

**West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report**

**February 2019**



<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Non-Technical Summary</b>	<b>1-6</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Purpose of this report	8
1.2 West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan	8
1.3 SEA screening	10
1.4 Habitats Regulations Assessment	12
1.5 Compliance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations	13
1.6 Structure of this report	15
<b>2. Methodology</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 Introduction	16
2.2 Stage A – Scoping	16
2.3 Stage B – Developing reasonable alternatives and assessing effects	16
2.4 Stage C – Preparing the Environmental Report	18
2.5 Stage D - Consulting on the Environmental Report	18
<b>3. Scope and level of detail of this SEA</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1 Introduction	19
3.2 Scoping Report	19
3.3 Sustainability Appraisal Framework	29
<b>4. Assessment of likely effects of neighbourhood plan and alternatives</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1 Introduction	31
4.2 Consideration of need for housing and assessment of housing site options	31
4.3 Assessment of neighbourhood plan overall	36
4.4 Conclusions on likely significant environmental effects and recommendations	43
<b>5. Monitoring proposals</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>6. Next steps</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix A – West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan SA Framework</b>	
<b>Appendix B – Housing site options assessment</b>	



# Non-Technical Summary

## Purpose of this report

This document is an Environmental Report, prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'WLNP').

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to identify, evaluate and present information on the likely significant environmental effects of the Plan. It will also allow the SEA consultation bodies<sup>1</sup> and other persons who, in Wiltshire Council's opinion, have an interest in the plan, the opportunity to offer views on the SEA. It has been produced in compliance with the SEA Regulations<sup>2</sup>, which transpose the SEA Directive<sup>3</sup> into English law.

## West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan

The West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan (WLNP) has been prepared by a neighbourhood plan steering group, on behalf of West Lavington Parish Council who are the 'Qualifying Body' responsible for the neighbourhood plan.

A draft of the WLNP was submitted to Wiltshire Council in April 2018 and Wiltshire Council consulted on the draft plan from 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018. The draft plan was then examined by an independent Examiner, whose report on the findings of the examination was received in November 2018. The Examiner concluded that *'the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and I recommend to Wiltshire Council that, subject to modifications, it should proceed to Referendum.'*

However, once an examination report has been received on a neighbourhood plan, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must then decide what action to take in response to each of the report's recommendations; this must include ensuring that a neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union (EU) obligations in order to be legally compliant. Two EU directives are particularly relevant at this time, and further consideration of these has led to the need to undertake this Environmental Report.

## SEA screening

Neighbourhood plan proposals must be assessed by Wiltshire Council, the 'responsible authority'<sup>4</sup> under the SEA Regulations, to determine whether a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a 'screening' assessment. Wiltshire Council first undertook a screening assessment of the WLNP in October 2017 which concluded that the plan *'is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and accordingly does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.'*

However, in January 2019, following on from a ruling<sup>5</sup> by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), the previous decision of Wiltshire Council that an 'appropriate assessment' under the Habitats Regulations was not required for the WLNP was reviewed, and an 'appropriate

---

<sup>1</sup> Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England

<sup>2</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633

<sup>3</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment

<sup>4</sup> The authority by which or on whose behalf the plan is prepared

<sup>5</sup> on the treatment of mitigation for development (People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta) (Case C-323/17)

assessment' is now required. On this basis, Wiltshire Council issued a revised SEA screening determination on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019, concluding that an SEA is now required for the WLNP.

## **Methodology**

The SEA Regulations require the Environmental Report to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan and reasonable alternatives to the plan.

This Environmental Report therefore assesses the likelihood of significant environmental effects of the neighbourhood plan proposals, and reasonable alternatives to them, and any mitigation measures that are envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment. It also contains a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

It recommends any specific changes or mitigation measures that may help improve the environmental outcomes of the plan, which may result in modifications being made to a plan.

## **Scope and level of detail of this SEA**

This stage of the SEA outlines the proposed scope and level of detail of the SEA, meeting the requirements of Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations. For the WLNP this culminated in a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report<sup>6</sup>. That report includes a set of sustainability objectives against which a plan can be assessed (see Appendix A of this report). The Scoping Report was submitted to Wiltshire Council alongside the draft WLNP in April 2018.

The three SEA consultation bodies<sup>7</sup> were consulted on the Scoping Report from 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and their responses are presented in Appendix D of that report.

## **Assessment of reasonable alternatives**

### Consideration of need for, and level, of housing

The report '*Housing Allocation Site Selection Methodology April 2018*' that accompanies the draft WLNP sets out the process of site assessment undertaken by the neighbourhood plan steering group. It explains that the neighbourhood plan needs to reflect both wider strategic pressures and local needs or demand whilst also restricting potential excessive and inappropriate development.

Given that zero growth was not considered to be a reasonable option for the plan, the views of local residents were sought on a range of housing levels from between 20 dwellings to less than 100 dwellings over the plan period. In terms of an assessment of this range of provision against the SEA environmental objectives, the likelihood of significant effects occurring would very much depend on the level of provision and the location and type of any sites allocated, and especially their proximity to sensitive environmental receptors.

---

<sup>6</sup> West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Impact Planning Services Ltd, February 2015)

<sup>7</sup> Historic England, Natural England, Environment Agency

The cumulative effects of developing a number of smaller sites may be greater than developing one large site where there may be greater opportunities for mitigation such as landscaping. A smaller level of provision is likely to have less environmental effects overall, but this would also have less benefits in terms of meeting local housing needs, especially affordable housing needs, and other social and economic benefits.

Development of a smaller number of dwellings in the plan period is considered likely to reduce the likelihood of significant environmental effects. However, it is acknowledged that consideration also need to be given to maximising social and economic benefits for local people, so provision of a mid-range level of housing e.g. 50-70, may be the scale of development most likely to help achieve the neighbourhood plan objectives, and contribute to contributing to sustainable development.

### Alternative housing site options

The neighbourhood plan steering group undertook an objective appraisal of potential housing site options by first identifying broad spatial planning constraints around both villages in the neighbourhood area. This included consideration of a number of ‘exclusion criteria’. This resulted in a list of 14 potential sites to be assessed against a Template for Site Appraisals, which used groups of criteria to assess each site on its merits.

This resulted in a smaller list of eight sites, and finally, after considering deliverability and implementation of these sites, a ‘short list’ of five sites was compiled which were considered to be ‘reasonable alternatives’ as they were sites that were considered available, viable, deliverable and without major constraints. Two sites (5 and 6) were considered together as one site.

There are therefore four ‘reasonable alternative’ sites as follows:

- Site 2: Littleton Panell - High Street adjacent to ‘The Farm’
- Site 3: West Lavington - Behind High Street/Orchard Place/White Street
- Site 5/6: West Lavington - High Street, within Equestrian Centre<sup>8</sup>
- Site 7: West Lavington – Land South of Lavington Lane

The detailed assessment of these four sites against the SEA objectives is presented in Appendix B. A summary of the assessment findings is presented below:

Site	Summary of assessment outcome <sup>9</sup>								
	Biod'y	Popula'n & Housing	Healthy Comm's	Land & soil resources	Water resources & flood risk	Climatic factors	Air quality & environmental pollution	Historic environment	Landscape
2	--	++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
3	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
5/6	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
7	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	-	--

The SEA assessment has found that there are likely significant effects, both positive and negative, with all four sites assessed, and that mitigation measures to reduce the potential significant adverse effects are considered to be achievable at each site.

<sup>8</sup> Sites 5 and 6 have been considered together as are in single ownership and only together is there potential for access issues to be resolved.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to Table 2.1 Generic Assessment Scale for evaluation of significance of effects

All four potential housing sites would be likely to have significant positive effects due to the amount of new housing, including affordable housing, that could be delivered on each site, with sites 3, 5/6 and 7, likely to have major positive effects due to the amount of new housing, including affordable, that could be delivered.

All four sites are within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA and have been 'screened in' for appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations (refer to the findings of the WLNP HRA<sup>10</sup> for more detail). For this reason, there are likely significant effects in terms of the SEA and all four sites have been scored 'moderate adverse'. However, the HRA of the WLNP concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The assessment has found that sites 2, 3 and 5/6 are all likely to have significant adverse environmental effects on the West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area and individual listed buildings in proximity to the sites, with mitigation measures considered to be achievable but difficult or problematic.

Site 7 is considered likely to have significant adverse effects in relation to biodiversity – the site is ecologically sensitive being in close proximity to ancient woodland (Manor House Woods), woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook, which are BAP Priority Habitats. Site 7 is also considered likely to have significant adverse effects in relation to landscape impacts - this site is elevated above Lavington Lane and dwellings may appear very prominent from the road and any proposals that take access from Lavington Lane and involve a high degree of engineering to navigate the steep bank have the potential to result in significant landscape impacts.

### **Assessment of neighbourhood plan overall**

The SEA assessment of the plan and its' policies has found that significant environmental benefits are likely overall, with strong policies that will provide protection and enhancement for the built and natural environment. The plan will also sufficiently meet its housing needs and provide a significant level of affordable housing. The provision of housing, protection of community and educational facilities and policies to protect the natural and built environment will also help to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.

The proposed housing site allocation 'Land South of Lavington Lane' is within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA and research has shown that Stone-curlew are particularly susceptible to recreational pressure and additional housing has potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA. However, the HRA of the WLNP concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The proposed housing site allocation is considered likely to have significant adverse effects in relation to biodiversity – the site is ecologically sensitive being in close proximity to ancient woodland (Manor House Woods), woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook, which are BAP Priority Habitats. It is also considered likely to have significant adverse effects in relation to landscape impacts - this site is elevated above Lavington Lane and dwellings may appear very prominent from the road and any proposals that take access from

---

<sup>10</sup> HRA of West Lavington Neighbourhood Development Plan (Wiltshire Council, February 2019)



Lavington Lane and involve a high degree of engineering to navigate the steep bank have the potential to result in significant landscape impacts.

### **Conclusions on likely significant environmental effects and recommendations**

The SEA assessment of the plan and its' policies has found that significant environmental benefits are likely overall, with strong policies that will provide protection and enhancement for the built and natural environment. The plan will also sufficiently meet its housing needs and provide a significant level of affordable housing. The provision of housing, protection of community and educational facilities and policies to protect the natural and built environment will also help to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.

The SEA assessment of 'reasonable alternative' housing site options has found that all four potential sites considered are likely to have significant benefits in terms of their ability to deliver a substantial amount of housing to meet local needs, with sites 3, 5/6 and 7 likely to have major positive effects due to the amount of new housing, including affordable, that could be delivered.

Sites 2, 3 and 5/6 are all considered likely to have significant moderate adverse effects on heritage assets due to their likely effects on the Conservation Area and its setting – mitigation measures would be problematic but are possible to reduce the likely significance of the effects.

In terms of effects on biodiversity, all four sites are within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA. However, mitigation for the impacts of the Wiltshire Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012. The HRA of the WLNP concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with other plans and projects with this mitigation in place.

Site 7 is considered likely to have significant adverse effects in relation to biodiversity – the site is ecologically sensitive being in close proximity to ancient woodland (Manor House Woods), woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook, which are also BAP Priority Habitats. It is considered that there would be likely significant effects on the woodland due to effects of lighting of the development and any associated works to the access road.

**Recommendation** - it is recommended that development of the site is led by a strong landscape strategy with substantial Green Infrastructure in the northern and eastern parts of the site to protect the ancient woodland and river corridor.

**Recommendation** – it is recommended that an ecological assessment is undertaken and submitted in support of any planning application to demonstrate how any adverse impacts on adjacent habitats can be reduced. This should include ensuring that lighting levels at the edge of Manor House Woods is not increased by the development and associated works.

Site 7 is also considered likely to have significant adverse effects in relation to landscape impacts - this site is elevated above Lavington Lane and dwellings may appear very prominent from the road. The key issue is the proposed access and the likely visual change to the rural character of this section of Lavington Lane to a more urban one. Any proposals that take access from Lavington Lane and involve a high degree of engineering to navigate the steep bank have the potential to result in significant landscape impacts.

It is considered that mitigation to reduce the likely landscape constraints is possible, though could be problematic, and further options of accessing the site should be explored.

- **Recommendation** – it is recommended that development of this site includes a strongly landscape-led strategy, informed by a robust Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that assesses the constraints and design parameters. This should include substantial Green Infrastructure in the northern and eastern parts of the site to protect the ancient woodland and river corridor.
- **Recommendation** – it is recommended that, to avoid significant landscape impacts, other access options to the site should be further explored in relation to their impacts on landscape.

## Monitoring proposals

SEA monitoring can enable the establishment of a causal link between the implementation of the plan and the likely significant environmental effects (both beneficial or adverse) being monitored. This will allow the identification of any unforeseen adverse effects and enable appropriate remedial action to be taken. Existing guidance recommends monitoring to be incorporated into Local Authority's existing monitoring arrangements. The WLNP, once 'made', will form a part of the Development Plan for Wiltshire and therefore any significant effects of its implementation will need to be considered as part of the Council's monitoring activities.

In order to reach a final framework of monitoring indicators for the WLNP, Wiltshire Council will need to consider indicators which can be most effectively used to monitor significant environmental effects. This will need to be undertaken in dialogue with statutory consultees and other bodies, as in many cases the monitoring information may need to be provided by outside bodies.

