘as’.</p> <p>3.2.3 To the end of paragraph 3.49 add: ‘Place Shaping Priority 1 of Policy 6 of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review Regulation 19 Version recognises the existing levels of net out-commuting in Chippenham as being an issue’.</p> <p>3.2.4 In paragraph 3.50 replace the second sentence with: ‘Some housing estates are poorly connected via sustainable transport modes to the town centre and its facilities’; delete the third sentence.</p> <p>3.2.5 In paragraph 3.51 add: ‘Paragraph 1.2 of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan DPD recognises the fact that ‘In planning for the future growth of the town the proposals of this plan seek to: Respect the individual identities of villages within the landscape setting of Chippenham and their relationship to the town’.</p>	For clarity and accuracy

4	<p>Under the heading “4. Creating Vision & Objectives”:</p> <p>4.1 In paragraph 4.1 replace “being able to prepare a ‘Vision’ and set of accompanying objectives for the Plan with the confidence that it reflected the wishes of the community” with ‘being able to prepare a ‘Vision’ for Chippenham from which objectives specifically for the Neighbourhood Plan are derived with confidence that these reflected the expressed wishes of the community’.</p> <p>4.2 In the colour boxes which are part of paragraphs 4.2 and 4.4 replace “Objectives” with ‘Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan’.</p> <p>4.3 Also in paragraph 4.4 replace “A Vision and set of objectives were then prepared for each topic area” with ‘A Vision for Chippenham and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan were then prepared for each topic area’.</p>	For clarity and accuracy
5	<p>Under the heading “5. Sustainability & Climate Change”:</p> <p>5.1 In paragraph 5.5 replace “significantly” with ‘beneficially’.</p> <p>5.2 In paragraph 5.19 replace “achieve” with ‘encourage’ and add the following at the foot of the paragraph: ‘The Policy does not require fabric energy efficiency standards that go beyond the minimum standards set out in Building Regulations. Its expectations can be satisfied as long as the development achieves net zero carbon in its regulated operational emissions overall, or future paths to net zero have been addressed’.</p> <p>5.3 Delete paragraph 5.20 from “Carbon Offsetting” onwards as well as paragraph 5.21.</p> <p>5.4 Reword Policy SCC1 as follows: ‘Major development proposals for all new buildings will include an Energy Statement. This should demonstrate whether a development will achieve an annual operational net zero carbon emissions balance, by modelling each building’s estimated regulated energy consumption and the site’s overall renewable energy (electricity and heat) generation. A recognised industry calculation method should be used to calculate regulated energy consumption. For all new dwellings this should be the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP). Numerical figures for both space heating demand and total regulated energy use should be provided in the Energy Statement. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified of any significant differences in the development’s regulated energy consumption modelling data between planning application stage and building completion.</p> <p>In seeking to achieve net zero carbon development, fabric energy efficiency should be prioritised as far as possible, in accordance with the Energy Hierarchy shown as Figure 5.1.</p> <p>Where net zero carbon emissions are not being achieved through fabric energy efficiency, proposals will demonstrate the extent to which the remaining energy demand will be supplied from any of the following sources below, or it may be demonstrated that these are economically unviable or technically unfeasible (e.g. where there is an insurmountable constraint on grid capacity):</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1

	<p>a) renewable and/or low carbon heat supply (e.g. via connection to a low carbon district heating network where available and/or air or ground source heat pumps);</p> <p>b) on-site renewable electricity generation (e.g. roof mounted or ground mounted solar photovoltaic); or</p> <p>c) off-site renewable energy sources as part of an allowable solution, such as an approved community energy scheme or carbon offset fund, in agreement with the Local Planning Authority through a planning obligation.</p> <p>It should also be demonstrated that the development has been designed to, as far as possible, enable future occupiers to adopt low carbon technologies that it has not been possible to incorporate during construction (e.g. due to grid capacity constraints).'</p>	
