



Made March 2022

THE COLERNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021-2036
PART A: DEVELOPMENT PLAN



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“Development that expresses community aspirations”

This Plan was commissioned by Colerne Parish Council following a public meeting held in December 2016. The objective was to provide a local framework by which Colerne Parish could contribute to Wiltshire’s requirement for new employment and housing development in a manner that would reflect our community’s preferences and needs. Shortly afterwards, the proposal for development of Ministry of Defence land associated with the original 1939 Colerne Airfield (‘RAF Colerne’) accentuated the need to address the future pace and form of development for the parish. With due regard to all higher planning policy, the Plan expresses community aspirations for future development within the parish until 2036.

Undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan is a task beyond the resources of a Parish Council alone. Thus, a team of interested volunteers from the public meeting joined together with five parish councillors to form a Steering Group (SG), initially of 18, to steer the process of researching and writing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Colerne. The SG has received professional advice and support, mostly financed through the government’s appointed agency, Locality. Place Studio consultants were appointed as our advisers and they have encouraged the Steering Group to follow a ‘bottom up’ process involving different community groups in researching this Plan.

The Parish Council is indebted to all those local volunteers who have given their time and thoughtful consideration to supporting this process, as well as to the 40% of households who took the time to complete the Housing Needs Survey and our Community Consultation Survey in 2018.

The Parish Council has provided necessary funding to cover public consultations and to maintain publicly available records of the process. Their councillors have also given of their time to support this Plan, and the Council is committed to using the Plan to evaluate all future development projects within the parish. The SG received invaluable support from Wiltshire Council via our designated Link officer and the Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning Team, and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) that manages Ministry of Defence sites has met with us on several occasions to discuss possible options in any disposal process.

We are grateful to all the above mentioned for their support.

We commend this Plan to you. When adopted, not only will it be a formal part of Wiltshire’s Local Plan and a guide for future planning decision-making in the parish, but also an unprecedented record of how the parish and its community are composed at this moment in time.

Jane Mellett - Chair of Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (CNPSG)

Jacqui Bradburn - Chair of Colerne Parish Council until May 2020 and a member of the CNPSG

Anthony Clarke - Chair of Colerne Parish Council, May 2020 until May 2021

Paul Jobbins - Chair of Colerne Parish Council, May 2021 onwards

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Section 1: Introduction and Background

i. Structure of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1. This Neighbourhood Plan is in two Parts. PART A – this document – presents the planning background, narrative and Plan Policies. PART B presents, as a separate document, the **Design Statement** that forms an integral part of the overall Plan.
- 1.2. **From a development planning point of view the key outcomes of the Plan are found in PART A - Section 3 Development Strategy and Section 5 Development Policies; and in PART B The Design Statement.**
- 1.3. The Plan is supported by two Topic Papers. Topic Paper #1, **Site Evaluation**, lays out the thinking behind the Plan's assessment of sites for development and evaluates all of the sites selected for review. Topic Paper #2, **A Concept Statement for the MoD Estate**, provides a community vision and practical ideas for the proposed redevelopment of what was the Second World War RAF Colerne, a prominent parish site. These two Papers provide important argumentation underpinning the planning strategy advocated in this Plan and should be read alongside it.
- 1.4. The Plan refers throughout to several Reports and research project. All sources referred to are **hyperlinked in green**. All such documents may also be accessed through the archive-listing referenced in Section 8. Over time some external links may expire or be altered: in such cases please refer to the source-website as referenced.
- 1.5. At many points the narrative contains cross-references to the Plan Policies given in Section 5. These cross-references are given in square brackets, thus: [BE1].

ii. Basic Conditions and Consultation Statements

- 1.6. The Colerne Neighbourhood Plan will have legal status so it must meet the basic conditions for a Neighbourhood Plan, which are to:
 - have regard to national policies and advice contained in the guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the Wiltshire Local Plan;
 - not breach or be otherwise incompatible with EU obligations or human rights legislation, and
 - not breach the requirements of Regulation 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- 1.7. Full details of the Plan's compliance with these requirements are given in the accompanying **Basic Conditions Statement**.

- 1.8. The 'Regulation 14' draft of the Plan was made available for consultation by the public and by concerned statutory bodies in autumn 2020. A wide range of comments was received and the Steering Group is grateful to all those who contributed to this exercise. It facilitated significant improvements to the Plan, reflected herein. Full details of the comments received, and responses to each, are given in the accompanying **Consultation Statement**.

iii. Planning Context and Plan Designation

Planning Context

- 1.9. The framework within which this Plan is developed is set (a) by the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, as revised in 2021 and supplemented by National Planning Practice Guidance; and (b) by the Wiltshire Local Plan of which the chief relevant element is the **Core Strategy** adopted in January 2015. We have been mindful that a Local Plan Review is in process and presently expected for completion in early 2023, and this Neighbourhood Plan is designed to be capable of review and re-iteration if necessary at that point to ensure continued general conformity.
- 1.10. Additional planning contexts arise from the facts that our whole parish lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB); that the village is bordered to the west and south by the Bristol and Bath Green Belt; and that the older part of the central village is designated a Conservation Area. It should additionally be noted that while the parish lies entirely within the Unitary Council of Wiltshire, it borders both South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset (BANES).
- 1.11. The Plan aims to set out development principles and guidance that, in conformity with these higher-level frameworks, may be applied at a local level, so that local development will express community character and aspirations. It has benefited from a **Strategic Environmental Assessment** and **Habitats Regulations Assessment**, which have duly influenced the sustainability, ecological, heritage and environmental criteria adopted in site assessments. These points are elaborated in Topic Paper #1.
- 1.12. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of 'sustainable development' which the NPPF defines as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This in turn is expressed through three overarching dimensions – economic, social and environmental.

- 1.13. The Wiltshire Local Development Plan (LDP), 2006-26, sets out how 'sustainable development' is defined and applied within Wiltshire. Within the LDP the Core Strategy (adopted 2015) identifies different kinds of settlements and their roles, as well as defining the most sustainable locations for development. This identifies Colerne as a 'Large Village' within a settlement boundary. (Large Villages are defined as settlements with a limited range of employment, services and facilities.) The other settlements within the parish (see Section 4ic) are outside the settlement boundary and are therefore currently considered to be 'open countryside' for planning purposes.
- 1.14. Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Core Strategy provide support in principle for sustainable development within existing settlement boundaries. The Core Strategy states that proposals to develop local employment opportunities, housing or services outside the defined limits of development will not be supported unless included in community-led planning documents, such as a Neighbourhood Plan. In rural areas, the Wiltshire Core Strategy may also support the delivery of 'rural exception sites' to meet a defined local housing need, subject to available sites meeting environmental impact criteria.
- 1.15. The Core Strategy indicative housing requirement for new homes in Colerne (within the Corsham Community Area) was zero and Appendix 6 of the **Wiltshire Council Housing Land Supply Statement (2020)** reconfirmed an indicative remaining requirement of zero for the planning period. However, the Wiltshire Local Plan review is looking at housing requirements over the extended plan period to 2036, and provisional indicative numbers by Housing Market Area are available in the first public consultation document (**Empowering Rural Communities**, January 2021). These show a provisional indicative number for Colerne of +40 to 2036, of which 5 had been completed or pipelined by 2019. The implications of this are considered in this Plan in Section 3.
- 1.16. In August 2020 the government published its 'Planning for the Future' White Paper. Though none of its recommendations have yet entered legislation or guidance, some aspects of this Neighbourhood Plan are already in line with some of its proposals, notably Part 2 of this Plan – the Design Statement. As Colerne Parish lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly termed the Cotswolds AONB) all policies should demonstrate all possible conformity with its policies and guidance. The village of Colerne contains a designated Conservation Area which covers the core of the village. There are also around 100 Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments and a number of County Wildlife Sites in the parish.

Plan Designation

- 1.17. **The Designated Area** for this Neighbourhood Plan, as approved by the Local Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, in June 2017, is identical with the civil parish of Colerne. The qualifying body is the Parish Council of Colerne. The Plan period is 2021 to 2036. The Designated Area is shown in the following map:



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iv. How the Neighbourhood Plan was developed

a) Plan Management

- 1.18. Colerne Parish Council agreed in autumn 2016 to initiate a Neighbourhood Plan. The idea was introduced to the community at a public meeting held in December 2016, as an outcome of which a Steering Group (SG) was established to undertake research for and development of the Plan. The volunteer membership of this Steering Group was approved by the Parish Council, and included five Parish Councillors (one being the then PC Chair). The SG itself is independently chaired and the majority of its membership are not Parish Councillors. The Steering Group Terms of Reference can be found as an evidence document - **SGTOR**.
- 1.19. The SG held its first meeting in January 2017. At that point local resident Jane Mellett agreed to be the Group's Chair. In its early days the Steering Group comprised around 18 members. Inevitably, some of these have had to retire in the period since, but at early 2021 the SG still had a regular monthly attendance of between 8 and 10 members who had been present for the whole journey. SG members comprise both long-established and more recent local residents and possess a wide variety of professional backgrounds, which has meant that there has usually been one or more able to lead on particular aspects of the project.

b) Key Initiatives

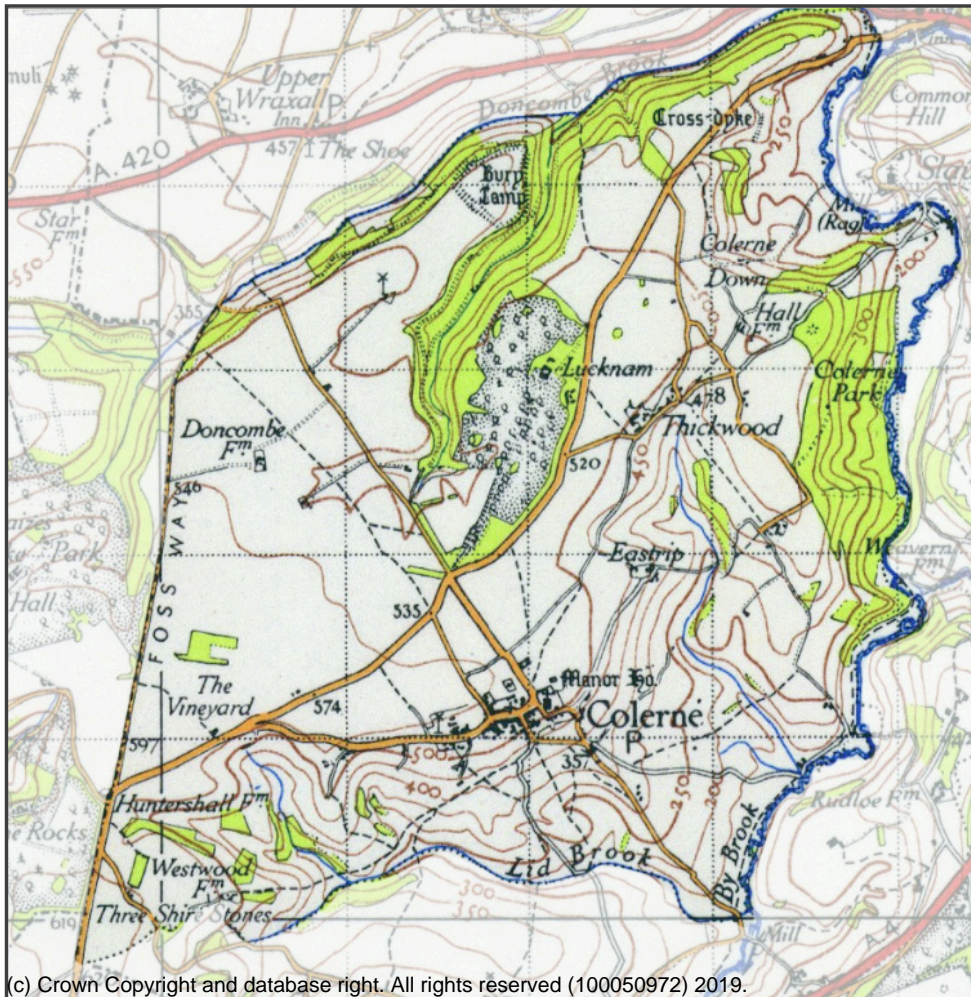
- 1.20. An early initiative was a series of **informal parish consultations** in spring 2017 that provided an overview of community concerns and priorities. A **local business survey** was conducted which received input from many local businesses; while the core information-gathering project, conducted in mid-2018, was a wide-ranging **Community Survey** circulated to all residents of the parish, which sought peoples' opinions and preferences on a range of development questions. The survey secured an excellent response rate of 40% of households and is reported on in detail in the Evidence Report referenced.

- 1.21. Following work by a topic sub-group in 2018/9, a **Housing and Sites Report** (January 2020) presented conclusions from three projects:
- (a) an analysis of potential local development sites (the outcomes of which are presented in Topic Paper #1 and **Housing Sites Assessment**);
 - (b) research into the local housing market; and
 - (c) a forecasting exercise of potential future local housing demand.
- 1.22. While some of the data and conclusions in this Report have now been superseded (see Section 3 i.c)), it provided an important platform for developing our thinking about housing need.
- 1.23. **The Design Statement**, identifying the key principles of building design for future development, was also prepared by a separate sub-group, and was initiated by a **Community Design Day** which featured an exhibition and collaborative field-work.
- 1.24. In March 2019 the SG held a **'Vision' Workshop** which reviewed findings from the above initiatives, and endeavoured to crystallize the principles of community development that were emerging and to create a long-term vision for the community. This session provided a valuable framework for Plan recommendations and also provided the basis for development of a visionary 'Concept Statement' (given in Topic Paper #2) to advise the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Wiltshire Council in considerations of the proposed re-development of the MoD estate (as referenced in Section 3 iv)-v).