For the WLNP, the SEA assessment of the proposed housing site allocation in the plan, and other plan policies, has noted a limited number of likely significant adverse effects. These concern potential effects of recreational pressure on the Salisbury Plain SPA from increased numbers of residents in West Lavington, and localised landscape and biodiversity impacts of the development of Land South of Lavington Lane, West Lavington (site 7). However, as has previously been highlighted, such effects are capable of being mitigated and Wiltshire Council should continue to monitor the implementation of planning permissions and the effectiveness of measures within the Salisbury Plain Stone-Curlew Mitigation Strategy.

## Next steps

Consultation will take place on this Environmental Report to meet the requirements of Regulation 13 of the SEA Regulations, as set out in section 2.5. All comments received will be considered and amendments may be required to this Environmental Report.

Wiltshire Council will consider the completed report before making its decision on the recommendations of the Examiner.



## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1.1 This document is an Environmental Report, prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'WLNP').
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this Environmental Report is to identify, evaluate and present information on the likely significant environmental effects of the Plan. It will also allow the consultation bodies<sup>11</sup> and any other interested parties<sup>12</sup> the opportunity to offer views on the SEA. It has been produced in compliance with the SEA Regulations<sup>13</sup>, which transpose the SEA Directive<sup>14</sup> into English law.
- 1.1.3 This report has been undertaken on the submission version of the WLNP 2017-2026 (April 2018).

### **1.2 West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan**

- 1.2.1 The West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan (WLNP) has been prepared by a neighbourhood plan steering group, on behalf of West Lavington Parish Council who are the 'Qualifying Body' responsible for the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.2.2 West Lavington Parish Council applied to Wiltshire Council for a neighbourhood area to be designated. The designation of the West Lavington Neighbourhood Area was made on 17th July 2013.
- 1.2.3 A map of the neighbourhood area is shown below:

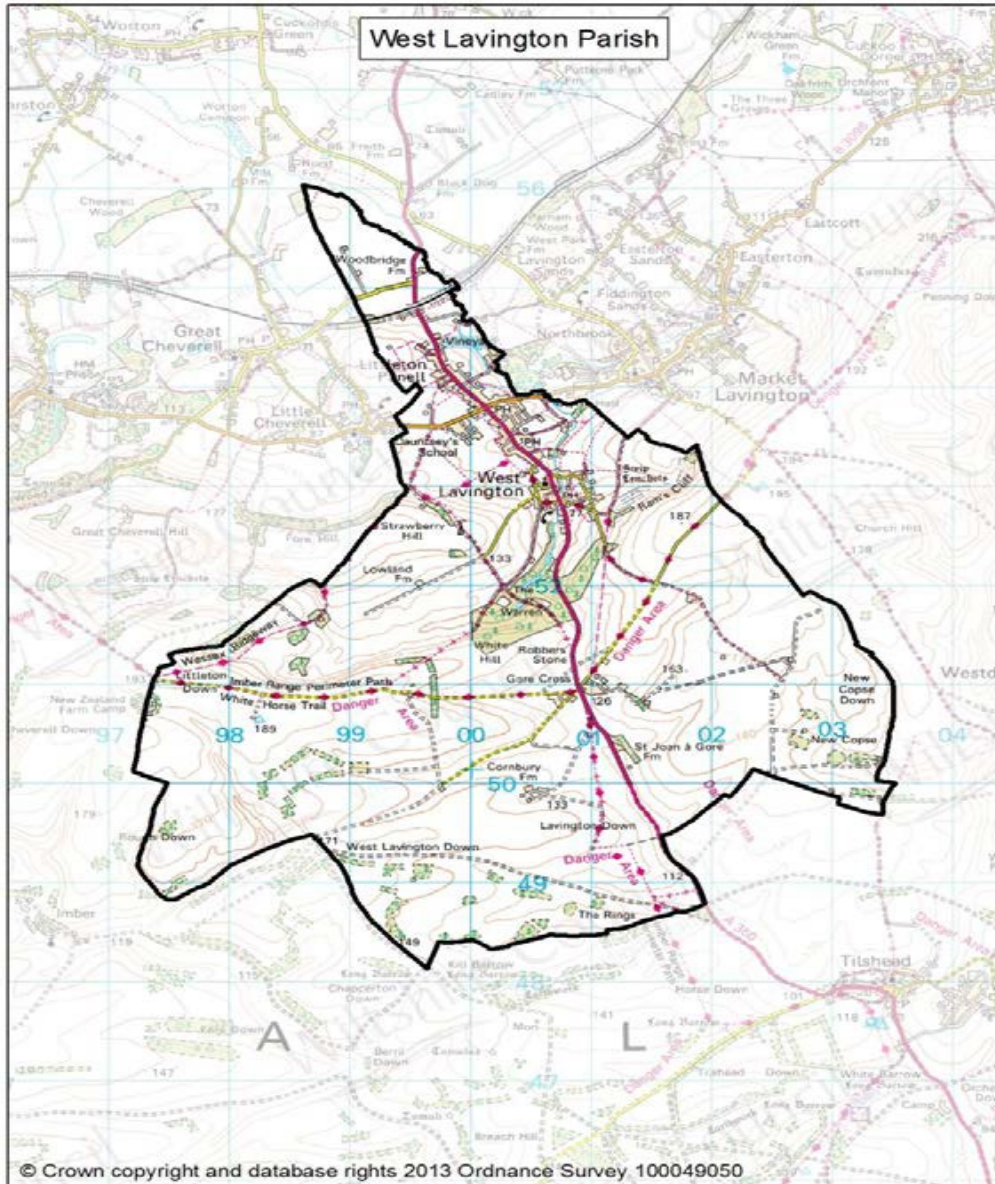
---

<sup>11</sup> Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England

<sup>12</sup> SEA Regulations require consultation with '*...persons who, in the authority's opinion, are affected or likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the decisions involved in the assessment and adoption of the plan concerned*'.

<sup>13</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633

<sup>14</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment



**Figure 1.1 West Lavington Neighbourhood Area**

1.2.4 The neighbourhood plan has the vision:

*“to provide a planning framework and policies that will stimulate appropriate development for the community, especially for both young families and older residents, and to enhance the local economy, community facilities and services whilst also conserving the village and countryside environment.”*

1.2.5 The main objectives of the neighbourhood plan are as follows:

- Promote the sustainable growth of West Lavington and Littleton Panell
- Protect and enhance West Lavington’s natural and built environment
- Protect and develop the community of West Lavington
- Promote transport and communication improvements

- 1.2.6 A draft of the WLNP was submitted to Wiltshire Council in April 2018 and Wiltshire Council consulted on the draft plan from 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018. The draft plan was then examined by an independent Examiner, Nigel McGurk BSc(Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI. His report on the findings of the examination into the WLNP was received in November 2018, and he concluded that *'the West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and I recommend to Wiltshire Council that, subject to modifications, it should proceed to Referendum.'*
- 1.2.7 However, once an examination report has been received, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must then decide what action to take in response to each of the report's recommendations; this must include ensuring that a neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union (EU) obligations, as incorporated into UK law, in order to be legally compliant. Two EU directives are particularly relevant at this time, and further consideration of these has led to the need to undertake this Environmental Report – this will be discussed further in section 1.3.

### **1.3 SEA Screening**

- 1.3.1 There is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, guidance<sup>15</sup> states that, in some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is considered likely to have significant environmental effects, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) must be carried out and an environmental report prepared in accordance with Regulation 12 of the SEA Regulations.
- 1.3.2 Neighbourhood plan proposals must be assessed by Wiltshire Council, the 'responsible authority'<sup>16</sup> under the SEA Regulations, to determine whether a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a 'screening' assessment. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with the SEA Regulations.
- 1.3.3 Wiltshire Council first undertook a screening assessment of the WLNP in October 2017 which concluded that the plan *'is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and accordingly does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.'*
- 1.3.4 The three SEA 'consultation bodies' Historic England, Natural England and Environment Agency were consulted on this decision from 6th October 2017 to 10th November 2017. Natural England and Environment Agency agreed with this decision and did not raise any additional issues.
- 1.3.5 Historic England raised some issues of concern at the SEA screening stage with the proposed housing site allocation in the plan, specifically in relation to potential impacts on the setting of the conservation area and archaeology. However, Wiltshire Council considered that these potential impacts had been sufficiently addressed, as set out in evidence documents that accompanied the submitted WLNP.

---

<sup>15</sup> Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 11-027-20150209

<sup>16</sup> The authority by which or on whose behalf the plan is prepared

- 1.3.6 At the Regulation 16<sup>17</sup> stage of consultation on the WLNP, Historic England confirmed that there are no longer any outstanding heritage issues with the plan. They stated *‘we note that the Heritage Assessment referred to is dated February 2018 and therefore constitutes new evidence. This is a very helpful report which, when considered with the Site Selection Methodology (and Appendix 7 in particular), provides useful reassurance as to the impact, or likely lack of same, which relevant designated heritage assets may be expected to experience as a consequence of development on the site. I can therefore confirm that there are no outstanding heritage issues associated with the Plan which we would wish to raise.’*
- 1.3.7 However, in January 2019, following on from the ruling by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) on the treatment of mitigation for development (People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (Case C-323/17), the previous decision of Wiltshire Council that an ‘appropriate assessment’ under the Habitats Regulations was not required for the WLNP, has been reviewed and that decision has been reversed. Wiltshire Council has concluded that an ‘appropriate assessment’ is required. This reversal of the HRA screening decision has consequences for the SEA screening.
- 1.3.8 The SEA Regulations state *‘5 (1) Subject to paragraphs (5) and (6) and regulation 7, where....the responsible authority shall carry out, or secure the carrying out of, an environmental assessment, in accordance with Part 3 of these Regulations, during the preparation of that plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure. 5 (3) The description is a plan or programme which, in view of the likely effect on sites, has been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive.’* Planning Practice Guidance<sup>18</sup> (PPG) states *‘If a plan is one which has been determined to require an appropriate assessment under the Habitats directive then it will normally also require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.’*
- 1.3.9 Wiltshire Council therefore issued a revised SEA screening determination on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019, concluding that an SEA is now required for the WLNP, based on the one reason that an appropriate assessment is now required.
- 1.3.10 This decision has led to the production of this Environmental Report, which builds on the SA Scoping Report, incorporating requirements of the SEA Regulations, that had already been produced and consulted on between June-July 2014. Comments from the three SEA consultation bodies are appended to the SA Scoping Report that accompanies the plan.
- 1.3.11 Prior to the revised HRA screening decision in January 2019, Natural England and Environment Agency had confirmed their opinion that significant environmental effects were not likely, and Historic England had also confirmed that they had no outstanding heritage concerns with the plan.
- 1.3.12 Regarding the level of detail required in an SEA, guidance<sup>19</sup> makes clear that *‘an SEA need not be done in any more detail, or using any more resources, than is useful for its purpose.’* Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>20</sup> also states, *‘the strategic environmental assessment should only focus on what is needed to assess the likely*

---

<sup>17</sup> The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

<sup>18</sup> Paragraph: 047 Reference ID: 11-047-20150209

<sup>19</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM, 2005)

<sup>20</sup> Planning Practice Guidance Para 030 Reference ID: 11-030-20150209

*significant effects of the neighbourhood plan proposal. It should focus on the environmental impacts which are likely to be significant.*’ This SEA therefore focuses on the limited likely significant effects of the neighbourhood plan proposals.

## **1.4 Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 1.4.1 Whilst SEA is a process for evaluating the likely significant environmental effects of a plan before it is made, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment must determine whether significant effects on a European site can be ruled out on the basis of objective information. If the conclusion is that the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site then an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for the site, in view of the site’s conservation objectives, must be undertaken. If a plan is one which has been determined to require an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive then it will normally also require an SEA.
- 1.4.2 Revised HRA screening<sup>21</sup> was issued by Wiltshire Council on 1st February 2019. It concludes that: *‘Taking into consideration the location, scale and nature of proposals in the NDP, there is a mechanism for effect on one European Site, Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA). All parts of the draft plan have been screened for potential impacts which may arise from the plan alone or in combination with other plans and projects. One policy has the potential to give rise to significant effects and is therefore taken forward to appropriate assessment.... Other policies would either not lead directly to development or would have no significant effects either alone or in combination with other plans and projects due to the scale and nature of the proposals in the plan (Paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3)’* The WLNP policy ‘screened-in’ is Policy H1 ‘New Housing’.
- 1.4.3 Salisbury Plain SPA encompasses a plateau of chalk grassland, which supports the following SPA features: Breeding Common Quail, Eurasian Hobby, Stone-curlew and non-breeding Hen Harrier. Natural England has published Supplementary Advice on conserving and restoring the site features of the SPA – this recognises that often, active and ongoing conservation management is needed to protect, maintain and restore the function of supporting habitat, both within and outside the SPA, in order to sustain the Stone-curlew population. The MoD estate and other landowners through Environmental Stewardship are actively involved in delivering these measures.
- 1.4.4 Evidence from research has demonstrated that Stone-curlew is particularly susceptible to recreational pressure. Mitigation for the impacts of the Wiltshire Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and comprised Council funding for monitoring breeding bird numbers and working with farm managers to maximise breeding success. As a consequence, the HRA for the Core Strategy, which was supported by a strategic HRA for housing development,<sup>22</sup> was able to conclude no adverse effect.