6	<p>Under the heading “Sustainable Design and Construction”:</p> <p>6.1 Merge paragraphs 5.24 and 5.25 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly) to become: ‘Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy encourages new development, building conversions, refurbishments and extensions to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand. Its reference to the Code for Sustainable Homes is now obsolete since the Code was abolished by the Government in 2015 and there is currently no replacement until such time as the Future Homes Standard is introduced in 2025. All non-residential development is required to achieve the relevant BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standards from 2019.’</p> <p>6.2 Replace paragraph 5.27 with: ‘Rather than focusing on different recognised building construction standards/ accreditations (which are useful but not always comparable with each other and can cover aspects unrelated to sustainable construction materials and techniques), Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC2 ensures a tighter focus on producing sustainable design, construction materials and construction methods on major development schemes. To that end it goes as far as possible towards ensuring the delivery of net zero carbon development in Chippenham through sustainable design and construction⁴³. The Design and Access Statement will be expected to cover all the aspects set out in Figure 5.2. Applicants are encouraged to present these details at pre-application consultations to ensure measures are incorporated early in the design process.’</p> <p>6.3 Amend the title to Fig. 5.2 to read: ‘Aspects to be addressed though Policy SCC2’.</p> <p>6.4 Amend Policy SCC2 to read: ‘Proposals for major developments will demonstrate optimised sustainability credentials in terms of a) design, b) construction materials and c) methods of construction, minimising or avoiding emissions and other environmental impacts. All major non-residential developments will be required to meet BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standard.’</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
7	<p>Amend Policy SCC3 as follows:</p> <p>7.1 In the Policy pre-amble add ‘robustly’ before “demonstrated”.</p>	For clarity and

	<p>7.2 Add two additional criteria (renumbering subsequent criteria accordingly) as follows:</p> <p>‘a) The costs and benefits compare favourably with potentially less intrusive options, such as large scale building mounted renewable energy.</p> <p>b) A comprehensive landscape impact assessment has been undertaken which has informed the proposals for the location of new infrastructure and all mitigation measures identified in that are implemented.’</p> <p>7.3 Delete the existing criterion c) for want of clarity.</p>	<p>accuracy and to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3</p>
8	<p>Amend Policy GI1 as follows:</p> <p>8.1 Replace the pre-amble sentence with the following: ‘Features of significant biodiversity value should be retained and enhanced as follows:’</p> <p>8.2 Amend to the listing of features as follows: i) Retain ancient trees and hedgerows and/or trees and hedgerows of arboricultural value, additional planting should extend tree cover. ii) Retain blue infrastructure and where sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are being created these should be multi-functional. iii) Retain native plants and wildflower areas and extend through landscaping proposals. iv) Protect bat habitats. v) Incorporate into new construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green/brown roofs (where appropriate) • Integrated bird and bat boxes • Swift bricks and bee bricks • 13cm x 13cm holes in fencing for hedgehogs and other small mammals to pass through. <p>8.3 Replace the first sentence of the second paragraph with: ‘Major development proposals must demonstrate a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10%, secured for at least 30 years. Proposals are encouraged to deliver in excess of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.’</p> <p>8.4 In the third paragraph replace “can provide” with ‘provide’.</p> <p>8.5 Replace the fourth paragraph with: ‘Accreditation of proposals as meeting Building with Nature standards will greatly assist their assessment against this Policy’.</p>	<p>For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1</p>
9	<p>Under the heading “Local Green Spaces”:</p> <p>9.1 Move paragraph 6.37, the related photo and its caption on page 53 to follow paragraph 6.42; amend paragraph 6.37 to read as follows: ‘Where a green space does not meet the criteria for Local Green Space designation but the space is integral to the functioning of the residential area in which it is located, Policy GI3 (Green Amenity Areas) recognises these generally smaller green spaces, which can be just as much valued by the community that live within the immediate vicinity. Figure 6.2 identifies the Green Amenity Areas in Chippenham,</p>	<p>For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1</p>