Section 2: A Profile of the Colerne Community

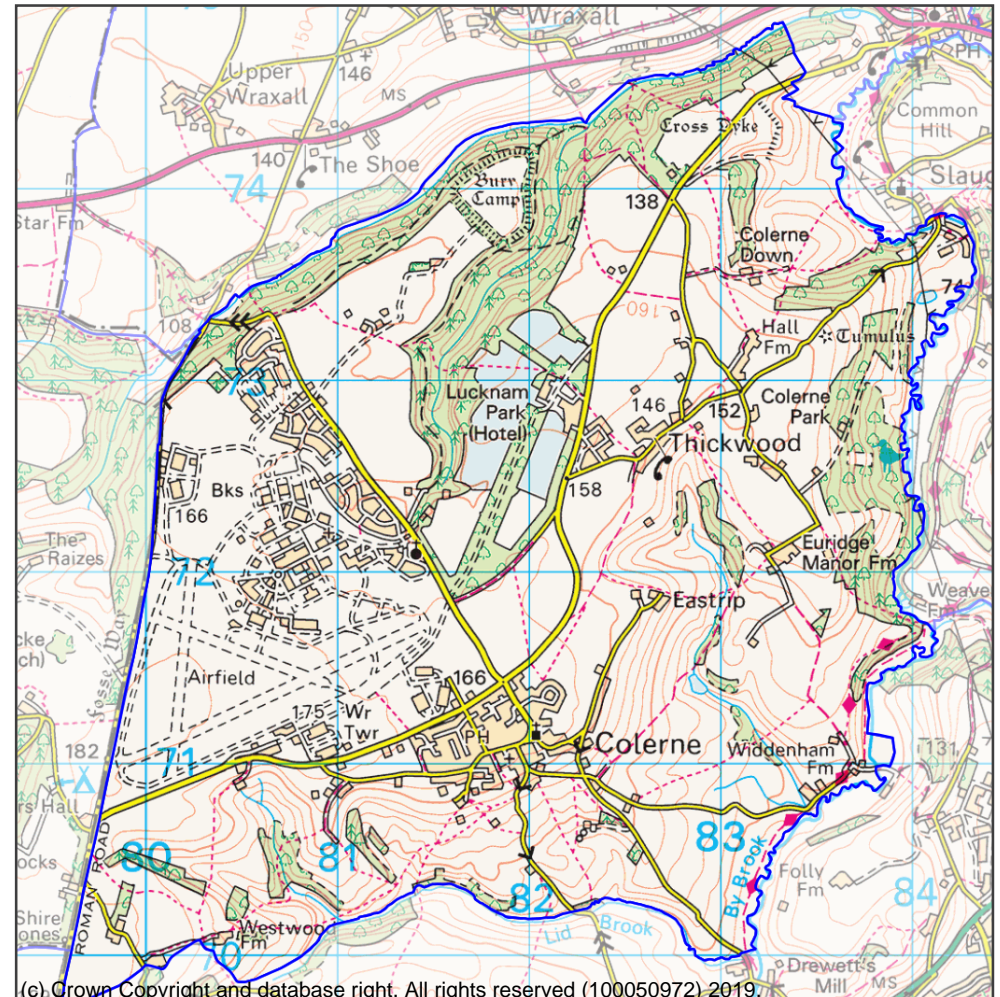
2.1. The parish of Colerne lies at the southern end of the Cotswold Hills, 545 ft above sea level and within the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The parish overlooks the valleys of the By Brook to the south east and, further south, the Avon; and the southern uplands of the Cotswold hills to the north and west.

1920's



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Today



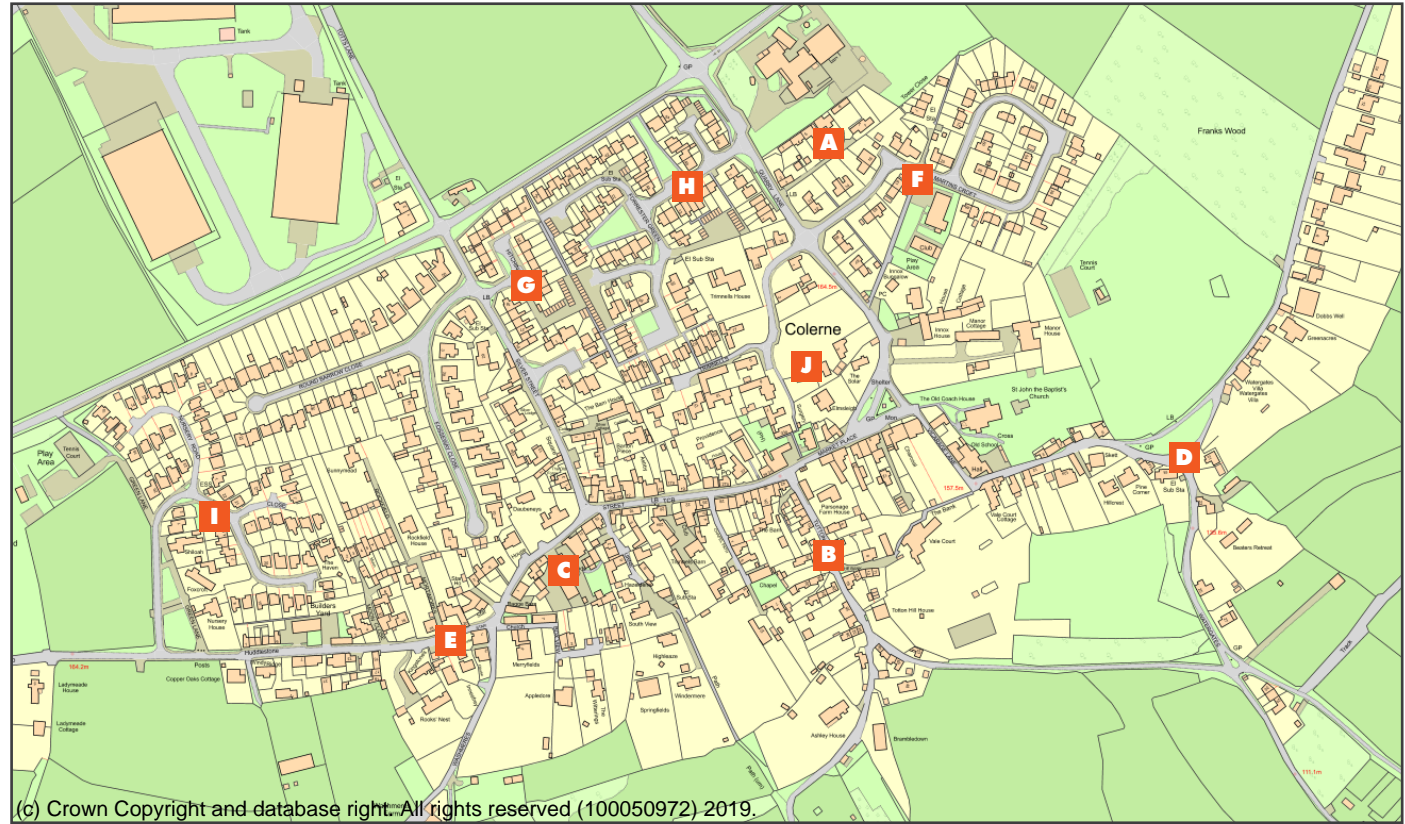
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- 2.2. Geographically it is a large parish. It stretches from the Fosse Way in the west to the thickly-wooded Doncombe Valley in the north, and it neighbours the small communities of Ford and Slaughterford to the east. To the south it descends steeply to the parish of Box. It comprises three main centres of population – the village itself, the Redwood, Southwood, Northwood and Pinewood estates to the north (collectively described as North Colerne), and Lucknam and Thickwood to the east, with scattered farmhouses and dwellings between. To the west and south-west the parish includes a part of the Bristol & Bath Green Belt.
- 2.3. Whichever minor road, lane or path is used for access, there is a steep hill at some point. The winds blow in from the Bristol Channel, and sometimes the village disappears into the clouds. This is Colerne - 'The Village on the Hill'. It is this elevated and - even today - somewhat isolated position, with its views outwards to the surrounding countryside and inwards from Rudloe and Kingsdown, which gives the parish its distinctive and valued character.
- 2.4. Geographical barriers have over centuries contributed to that degree of isolation and also to a sense of independence. This is reinforced by the inadequate nature of the infrastructure linking Colerne to Bath, Chippenham, Bristol and beyond. Even the key access road is only a minor road (C151), and narrows to a single lane as it approaches both the A4 to the south-west and the A420 to the north-east. The C151 descends steeply via a series of bends towards Batheaston following the edge of Bannerdown Hill, along a route that is little changed since Roman times. The direct route south to Box and the A4 is merely a single track lane with passing places. The road north, the Fosse Way, descends steeply into the Doncombe valley and is itself little more than single-track in places. Access to the village is unsuitable for large vehicles or high volumes of traffic, and even today a fall of winter snow can make the parish inaccessible.
- 2.5. The parish is an ancient English settlement that has evolved over centuries. Its height made it a place of safety, borne out by finds of Stone Age tools and by the Bury Wood Camp of the Iron Age. The Romans built the Fosse Way, which borders the parish to the west, and a villa dating from 4th/5th centuries was found beneath the land where the Airfield (formerly RAF Colerne) now lies.
- 2.6. Colerne was recorded as a settlement in the Domesday Book, in the hundred of Chippenham and the county of Wiltshire. It had a recorded population of 28 households in 1086, putting it in the largest 40% of settlements at that time.
- 2.7. From 1300 onwards, sheep farming and the wool industry centred around Bath helped the parish to prosper and by the 17th century, there were major farms and mills that generated agricultural and woollen-trade work for around 1,000 people. This declined when the wool trade moved away from the Cotswolds. From the early 1800s, stoneworking and quarrying were central to the wealth of the parish, while agriculture and paper milling maintained the activity of the three mills along the By Brook river at Slaughterford, Drewitts and Widdenham. New employment opportunities arose with Brunel's construction of the Box Tunnel in the mid-19th century, which brought labourers into the area.
- 2.8. By 1931, however, the village had again become a quiet, rather isolated place and home to only 844 persons. But its relative isolation (a carrier to Bath just twice a week) ensured a robust self-sufficiency, and as late as the 1980s the main street supported a range of independent businesses and services, from shoemaker to brewer to butcher.
- 2.9. The village dynamic changed markedly when in 1939 the government decided to take advantage of the hill-top Cotswolds plateau position to build one of ten major airfields for RAF fighters.
- 2.10. Throughout World War II, RAF Colerne was a strategic centre for western defences and provided employment, accommodation and services for military personnel. The airfield played a major role in the War – the historical significance of which has since become widely recognised. An active RAF presence continued until relatively recently, though somewhat diminished; and still today the Azimghur Barracks, situated on the northern part of the old airfield, is home to the No. 21 Signals Regiment. In 2018, however, the MoD announced an intention to dispose of the site for development.

2.11. Housing development over the centuries has been scattered and diverse resulting in the three separate residential areas within the parish. These are:

1. The Village of Colerne.

2.12. In 1875, the core of the old Colerne village extended as far as **A** Old Martins Croft to the north, the horse trough on **B** Tutton Hill to the south, the **C** Fox and Hounds to the west and the **D** Watergates well to the east. The Victorian developments along **E** Bath Road reflect the first major expansion of the village since the 18th century. The provision of council houses in **F** Martin's Croft and **G** Hitchings Skilling was begun soon after World War II and the majority had been built by the 1960s; some of these houses are now in private ownership. The private estates of **H** Forrester Green, the **I** Firs and **J** Trimmells were completed during the 1960s-1980s. Since then development has been focused mainly on upgrading old cottages and agricultural buildings.



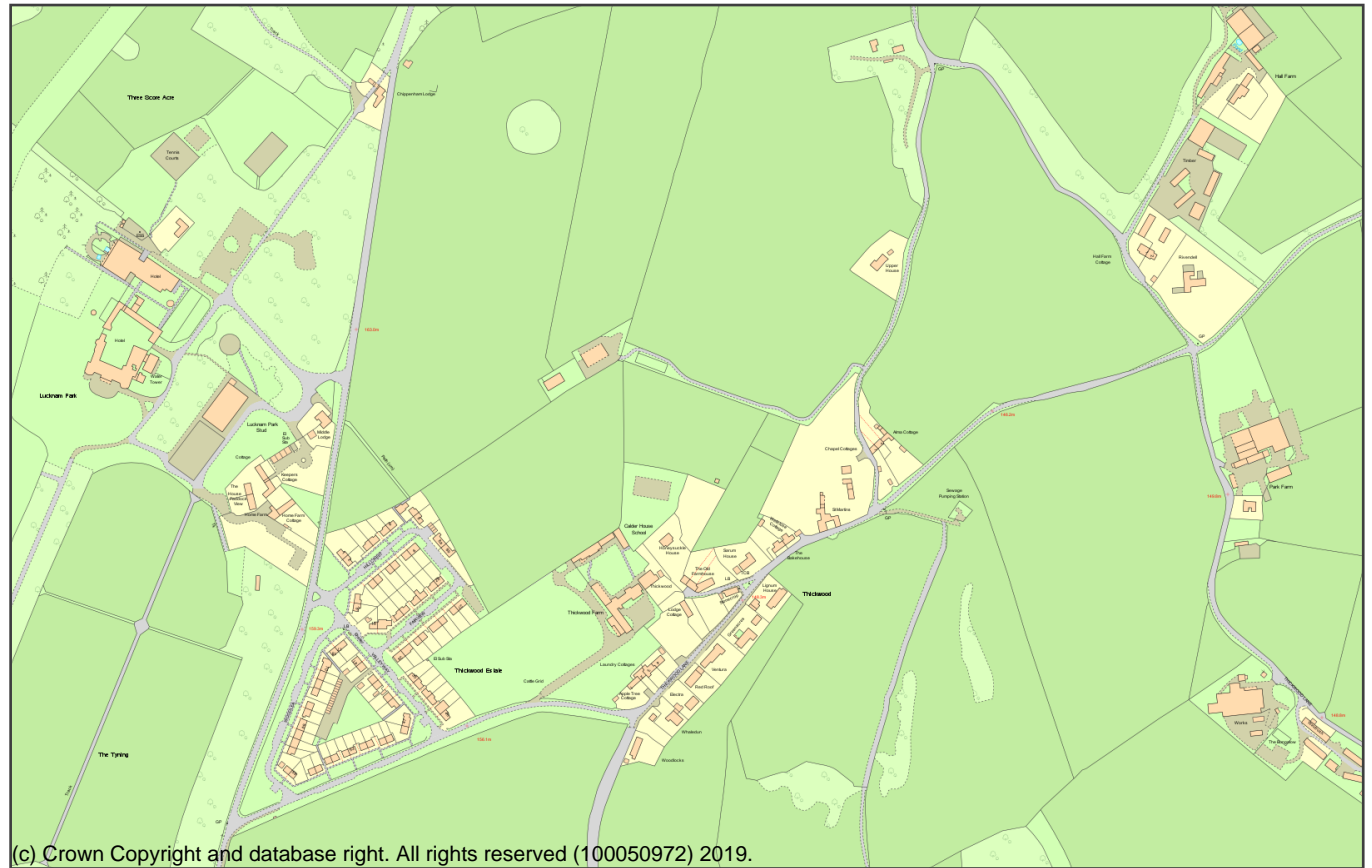
2. North Colerne.