---

<sup>21</sup> HRA of West Lavington Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2026 (Wiltshire Council, February 2019)

<sup>22</sup> HRA and Mitigation Strategy for Salisbury Plain SPA (in relation to recreational pressure from redevelopment), Wiltshire Council, 30 March 2012



- 1.4.5 The HRA screening assessment for the WLNP found that the plan would not lead to significant effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA alone. Impacts would only occur in combination with other plans and projects. These are highlighted in paragraph 5.3 of the Appropriate Assessment.
- 1.4.6 Policy H1 of the WLNP anticipates growth of up to 50 dwellings coming forward on the one green field site 'Land South of Lavington Lane'. The HRA states that *'fifty dwellings will give rise to about 114 people, 1% of which can be expected to visit the Plain on a regular basis'* (paragraph 5.4). It then states that the findings of monitoring of Stone-curlew populations *'suggest that the few hundred dwellings that could come forward as windfall development in addition to those anticipated in the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) are unlikely to lead to a level of recreational pressure that is unsustainable for stone curlew... For the time being, the current strategy appears to be adequate to support housing numbers above WCS and HSAP figures as monitoring will ensure that any necessary review of mitigation measures will be timely'*.
- 1.4.7 The Appropriate Assessment concludes that *'no changes are required to the West Lavington NDP in order to conclude, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with other plans and projects.'*

## **1.5 Compliance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations**

- 1.5.1 This Environmental Report complies with the requirements of the SEA Regulations. These are set out in the table below:

**Table 1.1 Meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations<sup>23</sup>**

<b>Requirements of the 2004 SEA Regulations (Reg 12(3)) and Schedule 2</b>	<b>Where covered in SEA</b>
<b>1.</b> An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Sections 1 and 3 of this report. Sections 1 and 3 and Appendix B of SA Scoping Report 2015.
<b>2.</b> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 3 of this report. Sections 4 and 5 of SA Scoping Report 2015.
<b>3.</b> The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Section 3 of this report. Sections 4 and 5 of SA Scoping Report 2015.
<b>4.</b> Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds(a) and the Habitats Directive	Section 3 of this report. Sections 4 and 5 of SA Scoping Report 2015.
<b>5.</b> The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	Section 3 of this report. Sections 3 and 6 of SA Scoping Report 2015.
<b>6.</b> The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as— (a) biodiversity; (b) population; (c) human health; (d) fauna; (e) flora; (f) soil; (g) water; (h) air; (i) climatic factors; (j) material assets; (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; (l) landscape; and (m) the inter-relationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l).	Section 4 and Appendix B of this report.
<b>7.</b> The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	Section 4 and Appendix B of this report.
<b>8.</b> An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	Sections 1, 2 and 4 of this report.
<b>9.</b> A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17	Section 5 of this report.
<b>10.</b> A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 9	Non-Technical Summary included at the beginning of this report.

<sup>23</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633

## **1.6 Structure of this report**

- 1.6.1 This chapter sets out the purpose of this report, an introduction to the WLNP, the findings of the SEA screening, an overview of the HRA screening and the Appropriate Assessment, and how the SEA complies with the requirements of the SEA Regulations.
- 1.6.2 The following chapters 2-6 set out the methodology that is used in this report, an overview of the scoping stage of the SEA, the assessment of likely significant effects of the WLNP and 'reasonable alternatives', and potential mitigation measures, monitoring proposals and next steps.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 This chapter sets out the methodology adopted for the SEA which is considered to be in line with guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), SEA Regulations and the SEA Directive. The main guidance document used in SEA assessments is that produced by ODPM<sup>24</sup> (now MHCLG).

### **2.2 Stage A - Scoping**

2.2.1 The first output of the SEA process (Stage A) was the SEA Scoping Report, which was finalised in February 2015, setting out the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SEA Report. This is discussed further in chapter 3. The content of the SEA Scoping Report is reproduced in large part in this Environmental Report in order to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations.

### **2.3 Stage B – Developing reasonable alternatives and assessing effects**

2.3.1 Proposals in a draft neighbourhood plan, and the reasonable alternatives to them, should be assessed to identify the likely significant effects of the available options. Forecasting and evaluation of the significant effects can help to develop and refine the proposals in the neighbourhood plan.

2.3.2 The Environmental Report may recommend specific changes or mitigation measures that may help improve the environmental outcomes of the plan.

2.3.3 At this stage of the SEA, the SEA Regulations (12(2)) require the report to *'identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of (a) implementing the plan or programme; and (b) reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme. (3) The report shall include such of the information referred to in Schedule 2 to these Regulations as may reasonably be required, taking account of—*

- (a) current knowledge and methods of assessment;*
- (b) the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme;*
- (c) the stage of the plan or programme in the decision-making process; and*
- (d) the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment.'*

2.3.4 The selection of preferred development sites has been carried out through the application of a comprehensive site selection process which assessed a wide-range of potential sites before selecting a preferred site – this process is described in the submitted Housing Allocation Site Selection Methodology (April 2018). That report describes how the overall approach to site selection was rooted in Stages 1 and 2 which involved the development of SA objectives and development of site assessment criteria that was based on those SA objectives. SEA objectives were therefore embedded into the wider assessment framework.

---

<sup>24</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM, 2005)

- 2.3.5 This site selection methodology then involved following stages of considering different alternative sites and consulting the public and stakeholders before choosing a preferred option. This is set out in the Housing Allocation Site Selection Methodology (April 2018).
- 2.3.6 Chapter 4 of this Environmental Report contains the assessment of likely significant environmental effects of four ‘reasonable alternative’ sites – sites that were found to be more sustainable, available and importantly, deliverable, within the plan period. Other sites that had been discounted as not implementable and not deliverable were not considered to be reasonable alternatives for the purposes of this SEA. These four sites have been assessed against the SEA objectives presented in chapter 3.
- 2.3.7 The generic SEA assessment scale that has been used is shown in Table 2.1 below:

**Table 2.1 Generic Assessment Scale**

<b>Major adverse effect (- - -)</b>	Option likely to have a <b>major adverse</b> effect on the objective with no satisfactory mitigation possible. <b>Option may be inappropriate for housing development.</b>
<b>Moderate adverse effect (- -)</b>	Option likely to have a <b>moderate adverse</b> effect on the objective. Mitigation likely to be difficult or problematic.
<b>Minor adverse effect (-)</b>	Option likely to have a <b>minor adverse</b> effect on the objective. Mitigation measures are readily achievable.
<b>Neutral or no effect (0)</b>	On balance option likely to have a neutral effect on the objective or no effect on the objective.
<b>Minor positive effect (+)</b>	Option likely to have a <b>minor positive</b> effect on the objective as enhancement of existing conditions may result.
<b>Moderate positive effect (+ +)</b>	Option likely to have a <b>moderate positive</b> effect on the objective as it would help resolve an existing issue.
<b>Major positive effect (+ + +)</b>	Option likely to have a <b>major positive</b> effect on the objective as it would help maximise opportunities.

Note: Major and moderate effects are considered to be significant for the purposes of the assessment. Mitigation is not considered possible for major adverse effects but is possible for moderate adverse effects.

- 2.3.8 The assessment of the site options through the SEA has resulted in minor, moderate and major effects being predicted. Prediction of minor adverse effects indicates that mitigation is possible and resulting effects are likely to be minor (not significant) and thus not a cause of concern. The same is true for site options with neutral or no effects.
- 2.3.9 Moderate adverse effects, on the other hand, indicate that mitigation is problematic, potentially resulting in the occurrence of undesirable significant adverse effects. On this basis, the least number of moderate adverse effects a site option presents, the more preferred it becomes from a sustainability perspective as the risks involved are less. Major adverse effects indicate that mitigation of the effects is not considered possible for a particular site option, and therefore that site should not be considered further.
- 2.3.10 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations also requires that the assessment of effects include secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects. Secondary or indirect effects

are effects that are not a direct result of the plan but occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway e.g. a development that changes a water table and thus affects the ecology of a nearby wetland. Cumulative effects arise where several proposals individually may or may not have a significant effect, but in combination have a significant effect. Where any secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects are considered likely to be significant these have been recorded in chapter 4 of this report.

## **2.4 Stage C – Preparing the Environmental Report**

2.4.1 This Environmental Report is a key output of SEA, presenting information on the effects of the plan. It should be considered alongside the SA Scoping Report published in 2014 and the draft WLNP.

## **2.5 Stage D - Consulting on the Environmental Report**

2.5.1 The first stage of the SEA, deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SEA, resulted in the production of an SA Scoping Report in 2014. The three statutory consultation bodies listed in the SEA Regulations were consulted for 6 weeks from 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014. Consultation responses are presented in Appendix D of the SA Scoping Report which was submitted alongside the draft WLNP.

2.5.2 Consultation procedures for this Environmental Report will meet the requirements set out in Regulation 13 of the SEA Regulations. Consultation will take place over a 5-week period from 15th February 2019 to 5pm on 22nd March 2019, and will include:

- Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England
- ...'persons who, in the authority's opinion, are affected or likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the decisions involved in the assessment and adoption of the plan...concerned, required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Directive ("the public consultees")'

2.5.3 Further details on responses to this consultation, and any corresponding modifications to this Environmental Report, will be presented here when this report is finalised.

### **3. Scope and level of detail of this SEA**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 The SEA Regulations' requirements for this stage of the SEA i.e. Scoping, are set out in Schedule 2 and are as follows:

*'1. An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.*

*2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.*

*3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.*

*4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds(a) and the Habitats Directive.*

*5. The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.'*

#### **3.2 Scoping Report**

3.2.1 The SA Scoping Report that accompanies this Environmental Report should be consulted for more details of that stage of the SEA. A summary of the main findings of the SA Scoping Report (February 2015), which the three SEA consultation bodies<sup>25</sup> were consulted on from 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014, follows:

##### Policy context and review of other relevant plans/programmes

3.2.2 The WLNP area is affected by a number of plans, policies and programmes. The policy context and review of other relevant plans and programmes included the following:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy Pre-submission Document: Hearing Session Tracked Changes Version (Core Doc. Ref. 'Exam 34A') (2013)
- South Wiltshire Core Strategy (2012)
- Kennet Local Plan 2011
- The State of the Environment Swindon and Wiltshire 2013
- The Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005)
- Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy (2005)

---

<sup>25</sup> Historic England, Natural England, Environment Agency

- Kennet Landscape Character Assessment (1999)
- The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2008)
- The Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire 2011-2015
- Local Climate Impacts Profile (2010)
- The Water for Life and Livelihoods, River Basin Management Plan for the Severn River Basin (2009)
- Kennet Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2008)
- Visit Wiltshire Business Plan 2012- 2015
- Wiltshire Workspace and Employment Land Review (2011)
- Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
- The Joint Strategic Assessment for Devizes Community Area 2011
- The Wiltshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2 2011-2016
- Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Update (January 2012)
- West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area Statement (2003)
- West Lavington and Littleton Panell Village Design Statement
- Salisbury Plain Army Basing Programme Planning Context Report (Consultation Draft Phase 3 report)
- Impact of the Military on the Agricultural Sector in Wiltshire

3.2.3 As a result of that exercise, a number of issues were identified which were considered of significance to the neighbourhood area. In particular, a number of issues were strongly represented that are relevant to this Environmental Report, as follows:

- Landscape conservation and the setting of the two villages
- Introduction of traditional landscaping features (e.g. hedgerows, use of native species in planting etc)
- Biodiversity conservation
- Protection and enhancement of heritage assets
- Traffic, parking and highway safety issues
- The importance of suitable transport alternatives to the private motor car



- The need to deliver balanced communities (housing, employment and social and community infrastructure)
- Sustainable use of resources and sustainable construction strategies
- Careful management of water both in construction, during operation, through management of surface water (SuDS) and in relation to flooding potential (ground water, surface water and river flooding)

#### Baseline information

3.2.4 The SA Scoping Report adopted 13 ‘sustainability themes’ that incorporated the environmental themes set out in the SEA Regulations in order to meet its requirements. The baseline section of the Scoping Report includes the existing baseline situation and future baseline. The following summary lists the topic areas covered under each theme that are relevant to SEA and then includes the future baseline situation for each theme.

#### **Biodiversity – issues considered included:**

- European designations
- Local designations
- Ancient woodland
- Environmental Stewardship Scheme
- National designations
- Biodiversity Action Plan habitats
- Woodland Grant Schemes

#### **Biodiversity - Future baseline in WLNP area**

- 3.2.5 With increased development pressures biodiversity, including fauna, flora and habitats, may become increasingly affected through loss of habitat, the impact of domestic animals (cats and dogs), intensification of farming, recreational pressure, climate change and indirect impacts such as the effect of air pollution on sensitive habitats like woodlands.
- 3.2.6 Equally, new development provides the opportunity to make significant improvements to the biodiversity of an area through habitat enhancement, ‘off-setting’ (where new habitat is created, often away from the site, but targeted to deliver a particular outcome such as the creation of new wetland). The Environmental Stewardship Schemes and other similar improvements in agricultural / land management practice may contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the Plan Area in future.
- 3.2.7 Of critical importance is the planned growth expected to occur at the garrisons in the vicinity of Salisbury Plain as many thousands of troops are relocated to the area (part of the Army Basing Plan - bringing troops back from Germany) will inevitably have an impact on the protected sites, habitats and species that are located on and adjacent to Salisbury Plain. This impact will take the form of both additional recreational pressures and intensified training demands on the land.
- 3.2.8 The High-Level Stewardship Scheme lasts for ten years. The Organic Entry Level Scheme and the Entry Level Scheme last for five years. These have now closed as of 2013. Therefore, they will run out in 2023 and 2018 respectively at the latest. They are therefore time limited and cannot be relied upon in the future for continued land management to significantly promote biodiversity. Additionally, the New

Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS) being worked up by DEFRA may not be as well funded as the Environmental Stewardship Schemes were. It is therefore unclear whether, when the existing environmental schemes come to an end, they will be rolled forward into new environmental schemes.