	<p>with larger scale maps for each Green Amenity Area contained within Annexe 5.’</p> <p>9.2 Amend Policy GI2 and the related Figure 6.2 as follows:</p> <p>9.2.1 Add to the title for Figure 6.2: ‘Each Local Green Space has a more detailed map in Annexe 5’ [the renumbered Appendix 9].</p> <p>9.2.2 Remove from the Policy list and amend the key for and the numbering of the following spaces on the map, and in the new Annexe, all except WW to become ‘Green Amenity Areas’ (and amend the remaining Local Green Spaces to a sequential numbering on the map and Policy List and in the new Annexe): F, G, H, J, L, O, P, Q, T, U, W, Z, AA, BB, GG, KK, LL, PP, RR., VV, WW.</p> <p>9.2.3 From Figure 6.2 and the related maps in Annexe 5, remove the footprint of the Church from space D, and from space S remove the whole of the sub-space that is dominated by buildings.</p> <p>9.2.4 From the last paragraph of Policy GI2, delete “and will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of that Local Green Space.”</p> <p>9.3 Create a new Policy GI3 (and renumber subsequent Policies accordingly) as follows: ‘The areas listed below and identified on Figure 6.2 are recognised as Green Amenity Areas which are integral to the functioning of the residential areas in which they are located and should be retained. Proposals to improve the amenity and recreational value of these areas are supported in principle.’ [list here the following areas appropriately renumbered: F, G, H, J, L, O, P, Q, T, U, W, Z, AA, BB, GG, KK, LL, PP, RR., VV.]</p>	
10	<p>Under the heading “Green Corridors”:</p> <p>10.1 Amend Figure 6.3 as follows:</p> <p>10.1.1 Delete the yellow shading but instead use green shading where the land is currently recognised open spaces, including the river flood zone as recreation space, but not including agricultural spaces in general.</p> <p>10.1.2 Indicate diagrammatically the strategic corridors using double-headed, hollow arrows each equal in scale; number these corridors to match the numbers in Policy GI3; don’t extend the arrows beyond the Neighbourhood Area boundary.</p> <p>10.1.3 Amend the map key to show the green shading as ‘Green Corridors’ and replace the yellow shading with an illustrative arrow.</p> <p>10.1.4 Move Figure 6.3 to be adjacent to Policy GI3.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3

	<p>10.2 In paragraph 6.54 replace “Neighbourhood Green Corridors” with ‘Green Corridors’.</p> <p>10.3 Within Policy GI3 - now renumbered as GI4: 10.3.1 In the second paragraph replace “remain intact, allowing” with ‘allow’.</p> <p>10.3.2 In the third paragraph remove “Neighbourhood”.</p> <p>10.3.3 From the fifth paragraph remove the heading “All Green Corridors”.</p>	
11	<p>Under the heading “Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows”:</p> <p>11.1 In paragraph 6.68 replace the last sentence with: ‘This target of 20% tree canopy cover on new development sites provides the basis for the expectation in Policy GI4.’</p> <p>11.2 In paragraph 6.70 replace the last sentence with: ‘For these reasons Policy GI4 requires developers to consider separation with care and, as a guide, expects a buffer of at least 15m between the edge of the woodland/tree belt and the development to provide a naturally graded edge to the woodland.’</p> <p>11.3 In paragraph 6.73 replace “specify” with ‘guide’.</p> <p>11.4 Within Policy GI4 – now renumbered as GI5: 11.4.1 Replace the second paragraph with: ‘Development proposals must consider with care the separation between construction and the edge of a woodland or tree belt and it must be satisfactorily demonstrated, through the detailed design process, that the proposal would have no adverse impacts on trees, ecology, people, or property. A buffer zone of at least 15m, consisting of semi-natural habitat, is considered appropriate between new construction and woodland.’</p> <p>11.4.2 In the third paragraph replace “Development will be supported that takes the opportunities to:” with ‘Development proposals should, appropriately to their scale’:’.</p> <p>11.4.3 Replace the content after the heading “Tree Canopy Cover” with: ‘Development proposals on sites outside of the town centre and greater than 0.5 ha in size should demonstrate an increase in site tree canopy cover of at least 6%. This will principally be achieved through planting of additional and replacement trees, but where it can be demonstrated that this is impractical, the use of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs) can be used to deliver equivalent benefit. On residential development sites, some of this tree canopy cover will be expected to be met through incorporation of new trees within rear gardens.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1

	Reference should be made to the advice set out in the Tree Planting Guide (Annexe 4).	