2.13. At the beginning of the 20th century there was a sizable farm and some smaller farmsteads on the plateau at Doncombe, about a mile north of the village centre, but there were few other dwellings there. However, the construction of RAF Colerne after 1939 obliterated that agricultural landscape and marked a time of extensive development. Most of the housing estates now visible along Doncombe Lane were built to house wartime or post-war service personnel. Today, some are privately owned, others are still rented or used by military personnel. Pinewood Estate, the northernmost development in North Colerne, lies on the edge of the airfield plateau before the steep descent into the Doncombe valley.

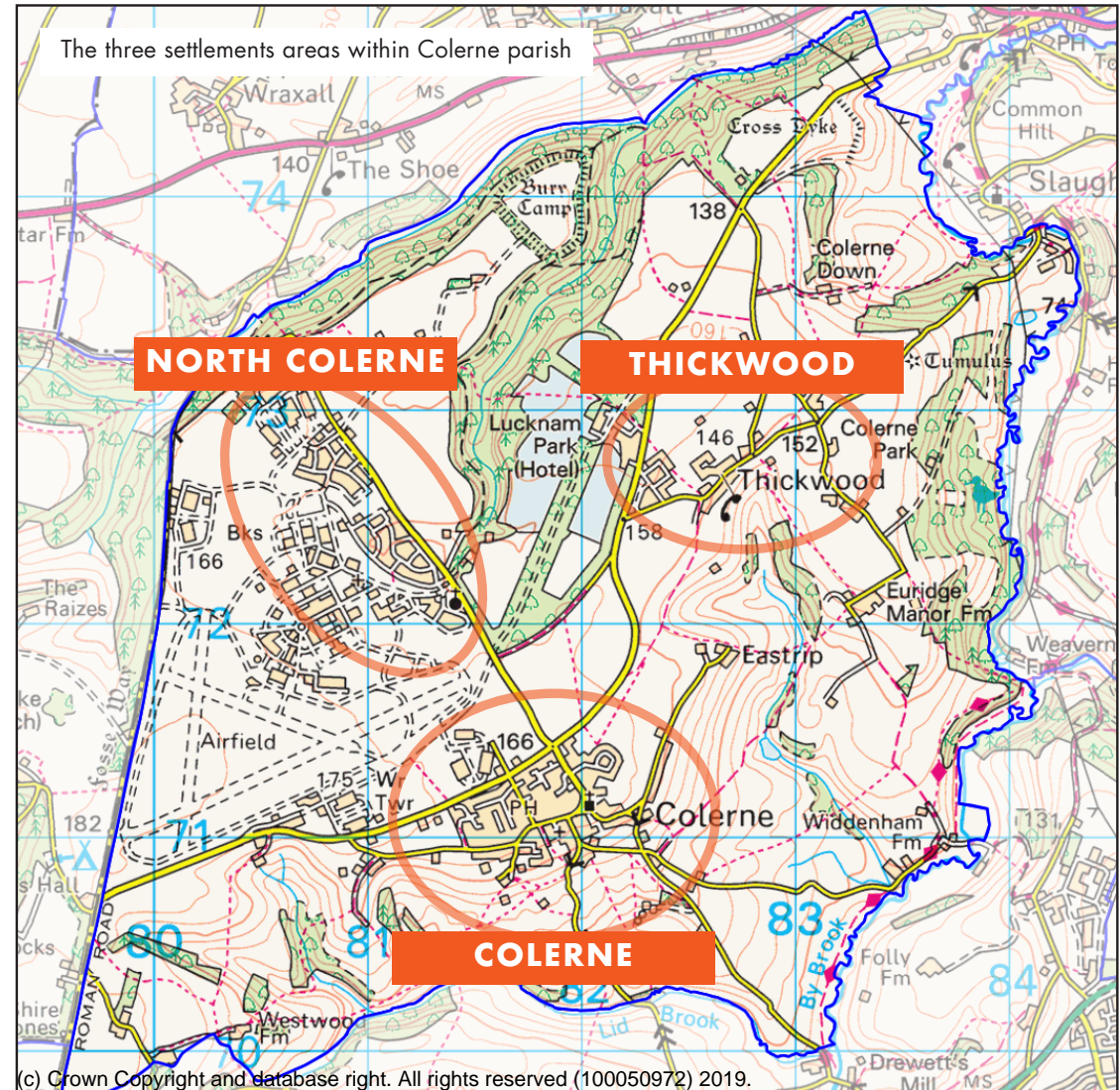


3. Thickwood

2.14. The hamlet of Thickwood was, until after World War II, primarily agricultural, with tied cottages and sizable farms including Euridge Manor and Lucknam Park. Thickwood Estate, now privately owned, was built for Royal Air Force personnel in the late 1950s. In parallel, a number of individual bungalows were built along the south east side of the road in Thickwood overlooking the By Brook valley.



- 2.15. These three settlements lie some distance apart from each other but are inter-connected from a community point of view. Families use the Colerne village facilities extensively – the school, social clubs, church and shops - and Colerne villagers visit North Colerne and Thickwood for leisure facilities and employment. There is an infrequent interconnecting bus service, but there are connecting pathways of varying quality. But much interconnection is by car and this can cause parking issues in the village. Travel outside the parish is usually by car as bus services are very limited.
- 2.16. Colerne is not an area that easily attracts new business, because of the limitations of road access and public transportation and its traditional role as a predominantly agricultural community. The main employer remains Azimghur Barracks. (Of the few larger businesses, most have developed for historical reasons in existing buildings eg Lucknam Park Hotel, and Jetway and the former Carpenter Oak in ex MoD buildings) or because they serve the local community. The minor businesses, of which there are several, are almost without exception home-based.
- 2.17. The parish is well-served by community facilities such as the Primary School, two GP Surgeries, some small shops, four pubs or social clubs, two sports fields and play-parks and a Village Hall. These, together with many groups supporting recreational and social activities, help to keep the community alive, welcoming and vibrant.
- 2.18. Centred on a true English village in spirit, character and history, the parish of Colerne is now a large community of about 3,000 but still comprises a working village and environs – not just residential, not just retirees, not a ‘second-home ghetto’, but enlivened by working folk, young families and their activities.



Section 3: Development Strategy

3.1. Our plan is based upon a series of facts and development principles reported in parts i.- v. below. Together these generate our Strategic Positioning, part vi.

i. Community Needs and Preferences

Neighbourhood Plan research and survey projects examined housing needs and community housing preferences, set against a profile of the community's current stock. This research is set out in the **Housing & Sites Report**, of which the key outcomes are as follows.

a) Housing Stock and Prices

- 3.2. The 2011 Census recorded Colerne as having a total of 1,091 dwellings of all types for a population of around 3,000 (which according to the Housing Needs Survey had changed very little by 2018). These dwellings encompass a large variety of property types and structures, ranging from the 14th-century to early 21st century, including mid-20th century ex-council and military houses that have been released to the market.
- 3.3. The village centre of Colerne consists primarily of older properties with some infill of later housing. The outlying settlement of Thickwood consists of older cottages and farms, and more modern housing built as military married quarters now privately owned. What is termed "North Colerne" is partly Service Family Accommodation

and partly areas of civilian-owned housing from earlier military disposals. Military occupied or leased housing accounts for over half of all dwellings in North Colerne (and nearly one-fifth of all dwellings in Colerne).

- 3.4. The diverse character of properties is reflected in the variation in the estimated average value of housing stock in different parts of the parish. Data from Zoopla (February 2019) suggest that the average value of Colerne housing stock was lower than that of its immediate neighbours, Biddestone, Marshfield, Batheaston and Bath, with properties in North Colerne being significantly lower than those of the towns and villages nearby.
- 3.5. These average Colerne house prices were slightly higher than the averages for Wiltshire and England. While there are few financially-assisted homes, there is some housing within the reach of some first-time buyers, at below average prices elsewhere in Wiltshire and nearby.

b) Employment Infrastructure

- 3.6. There is limited existing and potential employment in the parish. This is unlikely to change quickly because of poor transport links and road connections. Therefore additional housing supply, whether of private market housing or social housing, will need to be calibrated against intensified out-commuting that may follow, which would not only be against Local Plan and NPPF criteria, but would also be constrained by the limitations of road access and public transport.

c) Future Housing Requirements

- 3.7. A key component of the Neighbourhood Plan is the housing need over the Plan period. The Plan has adopted an indicative forecast for the Plan Period Housing Need of 35-40 dwellings. This arises from our own forecasting and specifically from Wiltshire Council's indicative numbers of January 2021.
- 3.8. When we commenced housing-needs assessments in 2018, we had no independent indicative data to draw upon and our own Housing and Sites Report referred to earlier provided a valuable starting point. As a consequence of later analysis and data, some of this Report's conclusions had been superseded by early 2021. A major new input was the indicative housing data from Wiltshire Council's Local Plan Review (LPR), released for informal consultation in January 2021. We have also noted the advice of Locality and other commentators that national trends (which we had used in our forecasting) are unlikely to be directly applicable to small rural communities, as they lack weighting for such factors as location, community population change, and the relative mobility of incomers and returners.

Table: Estimated Average Values of Housing Stock (February 2019) and Average Sale Prices between March 2014 and February 2019

Area	Average Value of Housing Stock (Feb. 2019) - £	Average Sale Price (£): Mar. 2014 to Feb. 2019
Biddestone	585,837	431,027
Marshfield	481,738	436,117
Bath	468,839	418,860
Batheaston	448,864	408,219
Colerne Parish (excluding North Colerne)	399,567	321,190
Corsham	354,841	319,822
Chippenham	339,214	284,976
North Colerne	191,414	178,737

Source: Zoopla: *Housing and Sites Report*, June 2019, revised September 2019 and January 2020

- 3.9. On this basis the SG concluded that the indicative housing need of 35-40 dwellings for Colerne that is quantified in the January 2021 LPR consultation should be adopted by this Neighbourhood Plan, and should supersede previous forecasts (including the current Local Development Plan requirement to 2026, which is zero).
- 3.10. The LPR indicative number was the outcome of a general methodology that Wiltshire Council applied to all Wiltshire large villages, and it did not take account of specific constraints that might apply. In our case these are the settlement boundary, and environmental, security and landscape constraints that are discussed elsewhere in this Plan and further elaborated in Topic Paper #1. Nevertheless the strategy outlined in this Plan is capable of meeting this Plan Period Housing Need.
- 3.11. An additional source was the **Housing Needs Survey** (HNS) conducted by Wiltshire Council in April 2018. This concluded that there was “a low level of sustained need for housing in the parish” and a short current waiting list. It indicated a minimum need in the following three years for 10 affordable dwellings, either as subsidised rented housing or shared ownership/discounted market homes. The Plan adopts this number as its Short-Term Housing Need.

d) Community Preferences

- 3.12. Several key community preferences about development emerged from the Neighbourhood Plan **Community Survey**, conducted in 2019. Topic Paper #1 sets out these findings, which may be summarised as:-
- preference for small scale developments in a range of different locations (larger scale estates of more than 25 houses were unpopular);
 - preference for a mix of types and size of new housing;
 - recognition of the place for alternative delivery models – Community Led Housing, Housing Association or shared ownership – to deliver affordable housing;
 - development by major developers to demonstrate intent to meet local needs;
 - new-build plots large enough to accommodate gardens and preclude on-street and pavement parking;
 - housing development to take place incrementally over time implying a housing trajectory of around 2-3 dwellings per year over the 16 year Plan period;
 - almost unanimous support for the idea that development should preserve the character and natural environment of the parish and its key landscape views;
 - strong support for the Plan’s development principle of ‘brownfield over greenfield’ *In light of the importance of this principle, it should be noted that the term “greenfield” is used throughout to indicate previously undeveloped land mainly agricultural, and is throughout clearly distinguished from “Green Belt” which indicates the area of the Parish which is specifically protected.*

ii. Future of the Ministry of Defence former ‘RAF Colerne’