**Water resources Including flood risk - issues considered included:**

- Watercourses
- Water supply
- River quality
- Flood risk
- Nitrate vulnerability

**Water Resources Including Flood Risk - Future baseline in WLNP area**

- 3.2.9 The future relationship between climate change, precipitation levels and river levels/flooding is unclear. However, it is possible that climate change will have an effect on average river levels and/or frequency of flood events, making the likelihood of floods occurring more common, and the extent of flooded land greater. Within the Plan Area, the relatively small catchment area for the tributary to the Semington Brook (due to proximity of the settled parts of the Plan Area to the source) suggests that the effects of flood events may be more limited than further downstream.
- 3.2.10 In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan, any new development at West Lavington and Littleton Panell is likely to lead to a reduction in the available permeable ground surface and this may lead to an increase in run-off unless appropriate sustainable drainage solutions are incorporated into the new developments. Since there are already issues with run-off from the surrounding hills, any new development would be likely to exacerbate existing capacity issues.
- 3.2.11 It is likely that the Semington Brook will remain at a moderate ecological quality, certainly in the period up to 2015, although improvements in agricultural practices, groundwater protection and other measures to improve the general quality of water courses may lead to overall improvements in the medium to long term.

**Climatic Factors - issues considered included:**

- Energy consumption
- Renewable energy
- Carbon emissions
- Temperature change

**Climatic Factors - Future baseline in WLNP area**

- 3.2.12 The Wiltshire Climate Change Adaptation Plan Level 1 Report April 2010 quotes the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) (funded by DeFRA and based on projections by the Met Office).
- 3.2.13 The report explains that annual mean temperatures in Wiltshire, under a medium emissions scenario, are likely to increase by between 2.2 and 2.9 degrees centigrade by the 2050s.
- 3.2.14 Precipitation is expected to stay roughly the same under the same scenario, but with a decrease in summer mean precipitation by between 10% and 28% and an increase in winter mean precipitation by between 9% and 22% (Wiltshire Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan Level 1 Report 2010).
- 3.2.15 Overall, these changes may lead to drier, hotter summers and warmer, wetter winters.

- 3.2.16 Following recent trends, it is likely that in the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan per capita CO2 emissions will continue to decrease as less reliance is placed on CO2 generating activities (eg, non-renewable energy consumption and combustion engine power transportation modes).
- 3.2.17 Furthermore, it is likely, based on past trends, that the installed capacity of site generating electricity from renewable sources is likely to increase albeit this may tail off once the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) targets for the share of energy from renewable sources are achieved (in 2020 or thereafter).
- 3.2.18 Unless mains gas is supplied to the Plan Area it is likely that alternative solutions for domestic and non-domestic heating fuel will continue to be adopted, primarily focussing on oil, LPG and electricity, but with greater use of renewable sources where they are feasible.
- 3.2.19 The most practical application for community based renewable energy schemes is likely to be small scale biomass projects in areas of high density housing immediately adjacent to each other. There is likely to be very limited scope for any further renewable energy developments on a community basis outside of this.
- 3.2.20 Domestic renewable technologies that may be deployed more regularly in future, in the absence of the Plan, include solar PV, solar thermal, biomass heating, ground and air source heat pumps.

**Landscapes - issues considered included:**

- Landscape character
- Tranquillity, intrusion and light pollution
- The MOD and Salisbury Plain

**Landscapes - Future baseline in WLNP area**

- 3.2.21 In the absence of this Neighbourhood Plan even incremental development and change will result in changes to the landscape, some of which will be negative. Encroachment into the countryside may be regarded as detrimental; however, development can also bring about improvements to the character and quality of landscapes through better interpretation and revealing of key features, active management and the benefits that off-setting can deliver by creating habitats and managed landscape areas for the benefit of biodiversity.
- 3.2.22 Inevitably light pollution will increase as development occurs unless alternative means are found to illuminate new developments, or greater restrictions are placed on external and internal illumination. Tranquillity will continue to be an issue as will visual and noise intrusion because development and traffic both have the ability to impact adversely on the tranquillity of landscapes and the quiet enjoyment of the countryside.
- 3.2.23 The effects on the landscape of the Army Basing Programme 18 - the relocation of 4,300 service personnel plus their families (7,700 people total) to the Salisbury Plain area are difficult to predict but they may lead to greater demands on the Salisbury Plain area (including land within the Plan Area) for training purposes. This may lead to changes in farmed land / grassland proportions within the southern part of the Plan Area.

3.2.24 Additionally, the general recreational pressures on Salisbury Plain may increase as a result of the physical increase in people living in the area. The masterplan proposes that most of the incoming personnel will be accommodated at the existing bases to the eastern end of the Plain, avoiding the firing ranges and ecologically designated areas. However recreational pressures will undoubtedly extend into the centre of the Plain, reducing the overall tranquillity of the area and this could impact on the Parish of West Lavington.

**Healthy Communities - issues considered included:**

- Life expectancy
- Care
- Children's fitness
- Health
- Obesity

**Healthy Communities - Future baseline in WLNP area**

3.2.25 In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan life expectancy is likely to increase and the population generally is likely to age, with a higher proportion of people living longer in future.

3.2.26 Any additional house-building is likely to lead to localised increases in populations in the two villages. Advances in medical practice may have a positive impact on life expectancy and mortality rates, whereas other aspects of life (poor diet, lack of exercise etc) may lead to further problems of obesity and cardiovascular disease, particularly in the younger and middle-aged sections of the population.

**Land and Soil Resources – issues considered included:**

- Soil resources
- Topography
- Previously Developed Land
- Waste collection / disposal
- Agricultural land
- Geology
- Development density
- Mineral resources

**Land and Soil Resources - Future baseline in WLNP area**

3.2.27 Unplanned growth on the edge of the settlements of West Lavington and Littleton Panell may lead to loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and other land benefitting from good quality soils.

3.2.28 In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan, incentives to improve recycling rates are likely to reduce the need for minerals and other raw materials and to increase recycling rates whilst at the same time reducing the amount of waste that is sent to landfill.

**Air Quality and Environmental Pollution - issues considered included:**

- Air quality
- Tranquillity
- Light pollution
- Contamination

**Air Quality and Environmental Pollution - Future baseline in WLNP area**

3.2.29 In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan it is likely that additional development in the Devizes Community Area will lead to increased incidence of pollution as a result

of the additional vehicle movements that any development is likely to generate. The growth planned in the Devizes community area is significant and it appears likely that it may increase as a result of the Core Strategy Inspector's interim comments to Wiltshire Council (core document 'Exam75' dated 2 December 201343) about increasing the total quantum of housing to be delivered in the Core Strategy Area over the Plan period.

- 3.2.30 Additional development, unless accompanied by proportionate growth in public transport, cycleway and footway improvements, is likely to result in further erosion of air quality.
- 3.2.31 New development brings with it lighting, noise and other pollutants which may further erode the tranquillity of the Neighbourhood Plan Area unless carefully controlled, through the use of controls in development plans<sup>44</sup>. Salisbury Plain will continue to be used by the Army for live firing and other manoeuvres which will have a general effect on the tranquillity of the area. Redevelopment of previously developed land may lead to the risk of pollutants entering the environment. Therefore, careful management of the decontamination of affected sites will be critical.

**Historic Environment – issues considered included:**

- Heritage assets
- Conservation Area
- Heritage at Risk
- Archaeology
- Salisbury Plain heritage

**Historic Environment - Future baseline in WLNP area**

- 3.2.32 In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan, all development in the future has the potential to harm the significance of the heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Sensitively designed development may not lead to harm to the significance of heritage assets and will be determined in the context of current planning policies and in particular the National Planning Policy Framework (or its successor) and the policies in the development plan.
- 3.2.33 Further development will undoubtedly reveal additional archaeological remains as a result of on-site field investigations. This will add further to the knowledge base and contribute to a greater understanding of the heritage and history of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

**Population and Housing - issues considered included:**

- Population
- Cohabitation
- Overcrowding
- Council and private rents
- Density
- Dwelling stock
- Affordable housing
- Recent developments
- Ethnicity
- House price data
- Affordability

**Population and Housing - Future baseline in WLNP area**

- 3.2.34 In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan the population is expected to continue to increase with additional house building in the area. Whilst it is not possible to say by how much, the total change in population between 2001 and 2011 was approximately

+17%. That may not be representative of the next ten years; however, a steady increase in population is likely to occur through small scale developments within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

- 3.2.35 The emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy anticipates delivering 10,000 new affordable homes in the life of the plan period 2011 – 2026 and within the remainder of the Devizes Community Area, of a total of 420 houses to be built over that period, up to 168 additional affordable housing units might be completed outside Devizes within the Devizes Community Area based on the 40% net requirement for affordable housing on sites of 5 or more dwellings as set out in Core Policy 43 at the emerging Core Strategy.
- 3.2.36 The residual requirement (taking account of sites with planning permission or built out since the start of the plan period) is in the order of approximately 205 dwellings for the remainder of the Devizes Community Area. This is subject to confirmation of the overall housing figures for Wiltshire and the Devizes Community Area, following the publication of the examination Inspector’s conclusions on the soundness of the Core Strategy later in 2014.
- 3.2.37 There may be limited additional housing demand in West Lavington and Littleton Panell as a result of the Army Basing Programme of relocation of troops to the Salisbury Plain area. However, this additional need is being met largely within the existing bases at the eastern end of Salisbury Plain, outside the Parish of West Lavington.

Identifying key sustainability issues and environmental problems

- 3.2.38 The policy context and review of other relevant plans/programmes, together with the review of baseline information (summarised above from the SA Scoping Report), flagged up a number of issues/environmental problems which the neighbourhood plan may be able to mitigate or completely address. Those key issues and environmental problems of relevance to this SEA, are considered to be:

**Table 3.1 Key sustainability and environmental problems**

SEA Theme	Issue/problem	Source
Biodiversity	Both SSSIs have a significant proportion of land which is classed as ‘unfavourable recovering’, in particular the Salisbury Plain SSSI	Natural England SSSI citations
	BAP habitats will require on-going management and enhancement	Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2008
	The impact of the planned relocation of the military to the areas around Salisbury Plain and the attendant impacts (recreational and operational) on the protected habitats within the Plan Area and particularly on Salisbury Plain as a result	Army Basing Programme documents
Water resources and flood risk	Flood risk in parts of the neighbourhood plan area. Additional development may exacerbate this. Further investigation of storm and foul water systems required to address run-off from surrounding hills and Salisbury Plain	Environment Agency flood mapping; Wessex Water and Wiltshire Highways data
	Development may impact adversely on	Environment Agency

	groundwater and river quality	data
Climatic factors	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions are higher per capita in the Plan Area than in the SW Region or England	Department of Energy and Climate Change data
	Changes to precipitation rates and rising mean temperatures	South West Observatory records
	Additional development and transportation associated with that development may lead to higher emissions of greenhouse gases	Department of Energy and Climate Change data
	In the absence of mains gas it is likely that alternative solutions for domestic and non-domestic heating fuel will continue to be adopted, primarily focussing on oil, LPG and electricity, but with greater use of renewable sources where they are feasible	Community supplied
Landscape	The character of the significant areas of open grassland on Salisbury Plain in the southern part of the Plan Area would be likely to be adversely affected by additional development in that locality	Various landscape studies
	Loss of tranquillity and additional light and noise pollution all have the potential to impact on the character of the Plan Area as a result of poorly planned development	CPRE mapping; Various landscape studies
	The characteristics of the different landscape character areas (mosaics of woodland, rural agricultural quality, pasture, valley settlements, riverine habitats, hedgerows etc) will be adversely affected by insensitively designed / located development	Landscape studies; planning register; development plan policies
	The impact of the planned relocation of the military to the areas around Salisbury Plain and the attendant impacts (operational) on the landscape areas and tranquillity within the Plan Area	Army Basing Programme documents
Healthy communities	Increasing fitness and tackling obesity in the general population, and children in particular, is critical. This may manifest itself in providing additional facilities / recreation resources	Devizes Community Area Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; Wiltshire Council Health Related Behaviour surveys
	Life expectancy is on the increase and the Plan Area will continue to have a higher life expectancy than in the SW Region or England. This will place additional pressure on community and health resources	Wiltshire Joint Strategic Assessment for Health & Wellbeing and ONS Neighbourhood Statistics
Land and soil resources	Additional development on the best and most versatile agricultural land will lead to a loss of this valuable resource	Natural England Land Classification Map SW Region

	Low levels of reuse of previously developed land are experience in the Plan Area. Opportunities should be sought to redress this	SW Observatory Local Profiles Wiltshire 2012
	Opportunities to continue to increase the rates of recycling and reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill should be exploited	UK Government - Local Authority Collected Waste Statistical Dataset
Air quality and environmental pollution	Additional development may lead to negative impacts on air quality if not managed sustainably	Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire 2011-15; LTP3 (2011-26)
	Loss of tranquillity and additional light and noise pollution, as a result of additional development, all have the potential to impact on the amenity of the Plan Area. Impact of existing noise on new development	CPRE mapping; Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011 (Institute of Lighting Professionals)
	Contaminated land could, if not managed properly, lead to secondary impacts on soil and water quality in the Plan Area	Wiltshire Council Environmental Health data; Environment Agency data
Historic environment	Insensitive development has led to harm to the significance of heritage assets (in particular the character of the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings) in the Plan Area	Conservation Area Statement for West Lavington and Littleton Panell
	The extent of medieval settlement remains in the Plan Area is largely unknown. Additional development should take opportunities to fully explore that aspect of local heritage before development proceeds	Local research; English Heritage resources
	The number, variety, extent and importance of heritage assets on Salisbury Plain is potentially significant. This part of the Plan Area is unlikely to be suitable for further development	English Heritage Salisbury Plain Training Area Report
	Limited opportunities exist for the public to interpret / explore the heritage of the Plan Area	Local research; English Heritage resources
Population and housing	Population has grown at a relatively slow rate in recent years. More rapid growth in future, over a short period of time, could lead to pressure on local services and facilities (eg schools, medical facilities etc)	ONS Neighbourhood Statistics
	The Plan Area is affected by unique factors such as Dauntsey's and the care homes (accounting for over 20% total population). This skews the figures on housing demand and supply	ONS Neighbourhood Statistics
	There is a perceived shortage of new houses for	Local surveys



	young families or for the elderly	
	The proportion of detached houses is significantly higher than in the rest of the SW Region or England, and the proportion of small units significantly lower	ONS Neighbourhood Statistics Dataset Accommodation Type - People (QS401EW)
	Affordability in the Plan Area is poor compared to the SW Region and England generally	Shelter Housing Databank website (using DCLG statistics)

### 3.3 Sustainability Appraisal Framework

3.3.1 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework developed during the scoping stage includes a set of objectives which will play a key role in focussing in on the key sustainability issues arising from the scoping process. These objectives are to be distinguished from other objectives which form part of the WLNP (which establish the purposes of the Plan), or which may arise as a requirement of policy, legislation etc.