12	Delete Policy GI5 and its related text.	Basic Conditions 1 & 3
13	<p>Under the heading “7. Housing”:</p> <p>13.1 Reword paragraph 7.3 as follows: ‘The Wiltshire Local Plan Review (Pre-Submission Draft, September 2023) indicates that the emerging strategy for 2020–2038 for Chippenham has an overall housing requirement of 5850 dwellings, which, after accounting for existing allocations, completions and permissions, would leave a residual requirement of 2090 dwellings to plan for.⁸⁰ In addition to this, a ‘neighbourhood area designation’ requirement of 200 dwellings is given for Chippenham.’</p> <p>13.2 Within paragraph 7.4 delete “and less by speculative market demand”.</p> <p>13.3 Within Policy H1: 13.3.1 Move the second paragraph to become the first and reword as follows: ‘Individual site circumstances, changes in local need and local authority priorities or achieving development viability may dictate variations from the guide figures below, in which case proportionate evidence shall be submitted to justify each variation.’</p> <p>13.3.2 In the new second paragraph amend the tabulation to show: ‘Market Housing 60% Affordable Housing 40% within which: • 70% affordable housing for rent • 25% First Homes • 5% shared ownership’</p> <p>13.3.3 In the fourth paragraph replace “10” with ‘some’.</p> <p>13.4 Within Annexe 1 Chippenham Design Guide: 13.4.1 On page 25 add a new paragraph 2 as follows (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly): ‘On smaller sites/infill/Conservation Area, new housing should be designed to assimilate with existing housing. However, on larger sites or those which have few positive qualities to draw upon (e.g. greenfield sites) a contemporary approach should be taken and a new identity for the development centred around future sustainable lifestyles could be sought. In either scenario, natural and high-quality reconstituted stone is recommended as the defining local material.’</p> <p>13.4.2 On page 26 in the box headed “Masterplanning” delete the last line: “The Guide applies equally to smaller windfall developments in the Neighbourhood Plan period”.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3

	<p>13.4.3 On page 27 in element 9 add 'generally' to the suggested block height restriction; in element 11 in the sentence "School provision is to be considered by the local authority" replace "by" with 'with'.</p> <p>13.4.4 On page 34 delete the comma in the phrase "A limited number of public car parking spaces, with electric vehicle charging".</p> <p>13.4.5 On page 44:</p> <p>13.4.5.1 Provide the source reference for LTN 1/20: www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120</p> <p>13.4.5.2 Delete the last sentence of Paragraph F5, referring to a 'densely spaced network'.</p> <p>13.4.5.3 With regard to point d) of Paragraph F8, amend to 'On new bus routes there should be sufficient carriageway width to allow buses travelling in opposite directions to pass each other without needing to give way.'</p> <p>13.4.6 On page 46 amend the picture caption to: 'New housing development should aim to deliver bus services which connect to key public transport hubs such as Chippenham Railway Station.'</p> <p>13.4.7 On page 49 amend the note that "New housing development will be expected to comply with the standards and provisions of that policy" by deleting "standards and".</p> <p>13.4.8 On page 50 (and also page 55): Merge the elements: "a. Energy generation which shall meet all or most of the demand created. b. Battery storage on each estate that has sufficient capacity to retain unused locally generated energy for later use by residents. This can either be within individual dwellings or for groups of dwellings." To become a new a. as follows: 'Renewable energy installation(s)'. </p> <p>13.4.9 On page 55 delete: "The land shall be kept in a tidy and pleasant state until take-up and be capable of being connected to necessary utilities. The use class of the land will be expected to remain as such in the future."</p> <p>13.4.10 On page 56:</p> <p>13.4.10.1 Replace the last sentence of K1 with: 'It is important that design quality is not diminished as a permission is implemented, amended, or through discharge of conditions.'</p> <p>13.4.10.2 Replace the last sentence of K8 with; 'Blank side elevations on to the public realm should be</p>	