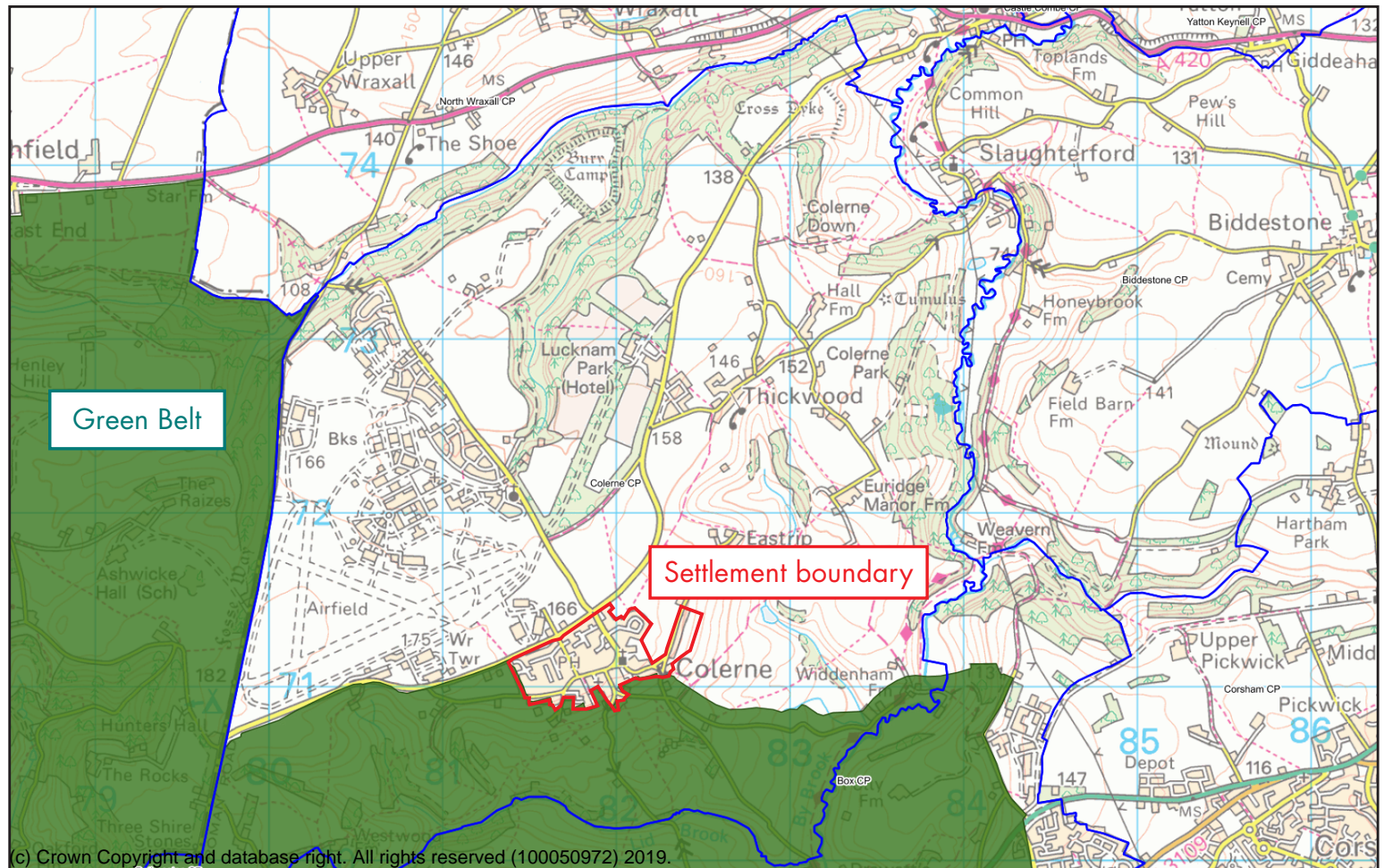
- 3.13. An important consideration in framing the Plan has been the 2018 Ministry of Defence announcement that during the plan period the MoD intends to dispose for development of the large site formerly called ‘RAF Colerne’. In particular we note that what is now the Azimghur Barracks area of this site is to be disposed of by 2031. This will provide extensive brownfield development land, the potential of which we set in the context of the NPPF paras 121 and 123 which aim to prioritise the development of brownfield over greenfield wherever possible. The consequences and opportunities of this longer-term prospect are explored in Topic Paper #2.



iii. Current Land-Availability Constraints

- 3.14. Colerne Village is recognised by the Wiltshire Local Plan as a Large Village capable of development within its defined settlement area. Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy give support in principle for sustainable development within existing settlement boundaries.
- 3.15. Colerne's Settlement Boundary is set tight around the existing village, and within it little development opportunity can be identified beyond infill or single-property re-development. (See: **Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, Appendix A: North and West HMA Part 1**, Amended Settlement Boundaries Adopted February 2020, from which the map adjacent is taken.) The Settlement Boundary is in turn bordered entirely by Green Belt or greenfield agricultural land with the exception of one ex-RAF hangar site (now an industrial storage complex) which is not deemed developable for residential for reasons outlined in Topic Paper #1.
- 3.16. As noted, the other settlements within the parish are outside the Settlement Boundary and are therefore considered to be 'open countryside' for planning purposes, only capable, in general, of 'rural exception site' development in limited circumstances.
- 3.17. In addition as already described in Section 1 iii above, further development constraints arise from the facts that the entire Designated Area lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB); that the village is bordered to the west and south by the Bristol and Bath Green Belt; and that the older part of the central village is designated a Conservation Area.

- 3.18. There is therefore an intersecting network of constraints that limit the "easy" identification of readily-developable land. There is, in short, limited immediate land availability. But the Plan is nevertheless able to adopt a strategic approach which aims at meeting identified needs over the Plan period.



iv. Development Deliverables

3.19. From the fact-base above and from interpretation of community preferences the SG distilled two core guidelines for how future development should be channeled and Plan Policies framed.

Village integrity

- 3.20. The current Settlement Boundary sits closely around the main village, and there is no significant land within it available for development.
- 3.21. The central area of the original village still preserves its Cotswolds Village style and atmosphere. The Community Survey (Q18) showed an overwhelming preference that, without prejudice to development that may occur elsewhere in the parish, this identity of place should be protected.
- 3.22. While a revised settlement Boundary could appropriate adjacent greenfield land (so long as it was outside the Green Belt), this is not adopted as a development route partly as it would compromise the village's rural setting and its sense of integration, and more significantly because, as argued below, it is not necessary (see also Topic Papers #1 and #2.)

Brownfield-over-greenfield

- 3.23. Expansion into greenfield would also conflict with NPPF policy that brownfield development should be given as much priority as possible (paras 121/123, NPPF). Greenfield land should not normally be developed when brownfield land is available or – as in Colerne's case – likely to become available. The NPPF sets a requirement that: "Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land".
- 3.24. As a consequence of these two considerations the SG reached the conclusion, expressed through the Plan, that development on greenfield is not a necessity. The MoD proposal to dispose of its Colerne estate for development would provide developable land, much of it brownfield, in a quantity well in excess of conceivable local needs.
- 3.25. It is recognised that this is not yet a "deliverable". The consequences of that current uncertainty are addressed below. Nevertheless, taking a strategic view, the Plan contends that an approach which set aside this potential may be said to infringe the NPPF para 121.

"Greenfield" and "Brownfield" in the Parish



[Source : Google Maps 'Streetview' and private image]

v. Managing Uncertainty

- 3.26. The **Vision workshop** of March 2019 considered positive principles that might be envisaged for re-development of the MoD site. That informed the preparation of a 'Concept Statement' – a community contribution to the master-planning of the MoD site (given in Topic Paper #2).
- 3.27. There are limitations to the site's development, for example (a) infrastructure and road access (see **Desktop Study of Roads around Doncombe Lane**); and (b) the continuation of the Satellite Ground Station which precludes development on the south of the site and limits the potential for development on the land outside the airfield boundary. (This may mean that the only value-adding future for the airfield itself might be retention for light-aircraft flying, perhaps along with a museum and visitor centre to record its important wartime heritage).
- 3.28. The SG also noted the expectation that the Wiltshire Local Plan Review could be completed (expected 2023) not long after this Neighbourhood Plan gets made, and so a further uncertainty is whether the revised Local Plan may in itself necessitate a review of this Neighbourhood Plan. By that time further clarity on the direction of MoD disposal may also be available and require review. The Plan's tactical approach to this uncertainty is supported by detailed arguments in Topic Paper #1, and the Parish Council is ready to undertake a Plan review should future circumstances require.
- 3.29. Given these contextual uncertainties, the SG needed to address the question: Why have a Neighbourhood Plan at all? It concluded that, even if it were subject to early review, a Neighbourhood Plan now could offer several important deliverables:
- a policy-led framework for both short and longer term development, through a set of planning Policies;
 - parameters of local housing need and demand so as to be able to work with Wiltshire Council housing assessments;
 - identification of immediately available sites and a platform for community-led housing;
 - definition and protection of community and housing character by setting out design principles to provide location-specific standards consistent with the Wiltshire Core Strategy;
 - a vision with respect to the MoD disposal which could work to the mutual benefit of the Ministry's and the community's objectives. The Concept Statement in Topic Paper #2 is the community's initial contribution to master-planning of the redevelopment.

vi. Our Strategic Positioning

- 3.30. Together, these considerations are crystallised into four fundamental planning principles which underpin the remainder of this Plan:
1. to allocate the limited site availability at this time to assist in meeting the housing need identified in the Wiltshire Council Housing Needs Survey;
 2. to meet the the longer term identified housing need through the availability during the planning period of significant brownfield;
 3. to retain the integrity of the central village by keeping its current settlement boundary, this being a sustainable proposition in light of future brownfield potential;
 4. recognition of a potential requirement to revise this Plan on the adoption of the Local Plan Review (2023) and/or as a result of emerging MoD land disposal plans.

vii. Development sites

- 3.31. The fact that this iteration of the Neighbourhood Plan cannot fully meet the Plan Period Housing Need and satisfy all of the community's preferences does not mean that nothing can be achieved. Working within the constraints identified, the Plan introduces proposals that can start to meet the identified Short Term Housing Need. Although these cannot at this time extend to meet the Plan Period Housing Need, Topic Paper #1 identifies future opportunities that could do so.
- 3.32. As a result of detailed evaluation, one site can be allocated as suitable for residential development, labelled the Thickwood Field. This is detailed in Section 5 Policy BE4.
- 3.33. The SG noted that some ideas for revised treatment of rural exception sites may be considered in the Local Plan Review (**Wiltshire Council Rural Housing Workshop, Calne, October 1 2019**). These might include:
- allowance for greater proportion of affordable housing on rural exception sites, with more precise, and additional, definitions of "affordability";
 - allowance for inclusion of starter homes, and homes for retirees and downsizers;
 - acceptability of Community Led Housing within rural exception sites.
- 3.34. Such ideas could offer additional options to meet identified short-term needs. Community-Led Housing on rural exception sites at a proportionate scale might also be able to bypass some development constraints. Because such a large proportion of this parish is classified as rural/open country, such schemes might be considered for small pockets of land not of interest for commercial development.
- 3.35. In summary, recognising the government's aim to boost the supply of housing, and the fact that there is a local affordable housing need, this Plan aims to meet housing needs through: housing delivery via redevelopment etc.; allocation at Thickwood; MoD land release; and rural exception sites as appropriate.

Section 4: Thematic Background to our Development Policies

i. Planning Themes

4.1. The Steering Group identified four planning themes that focussed the drafting of its Policies. The first is dealt with in detail in Topic Paper #1 and is only briefly recapitulated here.

a) Preservation of current land usages north of the C151

4.2. The objective of preserving the identity of the old village could be jeopardised by the apparent availability of developable land between the airfield and the C151. (The southern edge of this area defines the current settlement boundary.) Topic Paper #1 details cogent reasons for avoiding change of use of this ribbon of (largely) greenfield land and preserving its current uses – agriculture, sports and light industrial.

b) Character and Design

4.3. The Wiltshire Core Strategy provides general design principles, in particular in relation to landscape and the historic environment, but as it applies county-wide it does not provide the detail necessary for the enhancement of local distinctiveness as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (Sections: 13 (Green Belt), 15 (the natural environment [para 176/177 AONBs], 16 (the historic environment).

4.4. The Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Design Statement (DS) is an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan and is presented as Part B of the Plan. It follows an established format and aims to provide design guidance at a level of local detail that will “work” to protect the architectural and historic character of the Designated Area while encouraging modern standards, sustainability and innovation.

4.5. No “one size fits all” design policy will suit built environments that range from the 14th-century through military housing from the 1940’s to small private estates from the 1980’s. The DS therefore identifies 15 “character areas” within the parish, and provides design principles for each of them. It goes into particular detail in respect of Colerne village because much of it is in a Conservation Area for which there is no Assessment/Appraisal or Management Plan. There are also numerous listed buildings in the parish, many within the village, as well as large numbers of monuments and archaeological features.

4.6. The DS should be taken into account in preparing planning applications and decisions, and by parish residents, businesses and landowners who intend to improve their premises. This can be assisted, in appropriate cases, by reference to the **Pre-Application Protocol**.

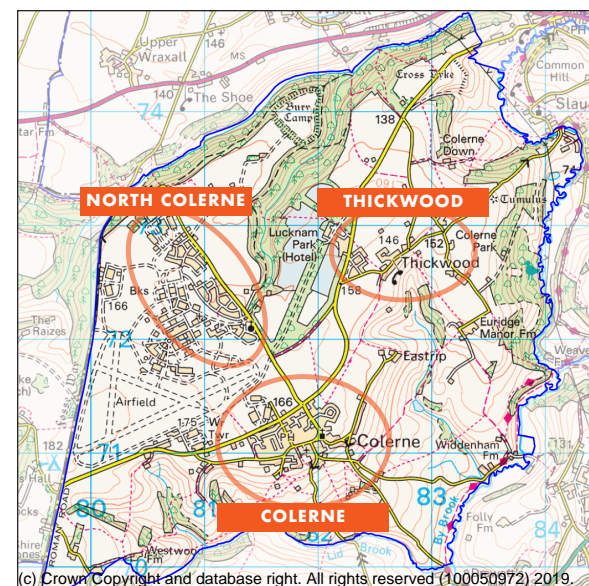
4.7. In accordance with NPPF para 176, the Design Statement general principles draw extensively on the Cotswolds AONB **Landscape and Strategy Guidelines**, which address factors such as:

- respect for pre-existing build character, materials, site and boundary layouts, and local vernacular;
- avoidance of “imported” off-the-shelf development styles, layouts and streetscapes;
- preservation of and harmonisation with archaeological and historic features;
- incorporation of principles of sustainable construction and supply (for example in energy supply and conservation, waste management, autonomous design).

4.8. While this may suggest a conservative approach to design, the DS makes clear that the Plan will support proposals that are of their time from a design and architectural point of view as long as they still respect the general DS standards and those of the relevant Character Area.

c) The three settlements

4.9. As described in Section 2, the parish of Colerne includes three discrete residential areas. Only one of these – the central village, with approximately 1,600 population – is currently defined as a “Settlement” in planning terms. Although the other two are in the planning category of “Open Countryside”, this is not at all an accurate description of their appearance or size. Thickwood and North Colerne are in themselves sizeable and characterful residential areas with their own profile; and all three settlements are interconnected by shared services and social links. Each of the three incorporates facilities used by the whole parish, which creates an active social and economic network between the areas.