3.3.2 These SA objectives include both environmental objectives that meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, and wider social and economic objectives that could be used as part of an SA. However, for the SEA, it is only the environmental objectives that will be used as the basis for the assessment in this Environmental Report.

3.3.3 The full SA Framework is presented in Appendix A to this report. The objectives that will be used in the assessment in this Environmental Report are as follows:

**Table 3.2 SEA objectives**

SEA Issue <sup>26</sup>	Scoping Report 'sustainability theme'	SEA Objective
Biodiversity; fauna; flora	Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses
Population	Population and housing	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures
Human health	Healthy communities	Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live
Soil	Land and soil resources	Ensure efficient and effective use of land and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings
		Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste
Water	Water resources and flood risk	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner

<sup>26</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 – Regulation 12(3) and Schedule 2

		Protect people and property from the risk of flooding
Climatic factors	Climatic factors	Minimise our impacts on climate change and reduce our vulnerability to future climate change effects
Air	Air quality and environmental pollution	Improve air quality and minimise all sources of environmental pollution
Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage;	Historic environment	Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment
Landscape	Landscape	Conserve and enhance the character and quality of West Lavington NP's rural and urban landscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place
Material assets	(Discussed under other topic headings above)	

#### **4. Assessment of neighbourhood plan and alternatives**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives'. Reasonable alternatives are the different options considered while developing a draft plan. They must be realistic and deliverable and considered and assessed in the same level of detail as the proposed approach in the neighbourhood plan. In this context, this section includes a narrative on factors the neighbourhood plan steering group considered in relation to the scale of housing provision within the plan, and an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of different housing site options that are considered as reasonable alternatives. This is followed by an assessment of the proposed plan policies in terms of likely significant environmental effects.

## 4.2 Consideration of need for housing and assessment of housing site options

### Consideration of need for, and level, of housing

4.2.1 The WLNP SA Scoping Report (February 2015)<sup>27</sup> listed the following 'key issues and environmental problems' in the neighbourhood plan area under the 'population and housing' theme:

1. *Population has grown at a relatively slow rate in recent years. More rapid growth in future, over a short period of time, could lead to pressure on local services and facilities (eg schools, medical facilities etc)*
2. *The Plan Area is affected by unique factors such as Dauntsey's and the care homes (accounting for over 20% total population). This skews the figures on housing demand and supply.*
3. *There is a perceived shortage of new houses for young families or for the elderly.*
4. *The proportion of detached houses is significantly higher than in the rest of the SW Region or England, and the proportion of small units significantly lower.*
5. *Affordability in the Plan Area is poor compared to the SW Region and England generally.*

4.2.2 The report '*Housing Allocation Site Selection Methodology April 2018*' that accompanies the draft WLNP sets out the process of site assessment undertaken by the neighbourhood plan steering group. It explains that the neighbourhood plan needs to reflect both wider strategic pressures and local needs or demand whilst also restricting potentially excessive and inappropriate development. Decisions on the number of homes being proposed in the WLNP considered a number of factors:

- Planning for 'zero' growth (i.e. no development) is not considered to be a viable option, as West Lavington is designated as a 'Large Village' in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and as such is identified as being suitable for some growth.
- The outcome of consultation on the neighbourhood plan to date which has demonstrated support for some growth in the parish.
- 'Need' and 'demand' are not necessarily the same, so an objective review of the evidence is required.

- Wider need is evident from both national and county-wide assessments, which have been published previously in support of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
  - Local need and demand can be assessed from historical growth patterns and responses to consultation.
  - An appreciation of the commercial viability of sites for a housing developer.
- 4.2.3 The neighbourhood plan steering group considered evidence that the Parish has absorbed 55 additional households, established in 45 more dwellings, between 2001 and 2011, and with evidence of continuing demand for housing, considered it would be reasonable to assume that a similar level of growth would occur over the neighbourhood plan period.
- 4.2.4 Planning for 'zero' growth i.e. no development, was not considered to be a viable option. There was sufficient support among local residents for lower levels of housing (around 20 to 40) but this tended to decline markedly above around 60 dwellings. However, the neighbourhood plan steering group had to balance this against the practicalities of developing suitable sites, the need to secure affordable housing and past rates of growth of around 50 over the decade. Given these factors and the need for housing in the wider area, the neighbourhood plan steering group felt that it was reasonable to assume that past growth rates would continue, and future supply should be at least comparable to these past trends.
- 4.2.5 Given that zero growth was not considered to be a reasonable option, the views of local residents were sought on a range of housing levels from between 20 dwellings to less than 100 dwellings over the plan period. In terms of an assessment of this range of provision against the SEA environmental objectives, the likelihood of significant effects occurring would depend on the level of provision and the location and type of any sites allocated, and their proximity to sensitive environmental receptors. The cumulative effects of developing a number of smaller sites may be greater than developing one large site where there may be greater opportunities for mitigation such as landscaping. A smaller level of provision is likely to have less environmental effects overall, but this would also have less benefits in terms of meeting local housing needs, especially affordable housing needs, and other social and economic benefits.
- 4.2.6 Housing provision in the range of 20-100 dwellings is not considered likely to have significant effects in the neighbourhood plan area in terms of air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. Most available housing sites in a rural area such as this are greenfield sites and therefore a higher level of provision will lead to the loss of more greenfield, often agricultural land. The development of most sites for housing has the potential for some adverse effects on biodiversity, landscape, heritage assets, water resources, but this will very much depend on location, size of site and opportunities for mitigation.
- 4.2.7 Development of a smaller number of dwellings in the plan period is considered likely to reduce the likelihood of significant environmental effects. However, it is acknowledged that consideration also need to be given to maximising social and economic benefits for local people, so provision of a mid-range level of housing e.g. 50-70, may be the scale of development most likely to help achieve the

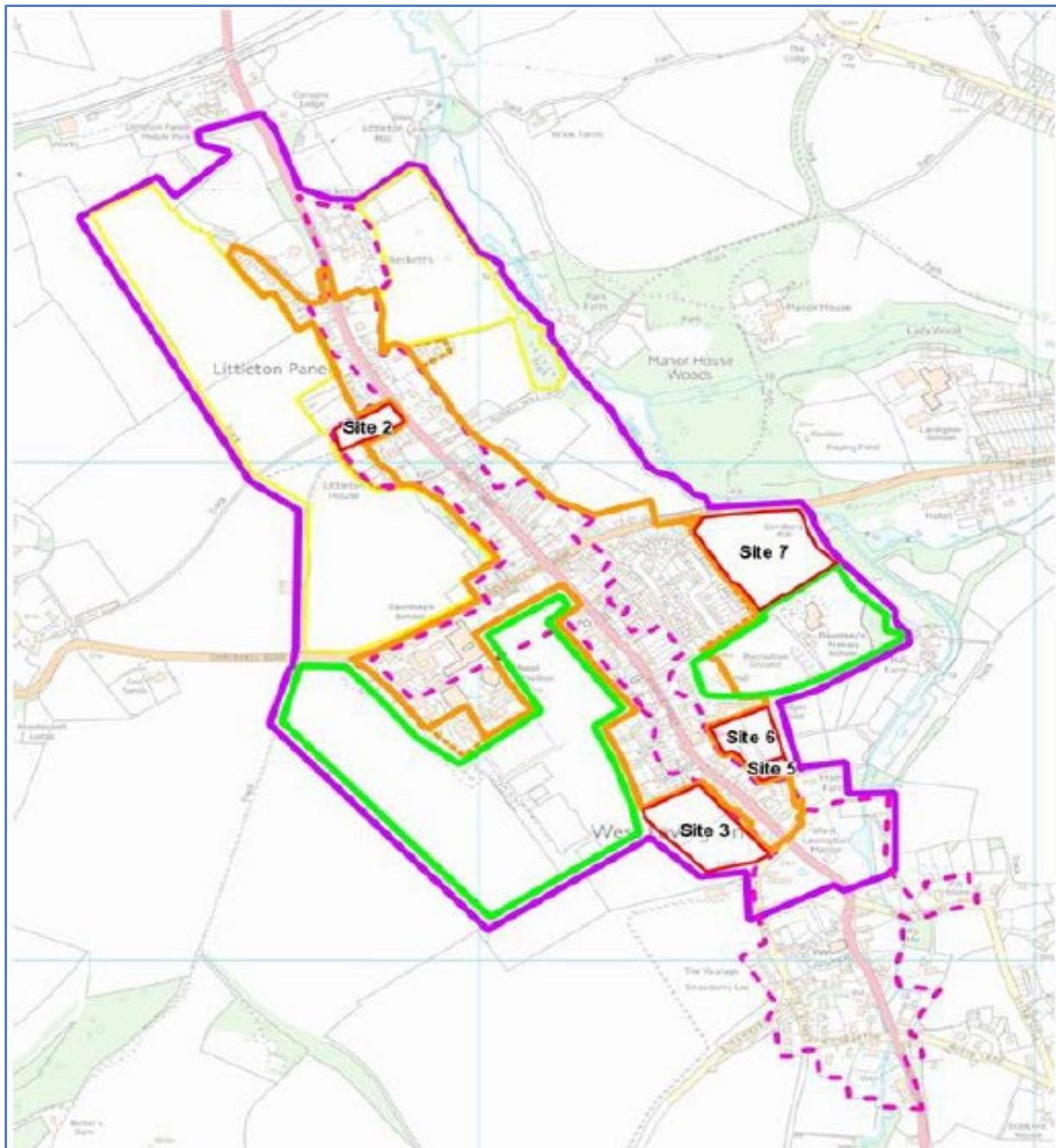
neighbourhood plan objectives, and contribute to contributing to sustainable development.

#### Assessment of housing site options

- 4.2.8 In terms of considering how potential housing sites were to be selected in the neighbourhood plan, the WLNP SA Scoping Report states in paragraph 1.27 that *'discussions with Wiltshire Council have indicated that it would be helpful to have a series of criteria against which individual sites can be assessed, in addition to the SA objectives and identified issues. This exercise will inform an objective appraisal of site options following the initial SA scoping exercise and will assist in the assessment of alternatives and their associated effects.'* The Scoping Report then presents this criteria in a Draft Template for Site Appraisals in Appendix C, which was based on the SA objectives.
- 4.2.9 The neighbourhood plan steering group undertook this objective appraisal of site options by first identifying broad spatial planning constraints around both villages in the neighbourhood area (West Lavington and Littleton Panell). This included consideration of a number of 'exclusion criteria'. This resulted in a list of 14 potential sites to be assessed against the Draft Template for Site Appraisals, as described above, which used groups of criteria under the following headings to assess each site on its merits:
1. Practical implementation criteria
  2. Environmental protection criteria
  3. Distance to facilities criteria
  4. Landscape and views criteria
  5. Village character and heritage criteria
  6. Criteria for subsequent consideration at site specific proposal stage
- 4.2.10 This resulted in a smaller list of eight sites, and finally, after considering deliverability and implementation of these sites, a 'short list' of five sites was compiled which were considered to be 'reasonable alternatives' as they were sites that were considered available, viable, deliverable and without major constraints. It was considered that two of the five sites should be put together, resulting in four 'reasonable alternative' site options.
- 4.2.11 These four 'reasonable alternative' sites are as follows and are shown on the map below:
- Site 2: Littleton Panell - High Street adjacent to 'The Farm'
  - Site 3: West Lavington - Behind High Street/Orchard Place/White Street
  - Site 5/6: West Lavington - High Street, within Equestrian Centre<sup>28</sup>
  - Site 7: West Lavington – Land South of Lavington Lane

---

<sup>28</sup> Sites 5 and 6 have been considered together as are in single ownership and only together is there potential for access issues to be resolved.



**Figure 4.1 Location of ‘reasonable alternative’ housing site options in West Lavington**

4.2.12 The detailed assessment of these sites against the SEA objectives is presented in Appendix B. Guidance<sup>29</sup> states that *‘it is not the purpose of the SEA to decide the alternative(s) to be chosen for the plan or programme. This is the role of the decision-makers who have to make choices on the plan or programme to be adopted. The SEA simply provides information on the relative environmental performance of alternatives and can make the decision-making process more transparent’*. For this reason, the SEA highlights the environmental effects that are likely to be significant with each option, and possible mitigation measures.