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	<p>avoided and houses should properly turn corners with active frontages on to the public realm including at least two significant ‘habitable’ room openings at ground and first floor.’</p> <p>13.4.11 On page 58 within K10 retain only the first sentence and add a footnote reference to: https://relondon.gov.uk/resources/guide-sourcing-reclaimed-construction-materials</p> <p>13.4.12 On page 59 within L4 replace the second sentence with: ‘Any proposals to depart from the approved Masterplan should demonstrate that the original proposal is no longer deliverable or that a better and more sustainable solution is offered.’</p> <p>13.5 Within Policy H2 for the reference to “Building for a Healthy Life” provide a footnote source reference: www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/building-healthy-life</p>	
14	<p>Under the heading “8. Town Centre”:</p> <p>14.1 In paragraph 8.14 amend the final sentence to replace “wider secondary retail frontage area” with ‘defined town centre boundary’.</p> <p>14.2 Create a new Annexe 6 and remove the 12 elements of Policy TC1 and related Figure 8.2 to that with a new introduction of: ‘As a basis for discussion with prospective developers the following Design Brief parameters suggest ways in which the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site might successfully be developed for the benefit of Chippenham Town Centre, subject to viability assessments.’ Amend the following:</p> <p>14.2.1 Amend the key to the Figure to remove references to Policy TC1.</p> <p>14.2.2 Amend element 9 of the Brief to read: ‘Provide a pedestrian link from the site to The Bridge’.</p> <p>14.3 Move the content of the Design Principles box to sit under the introductory sentence in Policy TC1. Amend the following:</p> <p>14.3.1 Replace Figure 8.2 with a simplified map showing in outline the two areas referenced in the title and removing the “Proposed” element of the key.</p> <p>14.3.2 In the introductory sentence of Policy TC1 replace “in accordance with the General Design Principles for the Site and the following parameters as shown on Figure 8.2” with ‘in accordance with the following General Design Principles for the Site and having regard to the exemplar Design Brief parameters as shown at Annexe 2’.</p> <p>14.3.3 Within the Design Principles merge L, M & N under new introductory words as follows: ‘Achieve a biodiversity net gain and:’.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1

	14.3.4 Revise paragraphs 8.38 and 8.39 to appropriately reference the Annexe 2 for the content of the Brief parameters.	
15	<p>Reword Policy TC2 as follows brining the annotation of Figure 8.3 into line with the Policy numbering: 'Development proposals in the River-Green Corridor area will be supported where they accord with the Masterplan shown on Figure 8.3 and demonstrate regard, subject to overall viability assessments, to the following Design Principles:</p> <p>A. Proposals must enhance the River Avon corridor as a defining connecting feature in the revitalisation of Chippenham Town Centre whilst recognising the environmental sensitivity of the River Avon Strategic Green Corridor and achieving a biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>B. All development proposals on the River Avon frontage, or public/semi-public spaces with a functional connection to the River Avon, should demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) active frontages; ii) through photo-visuals, that the frontages, including any balconies and terraces, are of the highest quality design and will provide a pleasing backdrop for the River when viewed from the opposite bank; iii) that flood resistance and resilience measures are integrated within the construction although any walls facing the river frontage should, where feasible, allow the development behind to be viewed from the opposite bank; iv) improved pedestrian and cycle routes alongside the River between the Town Bridge and Gladstone Road, including, subject to feasibility, re-routing or improving the Avon Path to limit the risk from flooding and provide year-round access in the vicinity of Gladstone Road Bridge. <p>C. In relation to Town Bridge development proposals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) consider replacement of the Town Bridge with a new bridge which enhances the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area; ii) provide means to help wildlife to move over, under or through the Town Bridge, such as a wildlife underpass and/or improved landscaping of banks; iii) examine the feasibility of providing shared space on the Town Bridge to improve the pedestrian experience and public realm. <p>D. Proposals to redevelop Emery Gate Shopping Centre, should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) remain within its existing curtilage, with existing High Street facades retained, and with uses that continue to underpin the vitality and viability of the Town Centre; ii) include predominantly for uses in Class E on the ground floor facing on to the River; iii) retain a public car parking area located and designed to ensure that it is not visible from Monkton Park or, as far as practicable, from other surrounding areas of public domain; iv) relocate the current vehicular access to the car park/service yard from the Town Bridge in order to resolve the traffic pinch point and improve public realm/access for pedestrians to Monkton Park. 	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3