4.10. Thickwood residents (approximately 400) and North Colerne residents (approximately 1,100) routinely go to Colerne village for its range of facilities – doctors, school/ playgroup, shops/pubs etc. Colerne village residents go to Thickwood for employment (four major employers — Lucknam Park, Calderhouse School, Jetway, Euridge Manor) and for recreation (Lucknam Park, dog walking/riding, running, cycling); and to North Colerne for swimming/badminton clubs (in the military facility but civilian-run), employment, pop-up youth facilities.

4.11. The Thickwood and North Colerne communities have pedestrian/cycle pathways of variable quality linking to the central village, and some very infrequent and irregular public bus services. The Plan envisages that larger developments (feasible in North Colerne) should facilitate transport infrastructure improvements. It also emphasises the shorter-term opportunity for new cycleways and pathways to better connect the three settlements with benefit to parents with buggies, school connections, mobility scooters, and walkers and cyclists.

4.12. North Colerne consists of four residential areas – Redwood, Southwood, Northwood, and Pinewood – close to each other but physically separated by MoD land and facilities. North Colerne is dominated by its links to the MoD, which, apart from its adjacency, has historically been a major local employer and remains so today.

4.13. This Plan aims to facilitate a greater connectivity between Pinewood, through Northwood and Southwood; and indeed beyond that to deliver better access to the village for North Colerne residents of all ages and ability without necessitating car use. Additionally, in the time that this Plan has been in preparation, security issues and Covid restrictions have both demonstrated the limitations of current access to existing MoD facilities for the 163 civilian homes in Southwood and Pinewood. Hence, new community facilities should be considered for North Colerne when MoD disposal master-planning takes place.



4.14. The viability of those could be increased by designing for greater integration between the existing residential communities of North Colerne. That would be enabled by infill of the spaces that exist between Pinewood/Northwood and Northwood/Southwood, so as to create an integrated North Colerne community – one that might in due course be capable of recognition as a Settlement. The key to this idea would be the availability and redevelopment of the currently derelict MoD semi-open land, sometimes referred to as the 'Drill Ground'. While this cannot yet be an allocated site, its potential in this context is discussed in the Topic Papers #1 and #2.

d) Climate emergency and the environment

- 4.15. While preparing this Plan, the expectations and standards required to mitigate the impact of climate change have developed fast. Biodiversity, the protection of green spaces and the development of nature corridors are not a luxury for the future, but an essential and fundamental building block to mitigate impact of climate change [NE2].
- 4.16. The Plan contends that high standards of building process and a carbon-neutral living environment have to be established for all new building locally, and encourages older properties to be retrofitted to reduce fuel usage and costs, and improve the quality of life for all [BE5].
- 4.17. Prior to the impact of Covid-19, 60% of all working age residents in this parish were commuting by car to work out of the area. Recognising that any built development will promote increased car usage, this Plan supports measures that seek a reduction in car commuting by support for homeworking and the creation of improved infrastructure for walking and cycling. The Plan has been written with the assumption that there will be no major improvements to highways in the parish, and that, where appropriate, development proposals must demonstrate how they will address the limitations of transport infrastructure. A more distant goal (Section 6) is the establishment of a local carbon-neutral community transport scheme that is flexible and frequent enough to be used by all sections of our local community.
- 4.18. New housing or employment developments must be designed to mitigate demand on energy production. The community has strongly supported the creation of a “community energy scheme”, discussed further in SE1-3. It is also essential that future developments include, appropriate to the site, the highest possible quality and quantity of ‘green’ features – trees, shrubs, grassland, hedgerows, and verges – with a presumption not just in favour of preservation of existing such features but also an overall ‘net gain’ (as proposed in the Environment Bill of 2019).
- 4.19. Particular Policies in the Plan that aim at climate change mitigation are: Sustainable design and construction [BE5]; Walking and Cycling [CHWB3]; Renewable energy [SE1]; car charging [SE2]. Some of these policies also have value in terms of post-Covid recovery and future pandemic resilience.

ii. Long-Term Vision and Objectives

- 4.20. The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to shape development that will be welcomed as a contribution to the unique character and environment of this lively rural Cotswolds hilltop community and its sense of place; enlisting an environmentally sustainable approach which is in tune with tackling the climate emergency. Tying together the foregoing considerations, we now summarise the Vision and Objectives that provide the setting for our Plan Policies.
- 4.21. Our Vision is that, by the end of its term, the Policies set out in the Plan will have ensured that:
 - i. The three residential areas of the parish have maintained their distinctiveness whilst developing organically and in association to meet local housing, employment and community services needs.
 - ii. Development has enhanced community identity and sense of place, and avoided “placeless” dormitory zones.
 - iii. New development design has enhanced the distinctive character of the parish, its settlements and buildings.
 - iv. The corridor of existing greenfield and light industry to the north of the village has retained current usages dedicated to agriculture, recreation and employment.
 - v. Ribbon development between the three residential areas has been prevented, and their surrounding agricultural landscapes have been maintained.
 - vi. Development, including of the MoD site, has been compatible with infrastructure capacities, and has given priority to autonomous and regenerative building.
 - vii. Building development and restoration has enhanced the rural nature of the parish, and in a way that responds to the economic and environmental challenges of the climate emergency.
 - viii. Transport infrastructure has been enhanced to encourage better interconnectedness with low-carbon impact within and without the parish.
 - ix. Development has sought to incorporate resilience to the overarching social challenges of the coming decades – climate change and possible new threats to public health.

- 4.22. The Objectives express the Vision at a practical level. They are evidence-based and reflect the needs and aspirations of the community ascertained via the work programmes referenced in the foregoing and in each individual Policy.
1. To ensure that development is sympathetic with the landscape and agricultural character of the parish and the Cotswolds National Landscape; and with the character of its varied built environments [NE1-4 and Design Statement];
 2. To ensure that housing development maintains the community's demographic and economic balance, encourages community coherence, fosters integrated community growth, and retains proportionality for the village and its hinterland [BE3,5];
 3. To encourage the provision of housing aimed at identified local needs, and on a scale that does not overwhelm the existing settlements [BE3 i, iv];
 4. To encourage existing and new low-impact businesses and services, to support Wiltshire's policy that new incoming population can occupy local jobs, and in the interest of community-building to minimise out-commuting to remote employment locations [EB1];
 5. To view all development through a low carbon lens, thereby striving for carbon-neutral status for all new homes, extensions and renovations; also for the generation of low carbon, renewable energy for use in transport, heating and lighting [SE1, BE5];
 6. Through its Design Statement to elaborate and make locally relevant the general design requirements of the Wiltshire Local Plan [Design Statement, PART B of this Neighbourhood Plan];
 7. To provide a framework by which development can be conditioned to contribute to supporting community services and infrastructure (including existing community facilities) [CHWB1-3];
 8. To preserve significant views out of the settlement that constitute an important community benefit, as well as ensuring the protection of views-in [NE4];
 9. To promote the provision of new cycleways and footways [CHWB3] to enhance interconnectivity across the parish (where possible facilitated by emerging low carbon technologies) and promote community health and well-being.
- 4.23. In the course of preparation of this Plan, community aspirations were identified which cannot at this stage be expressed as planning Policies but which can nevertheless provide important signposts for how the people of the parish would like to see future community developments taking shape. Some of these aspirations are recorded in **Section 6**.

Section 5: Development Policies

Introduction

5.1. The Policies included in this Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help determine planning applications within the Colerne Parish Neighbourhood Area. Each Policy has a unique reference number which can be quoted when comments are made on planning applications, and referred to by planning officers. The 17 individual policies are set out below, grouped under six Themes.

Theme A: Built environment policies

5.2. As described in Section 2 and Section 4 i c), the inhabitants of Colerne parish live in three main residential areas, each displaying a distinctive heritage and character. All these residential communities are set within

the environment of a pastoral landscape designated as National Landscape and in part as Green Belt and many are within a Conservation Area.

5.3. All new residential developments should enhance their immediate environments and public areas as places

worth living in, capitalising on the local community's assets, character, and potential in order to promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. Thus defined, 'placemaking' or 'community building' will be a constant theme when considering the impact of any development. The BE Policies aim to deliver these outcomes.

Policy BE1: Character and design

Context

5.4. With the publication early in 2020 of '*Living with Beauty*' (the report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission) and commitments about locally derived design characterisation in the Conservative Party manifesto of late 2019, locally distinctive design has become a more significant aspect of national planning policy. The model design code *Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England, 2020)* is also directly relevant.

5.5. Much of what is in these documents had already been picked up by the commitment of the Steering Group to produce a thorough locally-based Design Statement and also to introduce a Pre-Application Protocol as an aid to the delivery of locally distinctive design. In addition, Section 17 of the *Cotswolds AONB Position Statement on 'Housing and Development'* highlights key design criteria for developments within an AONB.

5.6. This approach is consistent with the design-led approach as captured in the NPPF (2021). The Neighbourhood Plan sets out the Parish Council's approach towards a clear design vision and expectations for development sites. This will ensure that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. As paragraph 126 of the NPPF 2021 comments 'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and

places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process'. The Parish Council will work with other to achieve these outcomes in the neighbourhood area.

5.7. Policy BE1 sets out a broader policy approach to secure high-quality design in the neighbourhood area. Applicants should demonstrate the way in which they comply with the Design Statement in preparing their design and access statements to accompany planning applications. Where appropriate developers should demonstrate compliance with Building for a Healthy Life.

5.8. Some construction works by utility companies will need planning permission and others may not. In the latter case, whilst needing to ensure public safety and performance, proposed utility development should be sensitively positioned to respect the natural landscape in the wider neighbourhood area and the Colerne Conservation Area.

Guiding Evidence

5.9. Responses to the Community Survey generated the following information:

- 87% of respondents (Q.3) supported the preservation of

the existing character of the parish.

- 92% agreed (Q.19) that key landscape views should be protected even at the expense of housing or economic development.
- 99% thought it important (Q.18) that the natural environment (especially valued local green spaces) should be protected.

5.10. The Design Statement (PART B of this Neighbourhood Plan) was also produced with its own stages of community involvement (as explained in the Statement).

Policy BE1: Character and design

- a. In order to create high quality buildings and places that are beautiful and enduring, development proposals should respond positively and distinctively to the National Model Design Code and the Colerne Design Statement as appropriate to their scale, nature and location. In particular, development proposals should be designed in a way which takes account of their surroundings in their built form, height, materials, historic character and boundary treatments.
- b. Developments which feature innovative and/or modern designs will be supported where they respect their surroundings and complement the setting of other buildings in terms of their height, massing and use of materials.
- c. Proposals which do not result in the creation of high-quality development or which unacceptably conflict with their surroundings will not be supported.

Policy BE2: Heritage

Context

- 5.11. The history of the parish of Colerne is summarised in Section 2. In the present context we can note additionally that the Church of St John the Baptist is Grade I listed, as are a number of the graves and the Celtic cross that marks the original early Christian settlement prior to the Norman church. The farmhouse Daubeney's (Grade II* listed) at the east end of High Street is a surviving example of a 'long house'.
- 5.12. Lucknam Park remains largely intact, with its Palladian building and unique half-mile avenue of mature trees. The farms and workers' cottages associated with the Park estate remain in the hamlet of Thickwood. Euridge Manor was owned by Malmesbury Abbey until confiscated by Henry VIII on the dissolution of the monasteries. Elizabeth I later granted the house and estates to Sir Walter Raleigh. The MoD site includes features of longer-term heritage value, including a number relating to its World War II historical significance.
- 5.13. For the whole parish, the built environment has to respect its location within the Cotswolds National Landscape. There is always potential for heritage assets to be negatively impacted by future development, particularly with the need to consider the impacts of climate change. These policies are designed to protect and mitigate against such impacts.
- 5.14. Traditional and historic buildings, including listed buildings and those within conservation areas are often expensive to heat and can be draughty and cold to live in. The government and Historic England recognise that historic buildings (including listed buildings) are not immune from the need to reduce carbon emissions and secure energy efficiency improvements. Provided a sensitive approach is

adopted and the character and heritage significance of the building is conserved, Historic England is usually supportive of proposals to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy use in historic buildings (**Historic England Energy Efficiency Advice**).

- 5.15. There is a statutory duty to preserve the character and appearance of a Conservation Area – S72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The local Wiltshire listing map can be accessed at: <https://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/HistoryEnvRecord/Home/Index>.
- 5.16. Policy BE2 addresses these matters. They are important to the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area. Where appropriate, a heritage impact assessment will be required to accompany a planning application.

Guiding evidence

- 5.17. The **Historic Evidence Report** includes details from the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record of monuments, listed buildings, events, parks and gardens and historic landscapes. In addition, Historic England's National Heritage listings are available within the Evidence report and these can be more easily accessed via the Historic England map locating each heritage listing within the parish. It is the duty of all developers and property owners to acquaint themselves with the character details of their property and neighbouring properties. (See the Plan Design Statement, which provides an assessment of character and design for the whole parish).
- 5.18. Over the past 40 years, the local History Society has presented the depth of history evident within the parish in two volumes (1990, 1995) under the title **The Village on the Hill**.

Policy BE2: Heritage

- a. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset as set out in the Colerne Historic Environment Record, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Proposals which would result in harm to a designated heritage assets will be determined in accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF 2021.
- b. The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in historic buildings, including the retrofitting of listed buildings, and buildings of solid wall or traditional construction or within conservation areas will be supported where the works would safeguard the special characteristics of the heritage asset concerned.

Policy BE3: Housing policy

Context

- 5.19. There is a wide range of interlinked criteria and standards of judgment relating to housing development. Therefore, these Housing Policies are combined into one set because they have a common purpose, which is to provide a practical framework for evaluating the fitness of development applications in the context of the local environment with which this Plan is concerned.
- 5.20. The policies should be read against the background of the Plan Development Strategy, Section 4, Topic Paper #1, and the contexts of the NPPF and Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 5.21. Pursuant to eventual availability for development of large brownfield sites, 'mixed-purpose development' will be favoured. [See also Topic Paper #2]
- 5.22. Policy BE1 sets out a wider context for new development to respond to the principles within the Design Statement. This approach will apply to the development of housing sites.