<sup>29</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM, 2005)

4.2.13 The SEA focuses on environmental effects and decision-makers will also need to take other factors e.g. social and economic factors, into account when deciding on options to progress.

4.2.14 A summary of the assessment findings is presented in Table 4.1 below:

**Table 4.1: Summary of assessment of reasonable alternative housing site options**

Site	Summary of assessment outcome <sup>30</sup>								
	Biod'y	Pop'n & Housing	Healthy Comm's	Land & soil resources	Water resources & flood risk	Climatic factors	Air quality & environ'l pollution	Historic environ't	Landscape
2	--	++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
3	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
5/6	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
7	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	-	--

4.2.15 The SEA assessment has found that there are likely significant effects, both positive and negative, with all four sites assessed, and that mitigation measures to reduce the potential significant adverse effects are achievable at each site.

4.2.16 The assessment has found that all four potential housing sites would be likely to have significant positive effects due to the amount of new housing, including affordable housing, that could be delivered on each site, with sites 3, 5/6 and 7, likely to have major positive effects due to the amount of new housing, including affordable, that could be delivered

4.2.17 All four sites are within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA and have been 'screened in' for appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations (refer to the findings of the WLNP HRA<sup>31</sup> for more detail). For this reason, there are likely significant effects in terms of the SEA and all four sites have been scored 'moderate adverse'. This is because any additional housing has potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA. However, mitigation for the impacts of the Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and comprised Council funding for monitoring breeding bird numbers and working with farm managers to maximise breeding success. As a consequence, the HRA for the Core Strategy was able to conclude no adverse effect. The HRA of the WLNP similarly concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with other plans and projects.

4.2.18 Site 7 is also ecologically sensitive with mature trees and hedgerows (BAP Priority Habitat) on and adjacent to the site and the site is in close proximity to ancient woodland (Manor House Woods), woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook which are also BAP Priority Habitats. It is considered that there would be likely significant effects on the woodland due to the effects of lighting, associated access works to Lavington Lane and recreational pressure. Due to the proximity of the Manor House Woods, any development would need to demonstrate that there will be no increase in lighting levels at the edge of the trees. Mitigation measures could include sensitive design and layout of the site, possibly a reduction in the number of dwellings and parts of the site remaining free from development.

<sup>30</sup> Refer to Table 2.1 Generic Assessment Scale for evaluation of significance of effects

<sup>31</sup> HRA of West Lavington Neighbourhood Development Plan (Wiltshire Council, February 2019)

4.2.19 In terms of effects on landscape, site 7 is elevated above Lavington Lane and dwellings may appear prominent from the road. It is considered that housing development on this site could result in landscape and visual impacts but that these could be successfully mitigated with robust mitigation and enhancement strategies, for example a strong Green Infrastructure buffer to Manor House Woods, to woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook. However, any proposals that take access from Lavington Lane have potential to result in significant landscape impacts specifically in relation to changing the rural character of the lane and potentially undermining the necessary Green Infrastructure buffer. Development also has the potential to maximise the opportunity to retain public access and extend the public footpath network, and consideration should be given to providing public open space at a site of this size.

4.2.20 The assessment has found that sites 2, 3 and 5/6 are all likely to have significant adverse environmental effects on the West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area and individual listed buildings in proximity to the sites. These effects would be problematic to mitigate but mitigation would be possible through appropriate design and layout.

### **4.3 Assessment of neighbourhood plan overall**

4.3.1 The submission version of the neighbourhood plan presents 11 policies to guide development in the plan area. The policies, and themes under which they are grouped, are as follows:

#### Built Environment

- Policy BE1 – Settlement Boundary
- Policy BE2 – Design of New Development and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy BE3 – Highway Impact
- Policy BE4 – Heritage Assets

#### Housing

- Policy H1 – New Housing

#### Economy

- Policy E1 – Retention of Existing Employment Land and Buildings
- Policy E2 – Employment Development

#### Community Facilities

- Policy CF1 – Community Facilities
- Policy CF2 – Educational Facilities

#### Natural Environment

- Policy NE1 – Local Green Space
- Policy NE2 – Setting of West Lavington Parish

4.3.2 The assessment that follows is structured under the nine SEA themes set out in Table 3.1. For each theme, any likely significant effects of the draft plan are predicted and evaluated, as well as any relevant mitigation measures.



- 4.3.3 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate significant effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects.

#### Biodiversity

- 4.3.4 The SEA has found that the plan is not likely to have significant effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA. The increase in population through the proposed housing allocation at Land South of Lavington Lane for up to 50 dwellings has the potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA as the site is within 6.4 km and evidence from research has demonstrated that Stone-curlew are particularly susceptible to recreational pressure. Natural England's Supplementary Advice has found that active and ongoing conservation management is needed to protect, maintain and restore the function of supporting habitat both within and outside the SPA.
- 4.3.5 Mitigation for the impacts of the Wiltshire Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and comprised Council funding for monitoring breeding bird numbers and working with farm managers to maximise breeding success. As a consequence, the HRA for the Core Strategy was able to conclude no adverse effect. The HRA of the WLNP similarly concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with other plans and projects.
- 4.3.6 The proposed housing allocation is ecologically sensitive. There are mature trees and hedgerows (BAP Priority Habitat) on and adjacent to the site which would require protection through a Green Infrastructure buffer. The site is in close proximity to ancient woodland (Manor House Woods), woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook which are also BAP Priority Habitats. It is considered that there would be likely significant effects on the woodland due to effects of lighting of the development, any associated works to the road and increased recreational pressure. An ecological assessment will be required in support of any planning application to demonstrate how adverse impacts on these habitats can be mitigated.
- 4.3.7 Due to the proximity of Manor House Woods and woodland to the east of the site, with likely presence of bats, any development would need to demonstrate that there will be no increase in lighting levels at the edge of the trees. Mitigation measures could include sensitive design and layout of the site, possibly a reduction in the number of dwellings and parts of the site remaining free from development. The plan's requirement for a masterplan for this site, developed in collaboration with the community, the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority, and including the development principle to include '*landscaping belts on the northern and eastern perimeters of the site*' is welcomed. However, these buffers need to be sufficient to mitigate direct and indirect effects on the woodland.
- 4.3.8 Policies NE1 and NE2 will provide additional protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the parish. These policies offer a positive approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity assets in the neighbourhood plan area.

#### Population and housing

- 4.3.9 The plan seeks to meet its own local housing needs and reflect wider strategic pressures, whilst also restricting potential excessive and inappropriate development. The steering group have considered it prudent to allocate land for housing to

contribute towards the indicative housing requirements prescribed in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and acknowledge that the housing requirements in the Core Strategy are a minimum, not a maximum. In addition, the Housing Needs Survey undertaken for the Parish has demonstrated a local need for housing in West Lavington.

- 4.3.10 Policy H1 also allows for small-scale residential development within the settlement boundary that does not impact adversely on the surrounding area.
- 4.3.11 It is considered that the housing policies within the plan are very positive and significant beneficial effects will likely result in meeting local needs for both market and affordable housing.

#### Healthy communities

- 4.3.12 The plan's proposals to meet local housing needs, protect and enhance the local natural and built environment and protect community facilities and jobs will all have a positive role in helping to maintain a healthy community. Providing decent homes to live in, local jobs and a pleasant environment in which to live will help to improve health and wellbeing. Protection and enhancement of Green Infrastructure networks, such as through policies NE1 and NE2 will support the health and wellbeing of residents by facilitating improvements in levels of physical activity, enhancing social interaction between residents and promoting psychological well-being.
- 4.3.13 With regards the proposed housing allocation at Land South of Lavington Lane for 50 dwellings, the SEA has found that the site is well located in relation to local services and facilities which will allow and encourage walking and cycling. It is in reasonable walking distance of the centre of West Lavington village, adjacent to the primary school, as well as being within walking distance of some facilities in Market Lavington e.g. the secondary school. There is access to public transport to travel to a wider range of services further afield. However, development at the village would be unlikely to create new employment opportunities in the village itself. Whilst a bus service visits the village, the majority of trips to work and wider services and facilities will likely involve use of cars.
- 4.3.14 Overall, the policies of the plan are likely to have positive effects on the health and wellbeing of the local community.

#### Land and soil resources

- 4.3.15 No significant adverse effects are considered likely through the plan proposals. Whilst the proposed housing site allocation will lead to the loss of some greenfield land on the edge of West Lavington, it is likely that the significant social and economic benefits this development will bring to the village will significantly outweigh the loss of the agricultural field.
- 4.3.16 The proposed housing site lies immediately adjacent to the core of the village of West Lavington. The quality of the land in relation to agricultural potential is not known. In relation to efficient use of land, the development of the site would be capable of delivering appropriate housing densities in line with local planning policy and available evidence. However, given the site's prominence, and in light of environmental constraints that will require significant mitigation measures in terms of Green Infrastructure, it is unlikely that housing densities could be maximised on this site.

4.3.17 Policy NE2 makes several references to support for protecting and enhancing the setting of the parish and this is welcomed. This includes:

- *‘Proposals to enhance the village and surrounding areas through appropriate green infrastructure such as landscaping and planting, especially around playing fields and any new developments’*
- *‘Where any proposed new development extends the existing built form of West Lavington and Littleton Panell closer to neighbouring settlements of Little Cheverell and Market Lavington, suitable landscaped buffers shall be incorporated to ensure the continued visual separation between the settlements’*
- *‘New development will be supported provided that it does not adversely affect or devalue the structure, diversity or views of the streetscene and landscape. New development, where supported by other plan policies, must be integrated into the streetscene and landscape through design and the incorporation of suitable green buffers and the planting including trees’*
- *‘Development which adversely affects the character, appearance or ecological importance of the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation; the Salisbury Plain SSSI; Great Cheverell Hill SSSI; Ancient Woodland and County Wildlife Sites will not be permitted’*

4.3.18 Policy BE1 is positive in terms of protecting the open countryside, confirming that the settlement boundary *‘...serves the purpose of containing the growth of the settlements, protecting the countryside from encroachment and preventing coalescence’*. Small-scale development within the settlement boundary is supported subject to certain criteria, and development outside the settlement boundary is strictly controlled.

#### Water resources and flood risk

4.3.19 Whilst development within the plan area will increase pressures on local water resources, development at the level proposed is not considered significant. Development would lead to some limited increase in demand for water and pressure on existing sewer system capacity. However, current evidence indicates that development of the proposed housing site allocation for up to 50 houses could be supported by water supply and sewage infrastructure.

4.3.20 The proposed housing site allocation is located in Flood Zone 1 but is adjacent to Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with Semington Brook. Evidence indicates that there have been historical issues with storm water drainage in the locality. Therefore, development at the site would have the potential to exacerbate fluvial and pluvial flooding if appropriate drainage systems are not incorporated into the design. At this stage there is no evidence to indicate that the allocated site, or any infill development, in line with Policy H1 or BE1, is not capable of incorporating adequate drainage solutions. To understand the detail of impacts and necessary mitigation, a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy would be required in support of any planning application. The use of effective Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS),

where appropriate, and a strong Green Infrastructure buffer to the north and east of the site could reduce adverse impacts on the brook and reduce future drainage issues.

- 4.3.21 Policy H1 provides Principles of Development for this site, one of which is to *'provide drainage systems that are pollution free and minimise surface water run off to the surrounding area'*.
- 4.3.22 Chapter 16 of the plan provides a thorough description of watercourses and areas of flood risk within the parish and Policy NE2 states that *'development which adversely affects the character, appearance, setting, recreational purpose, and tranquillity of the river corridors of North Brook and Semington Brook will not be permitted'*. It is considered that the proposals in the plan will not lead to significant effects.

#### Climatic factors

- 4.3.23 Development proposals outlined in the plan have the potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions and design of the proposed housing site and buildings must incorporate measures to mitigate the impacts on climate change and be resilient to the future consequences of climate change. The effect of the development of this site will be to increase greenhouse gas emissions overall but given the scale of development, this is considered a minor adverse effect.
- 4.3.24 Minimising the impacts of climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be possible through the implementation of measures outlined in *'Strategic Objective 2: to address climate change'* and the related *'Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy'* of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. These measures will ensure the incorporation of design measures to reduce energy demand and increase energy efficiency, as well as the promotion of low carbon energy sources and encouragement of sustainable building practices.
- 4.3.25 In terms of climate change adaptation, the plan describes the location of watercourses and areas of flood risk in the parish and recognises potential issues and threats associated with these. Policy NE2 supports proposals that will protect and enhance the natural features that are a key component of the landscape, with new development being integrated into the landscape through design and the incorporation of suitable green buffers and tree planting. Support for protection and enhancement of the natural environment and local watercourses will help maintain resilience to any future climate change impacts.

#### Air quality and environmental pollution

- 4.3.26 The proposals in the plan require mitigation measures to be provided where new development adversely impacts on the highway network. Policy BE3 will therefore help to reduce adverse effects on the highway network but any new development is still likely to increase the number of motorised vehicles in the area.
- 4.3.27 The proposed housing site is relatively large for the size of the village and development is likely to increase levels of air, noise and light pollution in the surrounding area, but not significantly and mitigation measures are possible as already outlined under other themes. The location of the site allows for pedestrian

and cycle access to services and facilities both within West Lavington and Market Lavington and this access should be improved and provide a realistic alternative to the motor car, especially for trips to local schools. If an access is provided onto Lavington Lane, this could provide greater opportunities for walking and cycling to the secondary school and Market Lavington village centre.