	<p>E. The inclusion at the north end of the High Street of a 2–3 storey high, quality landmark building in Bath Stone with active street and river frontages.</p> <p>F. The riverside downstream of Gladstone Road to be enhanced for biodiversity, whilst providing attractive open space for the community to enjoy.</p> <p>G. Replacement or removal of the radial gate weir in a manner that improves biodiversity and reduces flood risk; opportunities to provide renewable energy at any replacement weir structure should be embraced.</p> <p>H. The creation of section(s) of level public access to the River within Monkton Park.</p> <p>I. Retention of the Olympiad site for public indoor sport, recreation or fitness uses. Any new building fronting onto Monkton Park to be designed to be sympathetic to the parkland setting and to enhance the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area.'</p>	
16	<p>Within Policy TC3 in the opening sentence replace “which has been” with ‘and open feasibility assessments which have been’</p>	<p>For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1</p>
17	<p>Under the heading “Development within Chippenham Conservation Area”:</p> <p>17.1 Within Policy TC4 remove reference to the “setting of” Chippenham Conservation Area from the first and second paragraphs.</p> <p>17.2 Within the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal provide a footnote reference for the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG.</p>	<p>For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1</p>
18	<p>Under the heading “Buildings of Local Merit”:</p> <p>18.1 In paragraph 8.87 replace “as ‘locally listed’ or being important non-designated heritage assets” with ‘locally important non-designated heritage assets’.</p> <p>18.2 Provide an additional Figure (and alter the numbering of subsequent Figures accordingly) mapping the location of the properties now listed for recognition.</p> <p>18.3 Within Policy TC5 delete property “b. Former Chippenham District County Technical and Secondary School, Cocklebury Road”.</p>	<p>For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3</p>
19	<p>19.1 Within the heading “Design of Shopfronts and Advertisements” remove “and Advertisements”.</p> <p>19.2 Within Policy TC6 replace “must have” with ‘must demonstrate’.</p>	<p>For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1</p>

	19.3 Within the related Annexe 3 remove and replace as appropriate the words “will not be permitted” and variants of these.	
20	<p>Under the heading “Transport”:</p> <p>20.1 Within paragraph 9.2 replace the second to last sentence with the following: ‘In order to retain this momentum and shift to sustainable transport modes, and reduce the effects of climate change more rapidly, it is essential that safe and effective infrastructure for cycling and walking is incorporated within new development and developers improve links to key facilities outside the site through developer contributions.’; delete the final sentence.</p> <p>20.2 Delete paragraphs 9.7 and 9.8 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly).</p> <p>20.3 Amend paragraph 9.10 as follows: ‘Separate walking, cycling and vehicle routes are necessary when traffic speeds and volumes are higher. New shared-use paths will not generally be acceptable anymore, separate cycling and walking routes must be provided.’</p> <p>20.4 Replace the last sentence of paragraph 9.15 as follows: ‘The work by CCNDG has fed into the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Chippenham. This is nearly complete, and Wiltshire Council will use it to bid for funding to improve infrastructure’.</p> <p>20.5 Amend Policy T1 as follows:</p> <p>20.5.1 In the first paragraph delete “large scale major development proposals, and the majority of”.</p> <p>20.5.2 In the third paragraph delete “particularly those for strategic housing sites”.</p> <p>20.5.3 In the final paragraph replace “will require” with ‘will be expected to make’; delete “and set out in more detail in Appendix 22 – High Priority Improvements to the Cycle Network”.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