Guiding Evidence

- 5.23. Responses to the Community Survey generated the following data:
- Rate of development: 47% (Q.1) felt that development should take place in a "step-by-step way".
 - Scale of development: 59% (Q.6) favoured small-scale developments taking place in a range of different locations; 45% supported infill; 6% supported larger scale developments (more than 25 houses).
 - Phasing of development: 58% (Q.7) favoured the gradual addition of a few houses per year; 37% favoured mid-sized developments; 5% supported large scale single-site projects.
 - Sorts and size of houses: 50% (Q.5) felt that there needs to be a balance of all sizes of dwelling. Affordable Housing provision was supported by nearly all (92%) of respondents (Q.2).

Policy BE3: Housing policy

- a. The mix of housing stock within any development should demonstrate how it responds to local needs across a broad range, including provision for an ageing population (disability and 'downsizers'); units for younger people and first-time buyers; financially-assisted homes; and properties designed to accommodate home-working and those seeking larger family properties. Proposals for small scale developments which include a mix of different dwelling types will be particularly supported.
- b. When Local Plan policy requires affordable housing, developers should offer affordability through one of the following routes:
- Social Rent
 - Affordable Rent
 - Shared Ownership
 - Community-Led Housing.
- c. Proposals for housing development which meet the other elements of this policy and would bring about the redevelopment of previously-developed land will be particularly supported.
- d. Irrespective of the type of proposed residential development, proposals should be compliant with Bats Special Area of Conservation Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Natural England and Wiltshire Council 2015).

Policy BE5: Sustainable design and construction

Context

- 5.30. There is general support for sustainable construction in Core Strategy CP41, in the current Building Regulations, and in the Government's response to the proposed Future Homes Standard. (New legislation and new standards are to be phased in from 2021 to 2025.) At March 2021 we understand that CP41 may be reviewed within the Local Plan review with a view to setting higher than Building Regulations standards for all new residential development (as other South West Planning Authorities are also doing).
- 5.31. The government **National Design Guide (2021)** states that:
- “... Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change by being energy efficient and minimising carbon emissions to meet the Government legal net zero target by 2050. ... It identifies measures to achieve mitigation, primarily by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising embodied energy ...”.
- “... Well-designed places have a ... form ... that reduces their resource requirement ... [and] use materials and adopt technologies to minimise their environmental impact.”
- 5.32. Sustainable design and construction involves making use of a range of 'eco building' methods such as low carbon, renewable energy, water use reduction, waste-water management, waste reduction and the use of locally-sourced materials – thus requiring the use of auditing tools such as environmental impact analysis.

- 5.33. This is not just about construction (and hence Building Regulations) because sustainable design also relates to ensuring:
- A mix of uses and facilities within a neighbourhood to reduce travel demand and energy demands.
 - Places that are durable and adaptable to help make them less resource hungry over time – including the layout of infrastructure servicing and development.
 - The layout of buildings and planting to reduce energy and water use and mitigate against flooding, pollution and overheating.
 - Passive solar design in the siting of buildings to maximise the use of the sun's energy for heating and cooling.

Guiding evidence

- 5.34. The Community Consultations raised the following general points with respect to sustainable design and ecobuilding:
- an aspiration for all new development to have a zero carbon footprint;
 - the potential of prefabricated units for housing;
 - minimisation of infrastructure requirements (e.g. sewage disposal).
- 5.35. The Community Survey showed (Q.3), as criteria for new buildings, that 75% of respondents supported the use of energy-efficient technologies and 57% supported the inclusion of 'eco-home' design.
- 5.36. The policy below is also supported in the Design Statement which stresses that: “... designs which make use of sustainable construction methods in terms of energy conservation and supply, waste conservation and so forth will be supported”.

- 5.37. Policy BE5 sets out to take a practicable and a proportionate approach to this important matter. Its first part ensures that sustainable design is consistent with the character and appearance of the Character Area in which the proposal is located. It also ensures that the detailed matters in relation to energy inputs and on-site energy development are applied as appropriate to the scale, nature and location of development proposals. Plainly larger proposals will offer a much greater opportunity for such approach. In contrast many minor and domestic proposals will present far less opportunities

Policy BE5: Sustainable Design and Construction

- a. Development proposals should be designed to achieve the highest level of energy efficiency practicable, and which would be consistent with the character and appearance of the Character Area in which they are located. In addition, and as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should reduce the need for energy inputs, and use a renewable energy resource developed on-site.
- b. Proposals will be supported that contribute to the Wiltshire-wide target of carbon neutrality by 2030.
- c. Proposals will be supported that incorporate National Design Guide requirements and meet national and local policy requirements. Where feasible and viable, development that goes beyond national standards in place at the time will be supported.

Theme B: Natural Environment Policies

5.38. These policies aim to protect the landscape setting of the parish, in particular the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB,) and to maintain the distinctive views and visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside from public places within the parish. This Neighbourhood Plan also requires that green spaces within housing areas and recreational spaces are adequately protected, as set out in the [Local Green Spaces Report](#).

Policy NE1: Landscape and Natural Environment

Context

5.38. The parish of Colerne is set into (as well as on) its surrounding landscape. It has an unusual geology and topography, with several unique character areas, as defined by the [Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment \(LCA\)](#) and the [Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidance](#), which are summarised in the Design Statement. The LCA classifies and describes the local landscape and identifies features and characteristics that contribute to this locality's particular 'sense of place' generated by its agricultural and farming base. All of the parish is also in a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for bats.

5.39. Policy NE1 sets out a policy context to address these important matters. In particular it seeks to complement both national policy and local policy (Core Policy 51) and in relation to development in the AONB in particular. Part a of the policy comments about the effect of new development on the landscape. Where appropriate, applications should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA). Part b comments about the importance of new developments ensuring compliance with the importance and significance of the Bath and Bradford Bats SAC. To ensure such compliance:

- if any potential impacts on bat roosts, commuting corridors or foraging areas are identified, then a

licensed bat ecologist should be commissioned to carry out a preliminary visit and desk study to assess the risk and the need for further survey work;

- all development brought forward within core areas shall produce a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment of the development's impact on the integrity of the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC.

Guiding evidence

5.40. The Community Consultations identified the desire to develop more green spaces around and within housing developments, allowing community access. 99% of 536 respondents reported it "extremely important/important" (Q.18) that development should respect the natural environment and character of the parish.

Policy NE1: Landscape and Natural Environment

- a. Future development should maintain adequate open landscape space, rural and agricultural in character, between Colerne and other settlements in the parish so that the landscape continues to provide the overall character and context of the parish.
- b. Development will only be supported where it can demonstrate compliance with the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) or any subsequent update, and where it will not adversely affect any European site or core roosts and sensitive features within the Core Areas which are regarded as functionally linked to European sites.



Policy NE2: Green infrastructure and biodiversity

Context

- 5.41. In the context of Colerne parish – including the MoD Airfield and Barracks sites after disposal – green infrastructure includes walking, cycling and horse riding routes that are not on public highways, as well as hedgerows, tree lines and other natural features that provide wildlife corridors.
- 5.42. The parish of Colerne is bordered to the west by the Bristol and Bath Green Belt and to the South East by Colerne Park, which includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) dedicated to nature conservation and managed by the Woodland Trust. To the north of the C151 there are a number of dense woodland areas leading into South Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds and these, together with the surrounding agricultural pastures, provide essential habitats and corridors supporting a rich biodiversity. There is a well-used system of public footpaths and bridleways connecting the different parts of the parish (**Parish Council walk map**). The narrow lanes with hedgerows provide essential insect-hunting areas for local bird and bat populations (**Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan**).
- 5.43. As per NPPF para 179, plans should:
- i) *identify, map and safeguard ... local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks; ... wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;*
 - ii) *promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks;... the protection and recovery of priority*

species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

- 5.44. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate the provision of a net gain in biodiversity through enhancement and creation of ecological networks within and, where possible, beyond the site. Net Gain is an approach that uses the planning process to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- 5.45. Policy NE2 addresses these important matters. Part c comments about the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC. Any proposed development within Core Areas should be accompanied with sufficient details of the development’s impact on the integrity of the SAC to allow Wiltshire Council to reach an informed decision on the planning application.

Guiding Evidence

- 5.46. The Community Consultations raised the following general points with respect to green infrastructure and biodiversity:
- a concern that new developments should encourage good community interconnectedness;
 - that they should embody community access to open spaces;
 - that new tree-planting should feature in any new development.
- 5.47. The Community Survey included a section on the general parish environment.
- 53% of respondents (Q.1) thought it important that green spaces providing habitats for wildlife are protected.
 - 70% chose “Wildlife conservation” (Q.33) as a priority for the redevelopment of the MoD site.

Policy NE2: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- a. Development proposals should positively respond to green infrastructure and biodiversity matters, including but not limited to:
 - i) maintaining and improving the quality of existing green infrastructure, including local networks and corridors, specifically to increase value as a recreation asset and as a habitat for biodiversity;
 - ii) measures to reduce damage/disturbance to surrounding wildlife and green corridors and watercourses during the demolition/construction process;
 - iii) demonstrating how existing green areas and trees will be protected, and show how mitigation of the climate emergency is offered through maximum feasible planting of native tree species;
 - iv) respecting and accommodating the essential systems constituted by the numerous aquifers that flow down from the wolds into the Box valley and the By Brook river, feeding springs and watercourses;
 - v) recognition of County Wildlife Sites and designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- b. Proposals shall include a biodiversity gain plan that details how a 10% uplift in biodiversity will be achieved. The uplift should be achieved on the site itself. Where this would be impracticable to do so, it should be offset on other land within the immediate vicinity of the application site.
- c. Development will only be supported where it can demonstrate compliance with the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) or any subsequent update, and where it will not adversely affect any European site or Core Roosts and sensitive features within the Core Areas which are regarded as functionally linked to European sites.

Policy NE3: Local green spaces

Context

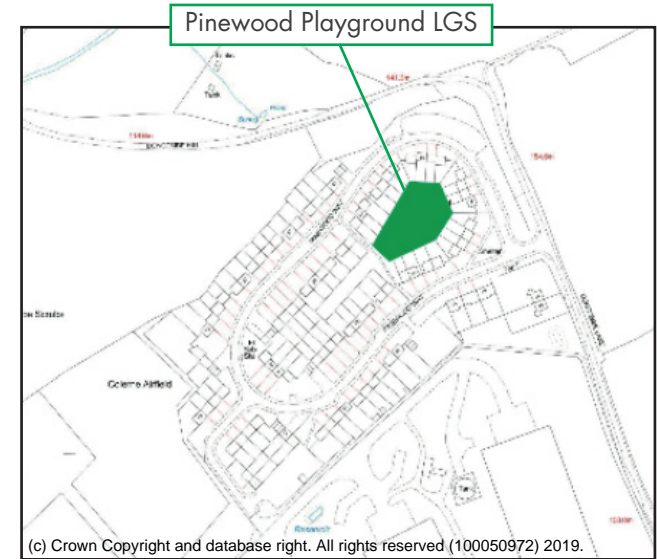
- 5.48. 'Local Green Space' is defined as "... a green area of particular importance to a local community designated as such through a local plan or neighbourhood development plan". The designation should only be used where the green space is:
- 1.in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - 2.demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance;
 - 3.local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
- 5.49. Policy NE3 designates the Pinewood Playground as a local green space. In doing so it follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the Pinewood Playground local green space within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by Wiltshire Council. In particular it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the 'very special circumstances' required by the policy.
- 5.50. Earlier stages of the Plan looked at the potential to designate the play area at Northwood as a local green space. However, given its location within an operational military base such a designation has not been pursued in this Plan. However, Topic Paper 2: 'A Concept Statement for the MOD Estate' sets out the Parish Council's approach to the opportunities, constraints and uncertainties regarding the future of the MOD sites. Whilst the master planning of RAF Colerne and Azimghur Barracks has not yet commenced the Parish Council will continue to liaise with the MOD as disposal progresses both in general terms, and with a view to any development which comes forward in the future safeguarding the existing Northwood Play Area.

Guiding Evidence

- 5.51. Responses to the Community Survey showed clear support for the conservation of landscape and green infrastructure, with 98% support (Q.20) for the proposition that Local Green Spaces – of historical, archaeological, recreational or wildlife value – should be identified to protect them from housing or economic development.
- 5.52. The Community Consultations identified the desire to develop more green spaces around and within housing developments, allowing community access.
- .99% of 536 respondents thought it "extremely important/important" (Q.18) that development should respect the natural environment and character of the parish.
 - .98% agreed that the NP should "...designate small 'Local Green Spaces' within our settlements (if they have historical, archaeological, recreational or wildlife value) [to protect] them from future development" (Q.20).
- 5.53. The Local Green Spaces Report identified 25 potential Local Green Spaces and their significance to their area and communities, and assessed them against the government guidance, supplemented by a more detailed local set of criteria. All but Pinewood Playground and Northwood Football, Play and Open Area were determined to already have adequate protection under Green Belt, CNL, listed monument criteria etc. The full statutory process of designation was carried out.

Policy NE3: Local Green Spaces

The Plan designates the Pinewood Playground as a Local Green Space. Development proposals within the designated local green space will only be supported in very special circumstances.



Policy NE4: Key views

Context

5.54. The central village, the outlying hamlets and their wider environment require special conservation considerations due to their significant landscape value within the Cotswolds National Landscape, and their general rural setting. Key Views into, within, and out of the parish and its settlements contribute significantly to its character and are valued by the local community.