- 4.3.28 There is no Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in West Lavington or Littleton Panell but there are known congestion issues at Lavington Crossroads. Development of the proposed housing site for housing may lead to short-term (construction) and long-term (occupation) impacts on local air quality e.g. increased private car usage. Mitigation measures to limit the impacts of vehicular movements on local air quality would need to be developed and implemented in accordance with local plan policy and advice from relevant bodies.

#### Historic environment

- 4.3.29 Policy BE1 of the plan is supportive of infill development within the settlement boundary and any such development is likely to be in close proximity to the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings or their settings and could potentially have a negative impact on these heritage assets. Policy BE2 of the plan requires all new development to *‘demonstrate good quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness and complements the fabric of the existing built up area, uses good quality harmonious materials and respects views around the village with reference to the height, scale and density of new buildings’*. Chapter 5 of the plan then gives a thorough description of heritage assets in the parish, with Policy BE4 requiring that *‘proposals for the change of use of listed buildings and development affecting or within the setting of listed buildings requiring planning permission will be required to demonstrate that the proposal is compatible with the fabric, setting and significance of the building as a heritage asset’*, and *‘development proposals within the conservation area and its setting should have regard to the significance of the conservation area as a heritage asset’*.
- 4.3.30 Those policies, along with policies Core Policy 57 and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will allow sufficient protection of heritage assets in the parish and there are no significant effects considered likely from those policies.
- 4.3.31 Regarding the proposed housing site allocation in the plan, the site has no heritage assets within or adjacent to the site. On its west side the site abuts modern housing estate development at Eastfield and Newby Close and to the south of the site adjacent is a modern primary school. A linear Conservation Area covering West Lavington and Littleton Panell was designated by the Local Planning Authority in 1975 and the closest part of that lies approximately 150m to the west of the site, west of the modern housing estate.
- 4.3.32 The Heritage Assessment<sup>32</sup> submitted with the WLNP has appropriately assessed the effects of the proposed development on any significant settings that have been identified. It states that *‘the closest part of the Conservation Area is separated from the site by intervening post-war housing developments and there is no direct inter-visibility with the development site. Lavington Lane provides an interconnecting route*

---

<sup>32</sup> Land South of Lavington Lane, West Lavington Wiltshire Heritage Assessment (Ian Lund, February 2018)

*between the crossroads and the northern edge of the site but again distance, changes in level and tree cover dictate there is no inter-visibility.’ The Assessment concludes that ‘the settings of Clyffe Hall, and the West Lavington and Littleton Panell Conservation Area, and the hitherto unrecognised Cornbury Mill seemed the most likely to be impacted. It became clear however the development site does not contribute meaningfully to setting of these items. The appraisal found, in fact, that two-storey development at Lavington Lane would not be injurious to the survival, or the settings, of any of the relevant heritage assets. In these circumstances the historic environment would not be harmed and a positive view can be taken of the housing proposals contained in the Neighbourhood Plan’.*

- 4.3.33 Access to the site is proposed from Lavington Lane. The site is elevated above Lavington Lane and any prominent or extensive development has the potential for adverse effect on the wider setting of the Conservation Area by changing the eastern gateway into the village. It is considered that the location of access to the site is the key issue. This means that careful consideration must be given to the extent and positioning of development within this site and any access arrangements.
- 4.3.34 The Heritage Assessment recommends that *‘a point towards the lower end of the Lavington Lane frontage would play down visual impact beyond the immediate vicinity and would not impinge upon the setting of any heritage assets. The quality of the Conservation Area nearest to the site has been found to be low, and the proposed development of the site could take place without altering or changing its status’.*
- 4.3.35 On balance, this SEA considers that effects of the plan proposals on heritage assets overall, including policies and the proposed housing site allocation, are not likely to have significant environmental effects given that mitigation measures to avoid harm are implementable with appropriate layout, design and use of materials. It is recommended that further consideration is given as to how the potential adverse effects of accessing the site could best be mitigated. This could include exploring further access options.

#### Landscape

- 4.3.36 Several policies within the plan will have significant benefits for protecting and enhancing the landscapes in the parish. Policy BE1 of the plan allows for small-scale development on sites within the West Lavington and Littleton Panell settlement boundary and strictly controls development in the open countryside. This settlement boundary will serve the purpose of containing the growth of the settlements, protecting the countryside from encroachment and preventing coalescence.
- 4.3.37 Policy BE2 then states *‘all new development shall demonstrate good quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness and complements the fabric of the existing built up area, uses good quality harmonious materials and respects views around the village with reference to the height, scale and density of new buildings’.*
- 4.3.38 Policy H1, which allocates the Land South of Lavington Lane site for up to 50 dwellings, requires a masterplan for the site to reflect a set of development principles. One of these principles concerns landscaping and requires *‘landscaping belts on the northern and eastern perimeter of the site’.*

- 4.3.39 Policy NE2 strongly supports development proposals protecting and enhancing the natural features that are a key component of the landscape, protection of views and linkages into and out of the two villages, provision of Green Infrastructure and the continued visual separation between settlements. These four policies, along with policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and NPPF will likely have significant environmental benefits for the parish.
- 4.3.40 With regards the Land South of Lavington Lane housing site allocation - the site is elevated above Lavington Lane and dwellings may appear very prominent from the road. It is considered that the introduction of housing development on this site could result in potential landscape and visual impacts that could be successfully mitigated with robust mitigation and enhancement strategies, for example a strong Green Infrastructure buffer to Manor House Woods and woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook.
- 4.3.41 However, it is considered that any proposals that take access from Lavington Lane and involve a high degree of engineering to navigate the steep bank from the lane up to the site, as well as removal of mature trees, have potential to result in significant landscape impacts. These impacts specifically relate to changing the rural character of the lane and potentially undermine the achievement of necessary Green Infrastructure.
- 4.3.42 The site contains desire lines which link existing footpaths and public rights of way. The development has the potential to maximise the opportunity to retain public access and extend the public footpath network. Consideration should be given to providing public open space at a site of this size.
- 4.3.43 The settlement pattern of nucleated villages is mentioned in the Wiltshire Landscape Assessment as a positive feature and it is noted that modern development at the edges of settlements has tended to erode their historic pattern and character. The strategy is to conserve and improve the rural, agricultural character of the Pewsey Vale, maintaining the pattern of hedgerows, streams and remnant water pastures, wet meadows and woodlands and historic features, and states that road engineering should be monitored to protect the rural character of the lanes.
- 4.3.44 The potential for significant environmental effects from a landscape perspective is scored as moderate adverse. It is considered that mitigation to reduce the likely landscape constraints is possible, though could be problematic. Mitigation measures should include a strongly landscape-led strategy, informed by a robust Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that assesses the constraints and design parameters, enabling sufficient Green Infrastructure to be incorporated, and a substantial landscape buffer along the eastern edge to the river corridor and the northern edge to the ancient woodland.

#### **4.4 Conclusions on likely significant environmental effects and recommendations**

- 4.4.1 The SEA assessment of the plan and its' policies has found that significant environmental benefits are likely overall, with strong policies that will provide protection and enhancement for the built and natural environment. The plan will also sufficiently meet its housing needs and provide a significant level of affordable housing. The provision of housing, protection of community and educational facilities

and policies to protect the natural and built environment will also help to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.

- 4.4.2 The SEA assessment of 'reasonable alternative' housing site options has found that all four potential sites considered are likely to have significant benefits in terms of their ability to deliver a substantial amount of housing to meet local needs, including affordable housing, with sites 3, 5/6 and 7 likely to have major positive effects due to the amount of new housing, including affordable, that could be delivered
- 4.4.3 Sites 2, 3 and 5/6 are all considered likely to have significant moderate adverse effects on heritage assets due to their likely effects on the Conservation Area and its setting – mitigation measures would be problematic but are possible to reduce the likely significance of the effects.
- 4.4.4 In terms of effects on biodiversity, all four sites are within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA. Evidence from research has demonstrated that Stone-curlew are particularly susceptible to recreational pressure and additional housing has potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA. However, mitigation for the impacts of the Wiltshire Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and comprised Council funding for monitoring breeding bird numbers and working with farm managers to maximise breeding success. The more recent HRA of the WLNP concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with other plans and projects with this mitigation in place.
- 4.4.5 Site 7 is considered likely to have significant adverse effects in relation to biodiversity – the site is ecologically sensitive being in close proximity to ancient woodland (Manor House Woods), woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook, which are also BAP Priority Habitats. It is considered that there would be likely significant effects on the woodland due to effects of lighting of the development and any associated works to the access road.

**Recommendation** - it is recommended that development of the site is led by a strong landscape strategy with substantial Green Infrastructure in the northern and eastern parts of the site to protect the ancient woodland and river corridor.

**Recommendation** – it is recommended that an ecological assessment is undertaken and submitted in support of any planning application to demonstrate how any adverse impacts on adjacent habitats can be reduced. This should include ensuring that lux levels at the edge of Manor House Woods is not increased by the development and associated works.

- 4.4.6 Site 7 is also considered likely to have significant adverse effects in relation to landscape impacts - this site is elevated above Lavington Lane and dwellings may appear very prominent from the road. The key issue is the proposed access and the likely visual change to the rural character of this section of Lavington Lane to a more urban one. Any proposals that take access from Lavington Lane and involve a high degree of engineering to navigate the steep bank have the potential to result in significant landscape impacts.



4.4.7 It is considered that mitigation to reduce the likely landscape constraints is possible, though could be problematic, and further options of accessing the site should be explored.

**Recommendation** – it is recommended that development of this site includes a strongly landscape-led strategy, informed by a robust Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that assesses the constraints and design parameters. This should include substantial Green Infrastructure in the northern and eastern parts of the site to protect the ancient woodland and river corridor.

**Recommendation** – it is recommended that, to avoid significant landscape impacts, other access options to the site should be further explored in relation to their impacts on landscape.

## 5. Monitoring proposals

- 5.1 The SEA Regulations state that **'17** — *(1) The responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action. (2) The responsible authority's monitoring arrangements may comprise or include arrangements established otherwise than for the express purpose of complying with paragraph (1)'*.
- 5.2 Schedule 2 to the SEA Regulations then states that the Environmental Report should include a *'description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17'*.
- 5.3 SEA monitoring can enable the establishment of a causal link between the implementation of the plan and the likely significant environmental effects (both beneficial or adverse) being monitored. This will allow the identification of any unforeseen adverse effects and enable appropriate remedial action to be taken.
- 5.4 Existing guidance recommends monitoring to be incorporated into Local Authority's existing monitoring arrangements. The WLNP, once 'made', will form a part of the Development Plan for Wiltshire and therefore any significant effects of its implementation will need to be considered as part of the Council's monitoring activities.
- 5.5 In order to reach a final framework of monitoring indicators for the WLNP, Wiltshire Council will need to consider indicators which can be most effectively used to monitor significant environmental effects. This will need to be undertaken in dialogue with statutory consultees and other bodies, as in many cases the monitoring information may need to be provided by outside bodies.
- 5.6 For the WLNP, the SEA assessment of the proposed housing site allocation in the plan, and other plan policies, has noted a limited number of likely significant adverse effects. These concern potential effects of recreational pressure on the Salisbury Plain SPA from increased numbers of residents in West Lavington, and localised landscape and biodiversity impacts of the development of Land South of Lavington Lane, West Lavington (site 7). However, as has previously been highlighted, such effects are capable of being mitigated and Wiltshire Council should continue to monitor the implementation of planning permissions and the effectiveness of measures within the Salisbury Plain Stone-Curlew Mitigation Strategy.

## **6. Next steps**

- 6.1 Consultation will take place on this Environmental Report to meet the requirements of Regulation 13 of the SEA Regulations, as set out in section 2.5. All comments received will be considered and amendments may be required to this Environmental Report.
- 6.2 Wiltshire Council will consider the completed report before making its decision on the recommendations of the Examiner.