21	<p>Under the heading “Access to the Bus Network”:</p> <p>21.1 In paragraph 9.25 replace “the Neighbourhood Plan strongly” with ‘The Town Council’.</p> <p>21.2 In paragraph 9.31 at the beginning of the second sentence add: ‘It is anticipated that’.</p> <p>21.3 On page 117 amend the footnote reference from Appendix 2 to Appendix 23.</p> <p>21.4 Within Policy T2:</p> <p>21.4.1 In the first paragraph after “unless” add ‘non-viability is evidenced or’.</p>	For clarity and accuracy

	<p>21.4.2 Replace the first sentence of the second paragraph with: ‘Major development that will add to demands on public transport should incorporate new on-site bus network infrastructure.’ In the last sentence of the same paragraph replace “can” with ‘might’.</p> <p>21.4.3 At the beginning of the third paragraph add: ‘As a guide,’.</p>	
22	<p>Under the heading “Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure”:</p> <p>22.1 Delete paragraphs 9.36 and 9.37 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly).</p> <p>22.2 Within Policy T3 delete the first four paragraphs.</p>	
23	<p>Under the heading “Access for Disabled People and those with Reduced Mobility”:</p> <p>23.1 Move the whole section to the Chippenham Design Guide Annexe as a new section; reformat as necessary to remain in keeping with the style and format of the Guide.</p> <p>23.2 Amend Policy T4 from “Policy” to ‘Guidance’ and amend the content as follows:</p> <p>23.2.1 Reword the second paragraph as: ‘Development proposals should consider the long-term maintenance, upkeep and repair of unadopted footways and footpaths.’</p> <p>23.2.2 In the third paragraph replace “likely” with ‘which will lead to’.</p> <p>23.2.3 In the fourth paragraph replace “put in place” with ‘devise’.</p> <p>23.2.4 In the last paragraph replace “a development” with ‘local centres’.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
24	<p>Under the heading “Waymarking Signage on the Footpath and Cycle Network” move the whole section to the Chippenham Design Guide Annexe as a new section; reformat as necessary to remain in keeping with the style and format of the Guide.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
25	<p>25.1 Add a reference to The Arc at paragraph 3.30 in the Plan, and describe the building further in Chapter 16 of the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal.</p> <p>25.2 Under the heading “Community Infrastructure”:</p> <p>25.2.1 Provide a footnote source for the quote in paragraph 10.10.</p> <p>25.2.2 In the opening sentence of Policy CI1 replace “Proposals for all major residential development shall include a Community Infrastructure Statement which demonstrates” with</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1

	<p>'Proposals for all major residential development shall demonstrate'.</p> <p>25.2.3 Replace the last paragraph of Policy CI1 with: 'The potential of large buildings in the town centre to become community facilities for Chippenham's growing population should be explored and be regarded as a priority use as buildings become vacant or present uses change.'</p>	
26	<p>Under the heading "Circular Economy", within Policy E1: 26.1 In the first paragraph replace "in Chippenham" with 'in principle'.</p> <p>26.2 Replace the second paragraph with the following: 'Development proposals from businesses are encouraged to demonstrate that they are designing-out waste and pollution wherever feasible.'</p> <p>26.3 Remove the third paragraph and relocate it within the Chippenham Design Guide, page 25 as a new paragraph 3.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
27	<p>Under the heading "Business Incubator Units": 27.1 In paragraph 11.28 replace "being demand" with 'being some indications of demand'.</p> <p>27.2 Within Policy E2: 27.2.1 In the first paragraph replace "a range of unit sizes to suit the local needs and requirements of different sized businesses will be provided on the wider employment site" with 'the sizes and range of units are compatible with identified need and business requirements, which may include serviced plots and ready-to-occupy units.'</p> <p>27.2.2 From the second paragraph delete the second sentence.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
28	<p>Under the heading "Developer Contributions", from paragraph 12.6 delete the bullet point which commences "Design proposals for.....".</p>	For clarity and accuracy
29	<p>Add a new paragraph 13.2 (and amend the existing 13.2 to 13.3) as follows: 'A Neighbourhood Plan Review could be carried out once the Wiltshire Local Plan Review is adopted, to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan remains in general conformity.'</p>	For clarity and accuracy