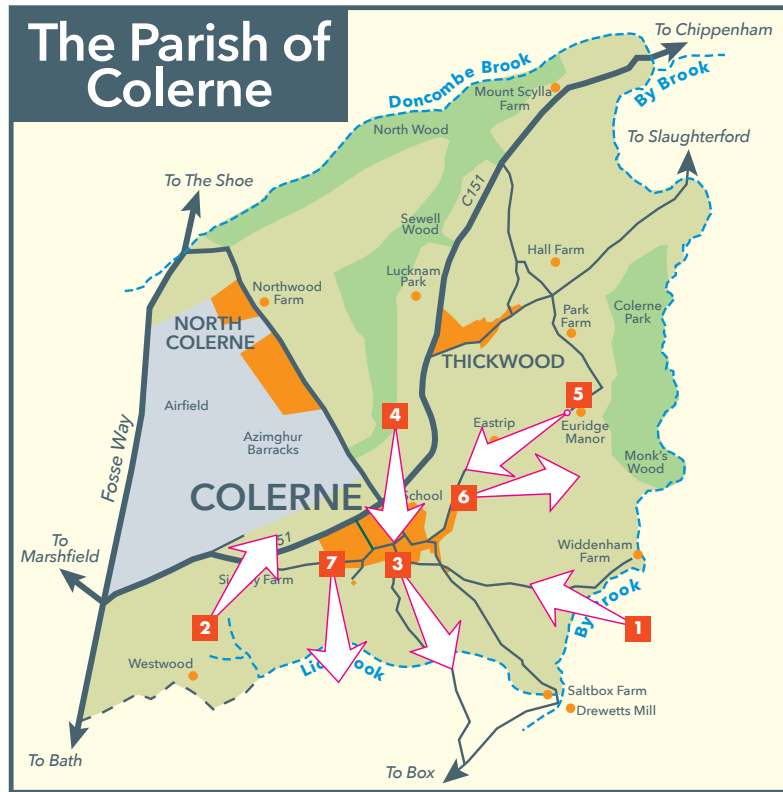
5.55. Policy NE4 comments on the significance of identified key views in the parish and the way in which new development proposals should be designed to respect these important features of the natural landscape. The Key Views and Valued Views reports identify the various important landscape aspects of the parish.

Guiding Evidence

5.56. The Community Consultations returned repeatedly to the general point that “the parish of Colerne is a beautiful place to live” – an observation dependent on the existence and maintenance of the key views out of (and into) the parish. Results from the Community Survey showed clear support for the conservation of landscape and key views. 92% of respondents agreed (Q.19) that “... Key landscape views are community assets” and that these views should be protected.

Policy NE4: Key Views

- a. The scale, layout, and massing of development proposals should be designed to respect and, where practicable, to enhance an affected Key View as shown in the details of the policy and the Key Views Report.
- b. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on an identified Key View will not be supported unless the public benefits arising from the development would outweigh the harm to the view concerned.



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Theme C. Employment and Business Policy

- 5.57. The **Colerne Business Survey** revealed that Colerne is not an area that easily attracts new business. Of the larger businesses, most are here for historical reasons (Azimghur Barracks, Lucknam Park, Jetway) or because they serve the local community (schools, doctors, shops). The small businesses (e.g. sole traders) are here, almost without exception, because they are home-based.
- 5.58. Since the completion of the Business Survey, there have been some significant changes. Two major businesses now make use of redundant hangars to the south of the airfield for long-term industrial storage. There are three small 'business parks' ; one using farm buildings (approx. 5 businesses employing others), one (recently vacated) using a collection of ex-MoD nissen huts (could be used for 3 or more businesses), and the Slaughterford Mill site (which now has 13 units housing 16 small or sole trader businesses, with low-cost premises). Otherwise, until the disposal of further MoD facilities, there are at present no premises or facilities in the parish that are likely to host significant new business activity.
- 5.59. There are only seven businesses that employ more than 20 people, of which two have more than 100 employees (Azimghur Barracks and Lucknam Park Hotel), a significant proportion of whose employees are from outside the parish either as daily commuters or live-in staff. The majority of people owning or employed by the smaller firms live in the parish. None of the existing major businesses expressed a need for expansion of their premises or interest in moving to a more modern facility if this was created. A few of the smaller concerns would like more space, with some interest in live-work units.
- 5.60. The impact of Covid 19 restrictions has been to demonstrate how many people are able to work from home. The good-quality internet connections for most of the parish are likely to drive a longer-term change in commuting practices and increase the need for community hubs where homeworkers and sole traders can come together and share facilities.
- 5.61. Nevertheless to the extent viable, the Plan supports and encourages new employment opportunities in the interests of promoting community self-sufficiency. The Policy under this Theme expresses this, and in doing so supports the aims of the Wiltshire Local Plan Core Strategy (e.g. paras 1.3, 1.4, 2.9) and the economic component of sustainability set out in the NPPF.



Policy EB1: Existing and future employment opportunities

Context

- 5.62. The economic activity of the parish of Colerne has historically been primarily agricultural and artisanal, occupations which remain prominent, but today with some limited business and commercial mix. Loss of any of these businesses will increase the numbers of residents already commuting to Bath, Chippenham and beyond for work.
- 5.63. There is recognition from the community of the need to encourage business development to enable more residents to work locally – provided that these businesses are small in scale and have an acceptable impact on local infrastructure and the environment. Policy EB1 contributes to securing developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the parish, fostering a sustainable community with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities.
- 5.64. Policy EB1 is framed around Core Policy 35 of the Core Strategy, and is intended to add more local traction to that general Policy.

Guiding Evidence

- 5.65. The Community Consultations revealed significant support for the retention of existing businesses, where possible, and to sustain employment opportunities within the parish. Responses to the Community Survey showed that:
- 77% of respondents (Q.9) supported the retention of existing businesses and their protection from change of use.
 - 60% of respondents (Q.8) agreed that the Plan should encourage business and employment growth in the parish.

5.66. Q.13 asked about the development of the parish economy, with the following results:

- Encourage homeworking: 93% in favour
- More entrepreneurial start-ups: 86% in favour (of whom 24% strongly agreed)
- More hi-tech businesses: 63% in favour
- More manufacturing businesses: 67% strongly disagreed / disagreed
- Remain largely agricultural: 85% in favour.

Policy EB1: Existing and Future Employment Opportunities

- a. The repurposing of land and buildings currently used for employment purposes will not be permitted unless:
- evidence is produced to show that redevelopment for alternative employment use is not possible;
 - the land and/or the buildings shall have been marketed for employment use to local markets for at least 6 months on reasonable terms, and have remained unsold or unlet with no reasonable offer having been refused;
 - details of marketing accompany any development proposal.
- b. The redevelopment for continued employment of land and buildings already used for employment will be supported where the proposal:
- supports the more effective and efficient use of the site as employment land;
 - results in no loss in full-time-equivalent jobs;
 - where appropriate is supported by a plan which demonstrates the need for additional space for business activity to grow;
 - can demonstrate an increase in energy efficiency.
- c. The establishment of small-scale employment enterprises on existing or new sites will be supported if:
- they provide adequate access and car parking, and do not create traffic flow problems or generate traffic inappropriate to country roads;
 - the proposals are compatible with the uses of surrounding buildings;
 - there is no significant adverse impact on residential amenity;
 - they are compatible with the Design Statement.
- d. Irrespective of the type of employment use proposed development should be compliant with Bats Special Area of Conservation Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Natural England and Wiltshire Council 2015).

Theme D: Sustainable Energy Policies

5.67. The UK government set the target to source 15% of all energy and 10% of transport fuels from renewables by 2020.

5.68. Core Policy 42 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy identifies how stand-alone renewable energy installations of all types will be encouraged and supported. However, the **UK Renewable Energy Strategy** states that the parish environment is most suited to solar photovoltaic arrays (domestic and commercial), heat pumps and CHP (combined heat and power) installations. Individual properties and public buildings are already encouraged, where appropriate, to install PV panels.

5.69. We have to note that lack of off-street parking in this parish, particularly within the old village, inhibits the uptake of all-electric cars.

Policy SE1: Renewable energy

Context

5.70. The NPPF para.156 stresses the need for plans to provide a positive strategy for renewable energy, and states that local planning authorities “should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy”.

Local context:

5.71. The SG undertook a study into how the high level guidance might be applied across the parish and sought the views of its members through the Community Survey. The SG was given a briefing by a renewable energy consultant on prospects given Colerne’s location, geography, infrastructure; and on 15 March 2018 it received its **Renewable Energy Group Report**. This found that the use of renewable energy technologies in small-scale developments in the parish is likely to be limited to solar PV and heat pumps. The adoption of Renewable Energy technologies in any redevelopment of the airfield/barracks offers additional potential and is discussed in the Concept Statement (Topic Paper #2). Their application would be supportable according to the Community Survey, although the Steering Group was informed that the viability of a large-scale solar generation “farm” may well be weakened by practical and technical difficulties on that site.

5.72. Sustainable energy policies aim to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and to increase energy autonomy as a contribution to community resilience. They can be seen as incremental, bringing improvement with each

and every development approved. Notwithstanding, it is unlikely that areas of Green Belt would meet the exceptional criteria demanded in the NPPF paras 153/156 for the production of renewable energy.

Guiding evidence

5.73. During the Community Consultations, all discussions of sustainability included reference to low-carbon heat sources and the micro-generation of renewable electrical energy, notably from solar, wind and biomass resources. It was suggested that an integrated parish-wide initiative could be viable. Responses to the Community Survey (Q.21) showed the following levels of support for renewable energy technologies:

- 56% for photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation from panels mounted on private houses and commercial buildings.
- 45% would be supportive of a large-scale PV ‘solar farm’ on the airfield (a similar level of response to retaining the airfield as operational).
- 34% for ground-source heat pumps.
- anaerobic digesters and biomass lagged behind at around 25% support.

5.74. Policy SE1 sets out to take a practicable and a proportionate approach to this important matter. It offers support to particular types of development. The first part of the policy sets out to ensure that such proposals respect the character of the local landscape. Where it is necessary to demonstrate that development would achieve this objective, planning applications should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment.

Policy SE1: Renewable Energy (Localised Renewable Energy Generation)

- a. Proposals for individual and community scale energy from solar photovoltaic panels or other forms of renewable generation will be supported subject to the proposed installation:
 - i) not creating an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents;
 - ii) having no unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance;
 - iii) having no unacceptable impact on visual amenity and/or local landscape character;
 - iv) being appropriate in scale to service local needs or is grid-connected in ways that do not infringe conditions (i)-(iii) above;
 - v) being capable of being accompanied satisfactorily within the local road network. .
- b. Support will be given to renewable generation developments that:
 - i) are led by, or meet, the needs of the local community;
 - ii) have regard to the wider benefits of providing energy from renewable sources, and the potential effects on the local environment;
 - iii) demonstrate compliance with Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Natural England and Wiltshire Council 2015).

Policy SE2: Electrical charging points

Context

- 5.75. In 2018, the government welcomed the Business, Energy and Industrial Committee's report "Electric vehicles: driving the transition", stating that it "shares the Committee's view that electric vehicles represent exciting opportunities for the UK as a tool to address greenhouse gas emissions, reduce air pollution, and as a new economic opportunity".
- 5.76. This was followed up in July 2019 when the Department for Transport Office of Low Emission Vehicles launched a consultation on "proposing that new-build homes are fitted with an electric car charging point"

Guiding evidence

- 5.77. The Community Consultations raised the subject of electric vehicle charging points within a set of aspirations for future energy provision and use. This vision included operating an electric shuttle bus to Batheaston powered by locally-generated energy. An increase in electric vehicle numbers, including e-bikes, was anticipated and concern for providing adequate charging facilities was expressed.

Policy SE2: Electrical charging points

- a. All new houses where dedicated parking is provided should have an appropriately located charging point. Where general parking areas are included in housing developments, there should be an appropriate ratio of charging points available for general use.
- b. Proposals for non-residential developments which provide electric charging points for staff and/or other users will be supported.
- c. The installation of electric car charging areas at public buildings with vehicular access and public parking areas will be supported.

Policy SE3: Lighting Schemes

Context

- 5.78. The designation of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty applies during the hours of darkness as well as during the day. Therefore, the levels and quality of artificial lighting have a significant impact on night-time public amenity, while also being a significant factor in the navigation and feeding patterns of nocturnal flying animals such as bats and many insect species (e.g. moths). The night skies over Wiltshire have been recognised for their astronomical clarity, and parts of our parish enjoy dark skies.
- 5.79. The main aim of this policy is to minimise the impact of artificial light in situations for which planning permission is needed. The benefits to be gained from proposed lighting should be balanced against the impacts of excess light intensity, light spill beyond the immediate target area and energy consumption.
- 5.80. It is important that any proposals for artificial lighting comply with Core Policy 50 (CP50) (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Bat SAC Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Wiltshire Council and Natural England, 2015) and the NPPF; as well as Policy NE1 of the NP. Proposals for new artificial lighting would be considered at the planning application stage (where this is applicable) and a project-level HRA may be necessary.

Guiding evidence

- 5.81. The Community Consultations raised the following concerns about the problem of light pollution from existing street lights. These concerns were centred on local amenity and may be taken to apply to artificial lighting within the context of this policy .
- 5.82. Additional lighting needed for new development should be fully up-to-date in design and use and not simply copy existing accepted provision.
- 5.83. Some lighting could be powered by solar panels and be autonomous.

Policy SE3: Lighting schemes

Development proposals should demonstrate how they have been designed to reduce light pollution. In particular, proposals should address how:

- light pollution encompassing sky glow, glare and light spill will be minimised; and
- light intensity, emitted spectrum and duration of use will be controlled, and energy efficiency optimised.

Theme E: Community Health and Well-Being Policies

- 5.84. Colerne's community facilities and amenities make a significant contribution to the health and well-being of the inhabitants of the parish. They provide a focus for community life and social interaction and are important for the long-term sustainability of the community. They also provide local employment, reduce the need to travel and offer an important social service, particularly for those who do not have access to a car. Their importance has been evidenced by our experience in the coronavirus crisis. However, the loss and threatened closure of facilities and services is a common feature of village life everywhere as local residents increasingly travel to larger facilities elsewhere.
- 5.85. The aim of this Plan is to protect and positively integrate existing local facilities and services, while encouraging the provision of new facilities and services as part of new development.
- 5.86. Health and well-being is for everyone; it is essential to maximise opportunities and ensure accessibility to all facilities for all ages and levels of mobility, while reducing dependence on cars. The Steering Group undertook a study of the potential for development of needed outdoor sports facilities, and this is reported in [Review of Future Outdoor Sports Provision](#).

Policy CHWB1: Protection and enhancement of community facilities

Context

- 5.87. Existing community facilities serving the whole parish include:
- Allotments
 - Anglican church and Evangelical chapel
 - Children's play areas
 - Football and Rugby Clubs and Recreation Ground
 - GP Surgeries
 - Hotel and Spa
 - Old School Play Group and nursery/childcare
 - Parish Rooms and Community Café
 - Post Office, hairdressers and stores
 - Primary School
 - Two public houses and two clubs
 - Village Hall and Scouts HQ
- 5.88. There is a need to maintain local services, especially the shops, to support the environment of homeworkers (likely to increase in the post-Covid period) and also older members of the community with reducing mobility and increasing dependency. Improved facilities within the community can result in a reduced need for travel outside of the area for all.

- 5.89. A full inventory of existing social, sports and community facilities is given in the [Existing Community Facilities Report](#). New developments will be expected to contribute towards the enhancement of existing facilities and, where appropriate, provision of new facilities, whether adjacent to the development or elsewhere in the parish.

Guiding evidence

- 5.90. The Community Consultations affirmed that the local sense of community is created by life outside of work and business, significantly through clubs, societies and other places for social meeting. With these facilities concentrated in the central village, community cohesion is primarily felt by the village dwellers; people living in outlying areas can feel less connected.

Policy CHWB1: Protection and enhancement of community facilities

- a. Development proposals that would result in the loss of a community facility will not be supported unless one or more of the following factors apply:
- there is no longer a demonstrable need or demand for the community facility concerned; or
 - the existing community facility can be demonstrated to be no longer economically viable; or
 - the proposal makes alternative provision for a facility still needed that would otherwise be lost, in an appropriate and convenient location elsewhere in the Plan area, and the proposed alternative provision complies with other policies in this Plan; or
 - it can be shown that all options for continuing community use have been exhausted.
- b. Development proposals for the enhancement of a community facility, including enhanced access and links to the community will be supported.
- c. Irrespective of the type of community facility proposed development proposals should be compliant with Bats Special Area of Conservation Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Natural England and Wiltshire Council 2015).

Policy CHWB2: Promoting additional community facilities

Context

5.91. This policy is concerned with the provision of additional community facilities through changes to the built environment that require planning approval. Proposals for additional community facilities will be supported if the applicant can demonstrate the community benefits of such facilities, that they have village support, and that their development will not generate unacceptable neighbourhood impacts.

Guiding evidence

5.92. The Community Consultations developed a diverse 'wish list' that included the creation of a library space, a sports complex containing a gym and swimming pool, a cricket pitch, the reinstatement of the tennis court at the Recreation Ground, and an enhanced network of footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways across the parish.

5.93. The Community Survey (Qs. 24, 25, 26 – free response) confirmed the desire of residents to enhance the range of community facilities and amenities in the parish, recognising their value to the life of the parish. The need to maintain and extend the play areas in the parish for children was highlighted and the need for better facilities for teenagers.

Policy CHWB2: Promoting additional community facilities

Proposals for new or enhanced community facilities will be supported where development:

- meets the design criteria in the Neighbourhood Plan Design Statement;
- meets a demonstrable need and or demand;
- will not result in unacceptable impacts on local residential amenity and is of a scale appropriate to the locality;
- is conveniently accessible for residents of the parish to walk or cycle;
- shows compliance with Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Natural England and Wiltshire Council 2015).

Future Outdoor Sports Provision:

5.94. The integration of the community as a whole is enriched by shared outdoor recreational facilities, the viability of which is achieved through involvement of all ages and abilities. There is an under-provision of outdoor sports areas within the parish at present. How this problem might be addressed within the Plan period is discussed in **Review of Future Outdoor Sports Provision** which brings together existing and emerging community aspirations for such an integrated approach.

Policy CHWB3: Walking and Cycling

Context

- 5.95. Most homes in Colerne village are within easy walking distance of the village facilities. However, people living in Thickwood currently face a one-mile walk to the High Street on a narrow pavement alongside a de-restricted section of the C151, while inhabitants of the more distant parts of North Colerne at Pinewood have a journey of 1.7 miles along a route that is incompletely provided with pavements. During term-time, there is a significant twice-daily flow of pedestrians along these routes to the village school.
- 5.96. The public footpath network around and into the parish is reasonably comprehensive, but there is no provision for cycling other than along roads. Several adjacent areas of the main village are only indirectly connected by road, rather than by direct footpaths or alleyways. Where they do exist the passages and alleyways between houses are an important part of the pedestrian network within the three main settlement areas.
- 5.97. Following on-going national initiatives to reduce the use of private transport for short journeys, it is important that new developments integrate measures to promote access to public transport, walking and cycling, through the provision of enhanced footpaths, and cycle links to green space, schools, the local centre and the wider countryside.
- 5.98. Wiltshire Core Policy 61 refers to the need to reverse the priority for infrastructure so as to create the following hierarchy - a) disabled, b) pedestrians, c) cyclists, d) Public Transport, e) goods vehicles, f) powered two wheelers, g) private cars. Delivering on this hierarchy has significant benefits for general health and wellbeing.
- 5.99. Currently most rights of way are not accessible to older residents, and those with wheelchairs or

mobility scooters have to use the roads and have little opportunity to go into the fields and green areas away from traffic. Retention and improvement of walking and cycling routes, or the creation of new routes, must involve improvement of this situation as a priority.

Guiding evidence

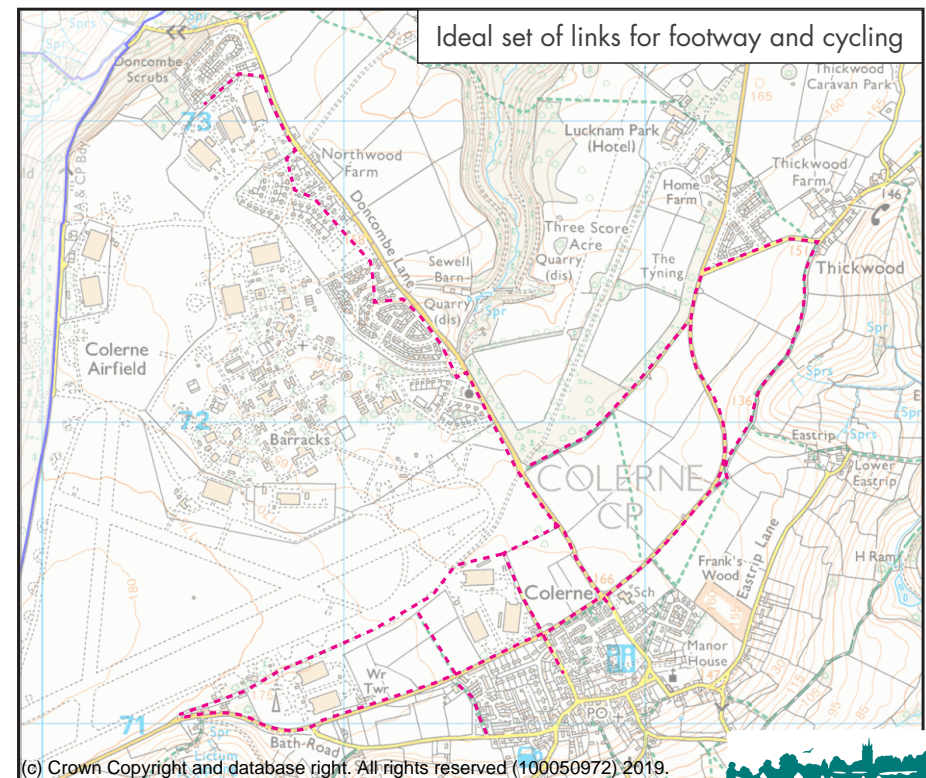
5.100. The Community Consultations identified an incomplete provision of connecting paths, both within and between centres of population. Footpaths are often circuitous, adding to the time taken for parents to take children to school or playgroup. In the absence of direct safe footpaths, many opt to use their cars for these daily journeys. See: Footpaths Report and **Colerne Primary School Safety Project**.

5.101. The Community Survey included a question (Q.33) about the redevelopment of the MoD site, which has the housing groups comprising North Colerne along its western edge.

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

Policy CHWB3: Walking and cycling

- a. Where public footpaths or cycleways are newly routed or rerouted, their routing should be sympathetic to landscape and wildlife corridors.
- b. Applications for any development adjacent to Public Rights of Way should, where appropriate, ensure that links are provided to those routes.
- c. Any new footpaths and cycleways must be designed to be accessible to all to the extent feasible.
- d. Care should be taken to comply with the Bat SAC Guidance for Wiltshire; and, where necessary, applications for changes/ development should be accompanied by an appropriate bat assessment as per Policy NE1.



Section 6: Future Projects to Reflect Community Aspirations

A. Markers for future policy

6.1. In preparation of this Plan, some Policies proposed in early drafts were eliminated as being subsumed within other Policies given in Section 5 or covered by higher policy. Some of these remain worthy of note as markers for future policy thinking or Plan reviews:-

Infill or backland development	Infill development, where feasible, should have regard to Design Statement principles and to imposition on neighbouring properties. Conversion to studios or workshops of buildings in gardens should have no negative service, access, noise or social impacts.
Custom and self-build	Should be locally-driven, with initial-owner involvement.
Rain-water management	Permeable surfacing to be incorporated for new-development areas in excess of 5m ² ; new-build to mitigate roof water run-off by means of water-butts, soakaways or rain gardens.
Sustainable land-preparation and contamination control	Ensure adequate planning for and provisioning of decontamination especially on brownfield sites (e.g. former military).
Traffic and transport	Requirement for travel plans to demonstrate mitigation of development impact on the parish's limited access-routes and public transport.
Allotments provision	Developments to provide for retention of existing, and support for new.
Childrens' play areas	Provision of dedicated play areas, or contribution to an enhancement of existing areas, should be offered by developments of more than 10 houses.
Infrastructure phasing and priorities	Development plans must consider infrastructure impact (especially transport) and offer mitigation proposals.

B. Colerne Pre-application Community Involvement Protocol

- 6.2. In order to ensure positive and structured pre-application engagement, developers intending to submit significant development proposals, as defined in the Protocol, are encouraged to follow the **Colerne Pre-Application Community Involvement Protocol**. This is to supplement the approach taken in the NPPF 2021 (paragraphs 39-46) and that which is taken by Wiltshire Council in its capacity as the local planning authority;
- 6.3. It is recognised that failure to carry out pre-application community engagement as described in the Protocol cannot in itself constitute a reason not to register a development application or on its own cause the refusal of a proposal. Nevertheless, the objective of the Protocol is to deliver a smoother and more harmonious process for development applications.

C. Revealed community aspirations

- 6.4. During the development of the Plan (notably in the Community Survey), many ideas which can be said to express community aspirations were identified which cannot be mandated by the Plan itself. It is recommended that the Parish Council should keep the following project list under review, and refer to it in developing its own strategic priorities:
- additional allotment facilities (e.g. in an integrated North Colerne settlement);
 - after the coronavirus experience of 2020/1, consideration to be given to development of shared work-spaces to anticipate a greater demand for home or near-home working;
 - more, and improved, cycleways and pathways, in particular linking the "three settlements";
 - to address the climate and ecological emergency the Council should grant-aid the replacement of trees lost through old age or disease;
 - an airfield and aircraft heritage and educational facility adjacent to the airfield to describe its historical and military significance to the RAF and the country;
 - a meeting space for North Colerne surrounded by recreational land;
 - a self-sustaining toilet facility at the Recreation Ground;

- a Community Energy scheme;
- parish gym/work-out facility (currently under active consideration);
- the Parish Council to represent to Wiltshire Council on a case basis the desirability of switching off street lights during the deepest hours of the night, leaving only those necessary on Highways Act safety grounds;
- feasibility study into the provision of public-access (community) EV charging points in Colerne, North Colerne and Thickwood;
- foster proposals for enhanced integrated all-age sport and recreational facilities, including a Colerne cricket club and other sports activities not at present catered for. The community survey and other evidence gathering noted requests for such facilities. The SG therefore commissioned a special review of the potential for

wider sports provision in the future. This review can be found at **Future Sports and Recreation Provision** and it is commended to the Parish Council for its future consideration;

- feasibility assessment of, and planning for, a local carbon-neutral community transport scheme, and of a 'Colerne Car Club' (car-sharing);
 - the Parish Council to develop and maintain a register of CIL funding priorities so that action can be expedited if and when funding is available.
- 6.5. Some of these ideas might be simple to implement if resources were available. Potential financial sources might be Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), local benefaction, the Parish Council itself, grants, local fundraising or crowdfunding.

Section 7: Plan Management and Review

- 7.1. The Colerne Neighbourhood Development Plan covers the years from 2020 until 2036. The Wiltshire Core Strategy, running until 2026, is currently (April 2021) under review and when its successor Local Plan Review is adopted, its period will run to 2036.
- 7.2. This Neighbourhood Plan is a response to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today, and it is recognised that current challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period.

- 7.3. Colerne Parish Council, as the Neighbourhood Development Plan authority, will be responsible for maintaining a monitor of significant planning events (for example how local applications have made use of the Plan); for periodical review of progress against its objectives; and of its continued contemporary relevance. If and as necessary the Parish Council will stand ready to sponsor a review of this Plan to respond to changing circumstances, in which context an event-monitor archive will be of great value.

- 7.4. In this context the Parish Council will assess the implications of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan on the contents of a made neighbourhood plan. Where necessary it will assess the scale, nature and extent of any conflicts and consider how best to review the Plan. It will also ensure that the made or reviewed Plan is monitored on a regular basis to test the effectiveness of the policies and to respond accordingly.

Section 8: References and Evidence

Follow link to an indexed summary of research, consultation and policy-background reports.

References and Evidence Documents