**Appendix A – SA Framework (taken from West Lavington SA Scoping Report – February 2015)**

<b>Sustainability Theme</b>	<b>Sustainability Appraisal Objective</b>	<b>Decision Aiding Questions Will the policy / alternative....</b>
<b>1. Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect and enhance priority habitats and species?</li> <li>2. Protect and enhance international, national and locally designated biodiversity sites?</li> <li>3. Avoid habitat fragmentation?</li> <li>4. Ensure all new developments protect and enhance local biodiversity?</li> <li>5. Contribute to the achievement of objectives and targets within local BAPs?</li> <li>6. Maintain the existing extent of ancient woodland sites?</li> <li>7. Minimise operational / recreational pressures on the protected assets</li> </ol>
<b>2. Water resources and flood risk</b>	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take into account predicted future impacts of climate change, including water scarcity issues?</li> <li>2. Encourage sustainable and efficient management of water resources?</li> <li>3. Ensure that essential water infrastructure is co-ordinated with all new development?</li> <li>5. Seek the installation of water saving measures such as rainwater harvesting and water metering?</li> <li>6. Consider the need for adequate provision of surface water and foul drainage?</li> <li>7. Promote provision of pollution prevention measures?</li> <li>8. Protect, and where possible, improve surface, ground and drinking water quality?</li> </ol>
	Protect people and property from the risk of flooding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimise the risk of flooding to people and property (new and existing development)?</li> <li>2. Take into account the predicted future impacts of climate change in the location and design of development, ensuring that development can adapt to any future flood risk scenarios?</li> <li>3. Protect and enhance the natural function of floodplains?</li> <li>4. Ensure the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) in appropriate circumstances?</li> </ol>
<b>3. Climatic factors</b>	Minimise our impacts on climate change and reduce our vulnerability to future climate change effects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimise emissions of greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances?</li> <li>2. Minimise the likely impacts of future development on climate change through appropriate adaptation?</li> <li>3. Promote energy efficiency in buildings and new development?</li> <li>4. Minimise contributions to climate change through sustainable building practices?</li> <li>5. Contribute to reducing emissions associated with the transport sector?</li> </ol>
<b>4. Landscape</b>	Conserve and enhance the character and quality of West Lavington	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect and enhance the landscape character and scenic quality of the countryside within and adjoining the Plan Area?</li> <li>2. Conserve and enhance areas with landscape designations and take account of their management objectives?</li> </ol>

	NP's rural and urban landscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements?</li> <li>4. Deliver good quality design that reflects local character?</li> <li>5. Protect and enhance natural landscapes within the villages, including recreational open space and strategic green corridors?</li> <li>6. Protect rights of way, open space and common land?</li> <li>7. Avoid loss of tranquillity?</li> <li>8. Avoid development which results in additional noise and light pollution?</li> <li>9. Improve the quality and quantity of access to the wider countryside for recreation?</li> </ol>
<b>5. Healthy communities</b>	Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide for high quality, accessible healthcare facilities?</li> <li>2. Promote design of buildings and spaces to reduce obesity?</li> <li>3. Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>4. Promote regular participation in sports /exercise/leisure opportunities?</li> <li>5. Protect local rural communities and rural ways of life?</li> <li>6. Mitigate the effects of an ageing population on community and health resources?</li> </ol>
<b>6. Education and skills</b>	Raise educational attainment and provide opportunities for people to improve their workplace skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support high quality educational facilities, including their expansion?</li> <li>2. Improve the skills and qualifications of those residing within the Plan Area?</li> <li>3. Support community enterprises and the voluntary sector?</li> <li>4. Support the creation of flexible jobs to meet the changing needs of the population?</li> <li>5. Ensure that the demand on local resources from those not economically active is addressed?</li> <li>6. Assist in tackling the increasing number of NEETs?</li> </ol>
<b>7. Economy and enterprise</b>	Encourage a vibrant and diversified local economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the rural economy and farm diversification?</li> <li>2. Recognise the importance of the social and natural environment to the local economy?</li> <li>3. Promote sustainable tourism and cultural opportunities?</li> <li>4. Support diversification of businesses throughout the Plan Area?</li> <li>5. Encourage the use of home-working where appropriate?</li> </ol>
	Ensure adequate provision of employment land and diverse employment opportunities to meet the needs of local businesses and a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide good quality employment opportunities in the Plan Area?</li> <li>2. Assist businesses in finding appropriate land and premises to locate / expand?</li> <li>3. Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of existing employment areas?</li> <li>4. Provide a variety of employment land to meet all needs?</li> <li>5. Provide employment land in areas that are easily accessible by sustainable transport?</li> <li>6. Recognise the importance of energy efficient employment and mixed-use proposals?</li> </ol>

	changing workforce	
<b>8. Land and soil resources</b>	Ensure efficient and effective use of land and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land?</li> <li>3. Protect and enhance soil quality?</li> <li>4. Maximise reuse of Previously Developed Land where possible/appropriate?</li> <li>5. Encourage remediation of contaminated land?</li> <li>6. Maximise efficient use of land within the village centres?</li> <li>7. Avoid the loss of natural floodplain?</li> </ol>
	Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduce the amount of waste produced?</li> <li>2. Ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management?</li> <li>3. Provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste?</li> </ol>
<b>9. Air quality and environmental pollution</b>	Improve air quality and minimise all sources of environmental pollution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain and improve local air quality?</li> <li>2. Minimise and, where possible, improve on unacceptable levels of noise, light pollution, odour and vibration?</li> <li>3. Minimise all forms of contamination to soils?</li> <li>4. Mitigate the impacts on air quality from new development / road transport?</li> <li>5. Avoid loss of tranquillity?</li> </ol>
<b>10. Historic environment</b>	Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conserve and enhance features and areas of historical and cultural value, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments?</li> <li>2. Ensure appropriate archaeological assessment is undertaken prior to new development occurring?</li> <li>3. Promote sensitive re-use of historical buildings and buildings of significant local interest, where appropriate?</li> <li>4. Improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage and historic sites?</li> <li>5. Maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements through high quality and appropriate design?</li> <li>6. Promote heritage based sustainable tourism and regeneration?</li> </ol>
<b>11. Population and housing</b>	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing in the Plan Area?</li> <li>2. Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all residents in the Plan Area?</li> <li>3. Ensure adequate provision of land to meet housing needs?</li> <li>4. Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>5. Ensure that best use is made of the existing housing stock?</li> <li>6. Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> </ol>

	and tenures	
<b>12. Inclusive communities</b>	Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maximise opportunities for all members of society?</li> <li>2. Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?</li> <li>3. Tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation?</li> <li>4. Minimise fuel poverty?</li> </ol>
	Improve equality of access to, and engagement in local, high-quality community services and facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities?</li> <li>2. Promote the development / improvement of a community facilities?</li> <li>3. Encourage active involvement of local people in community activities, including volunteering?</li> </ol>
<b>13. Transport</b>	Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote mixed-use developments that reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car?</li> <li>2. Increase uptake of sustainable travel choices i.e. public transport, walking and cycling?</li> <li>3. Promote car-share schemes and home or other forms of remote working?</li> <li>4. Reduce traffic volumes?</li> <li>5. Avoid placing further pressure on local parking?</li> <li>6. Help improve availability of local public transport choices?</li> </ol>
	Improve road safety, reduce accidents and help reduce traffic speeds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help to keep traffic speeds low?</li> <li>2. Enhance road safety / reduce accidents?</li> </ol>

**‘Reasonable alternative’ housing sites considered in the Environmental Report**

Site number	Site name	Site size (Ha. approx.)
2	Littleton Panell - High Street adjacent to ‘The Farm’	0.5
3	West Lavington - Behind High Street/Orchard Place/White Street	2.12
5/6	West Lavington - High Street, within Equestrian Centre <sup>33</sup>	1.24
7	West Lavington – Land South of Lavington Lane	3.24

SITE	Assessment outcome								
	Biodiversity	Population & Housing	Healthy Communities	Land & soil resources	Water resources & flood risk	Climatic factors	Air quality & environmental pollution	Historic environment	Landscape
2	--	++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
3	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
5/6	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	--	-
7	--	+++	0	-	-	-	-	-	--

**Site 2: Littleton Panell - High Street adjacent to ‘The Farm’**

**SEA Theme: Biodiversity**

**SEA Objective: Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site does not have specific ecological issues and the habitats within the site and adjacent appear to be of relatively low ecological value, however any planning application should be supported by a Phase 1 habitat survey as a minimum requirement.

Refer to the findings of the WLNP HRA<sup>34</sup>. This site is within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA and has been ‘screened in’ for appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. For this reason, there are likely significant effects in terms of the SEA. Evidence from research has demonstrated that Stone-curlew are particularly susceptible to recreational pressure and active and ongoing conservation management is needed to protect, maintain and restore the function of supporting habitat both within and outside the SPA. Additional housing has potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA. However, mitigation for the impacts of the Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and comprised Council funding for monitoring breeding bird numbers and working with farm managers to maximise breeding success. As a consequence, the HRA for the Core Strategy was able to conclude no adverse effect. The HRA of the WLNP similarly concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with

<sup>33</sup> Sites 5 and 6 have been considered together as are in single ownership and only together is there potential for access issues to be resolved.

<sup>34</sup> HRA of West Lavington Neighbourhood Development Plan (Wiltshire Council, February 2019)



other plans and projects.
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (- -)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Population and housing</b> <b>SEA Objective: Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures</b>
Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:  The site has potential for approx. 10-15 dwellings, which would result in a modest contribution towards the local housing need and strategic indicative housing requirement and has the potential to deliver some affordable units alongside open market units. Moderate positive effects likely given likely number of dwellings that could be provided.  In terms of school capacity, there is no current evidence to indicate that additional pupils from development could not be accommodated, though this may require expansion of schools. Additional housing development is likely to have a positive effect on the sustainability of local facilities such as schools and the doctor's surgery.
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (++)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Healthy communities</b> <b>SEA Objective: Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live</b>
Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:  This site is centrally located and is within good walking distance of the village centre. The site can be accessed via a footway on both sides and there is a bus stop in close proximity so there is encouragement to use alternative means of transport, contributing to the sustainability of the location. There are local services and facilities within walking and cycling distance and there is access to public transport to travel to a wider range of services further afield. However, development at the village would be unlikely to create new employment opportunities in the village itself. Whilst a bus service visits the village, the majority of trips to work and wider services and facilities will likely involve use of cars.
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (0)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Land and soil resources</b> <b>SEA Objectives: Ensure efficient and effective use of land and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings; Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.</b>
Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:  The site lies immediately adjacent to the core of the village of West Lavington and comprises an open, greenfield area of land. The quality of the land in

relation to agricultural potential is not known. The site is already within the settlement boundary of West Lavington. The loss of greenfield land and potential impacts on neighbouring residents would also need to be fully addressed through any subsequent planning application process.

In relation to efficient use of land, the development of the site would be capable of delivering appropriate housing densities in line with local planning policy and available evidence. However, given the site's prominence and in light of various constraints, it is unlikely that housing densities could be maximised on this site.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Water resources and flood risk**

**SEA Objectives: Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner; Protect people and property from the risk of flooding.**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is located in Flood Zone 1. Evidence indicates that there have been historical issues with storm water drainage in the locality, immediately adjacent to the site. Therefore, development at the site would have the potential to exacerbate fluvial and pluvial flooding if appropriate drainage systems are not incorporated into the design. At this stage there is no evidence to indicate that the site is not capable of incorporating adequate drainage solutions. To understand the detail of impacts and necessary mitigation, a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy is likely to be required in support of any planning application.

Development would lead to an increase in demand for water and pressure on existing sewer system capacity.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Climatic factors**

**SEA Objective: Minimise our impacts on climate change and reduce our vulnerability to future climate change effects**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

Minimising the impacts of climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be possible through the implementation of measures outlined in 'Delivering strategic objective 2: to address climate change' and the related 'Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy' of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. These measures will ensure the incorporation of design measures to reduce energy demand and increase energy efficiency, as well as the promotion of low carbon energy sources and encouragement of sustainable building practices.

Development of the site has the potential to exacerbate climate change and design of the site and buildings must incorporate measures to mitigate the impacts on climate change and be resilient to the consequences of climate change.

The effect of the development of this site will be to increase greenhouse gas emissions overall which is considered a minor adverse effect against this objective.

<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Air quality and environmental pollution</b> <b>SEA Objective: Improve air quality and minimise all sources of environmental pollution</b>
<p>Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:</p> <p>The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) but there are known congestion issues at Lavington Crossroads. That said, development of the site for housing may lead to short-term (construction) and long-term (occupation) impacts on local air quality (e.g. increased private car usage). Mitigation measures to limit the impacts of vehicular movements on local air quality would need to be developed and implemented in accordance with local plan policy and advice from relevant bodies. The site is located on the edge of the village of West Lavington and services at the village are accessible on foot.</p>
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Historic environment</b> <b>SEA Objective: Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment</b>
<p>Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:</p> <p>The site lies within the Conservation Area. The West Lavington &amp; Littleton Panell Conservation Area Statement identifies the site as a Significant Green Space and the roadside boundary wall is identified as an Unlisted Significant Wall. The site is specifically referred to within the Conservation Area Statement as being an open area which contributes to the character of the Conservation Area. This applies particularly to the front half of the plot which, raised up above the street and is especially prominent from street level. The open undeveloped nature of this site forms an important part of the Conservation Area and as such any development at the site will need to be justified and the impacts on the Conservation Area and setting considered. Any engineering to enable vehicular access to the site is likely to have visual impacts that could affect the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The archaeological layer showing Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) indicated that there may be important archaeological remains within the site.</p>
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (- -)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Landscape</b> <b>SEA Objective: Conserve and enhance the character and quality of West Lavington NP's rural and urban landscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place</b>
<p>Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:</p> <p>The site is relatively well contained with mature trees and hedgerows at the site boundary with the High Street. However, it is specifically referred to within the Conservation Area Statement as a Significant Green Space and a visual and landscape assessment will need to inform proposals. Housing development at this site would result in potential landscape &amp; visual impacts that could be successfully mitigated with robust mitigation and enhancement</p>

strategies, which may result in reduction of number of dwellings or area of the site that should be developed. Specifically, development at the site would need to incorporate Green Infrastructure buffers to mature hedges.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**Site 3: West Lavington - Behind High Street/Orchard Place/White Street**

**SEA Theme: Biodiversity**

**SEA Objective: Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site does not have specific ecological issues and the habitats within the site appear to be of relatively low ecological value, however any planning application should be supported by a Phase I habitat survey as a minimum requirement.

Refer to the findings of the WLNP HRA<sup>35</sup>. This site is within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA and has been 'screened in' for appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. For this reason, there are likely significant effects in terms of the SEA. Evidence from research has demonstrated that Stone-curlew are particularly susceptible to recreational pressure and active and ongoing conservation management is needed to protect, maintain and restore the function of supporting habitat both within and outside the SPA. Additional housing has potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA. However, mitigation for the impacts of the Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and comprised Council funding for monitoring breeding bird numbers and working with farm managers to maximise breeding success. As a consequence, the HRA for the Core Strategy was able to conclude no adverse effect. The HRA of the WLNP similarly concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with other plans and projects.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (- -)**

**SEA Theme: Population and housing**

**SEA Objective: Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The whole site provides capacity for approximately 40 units (though this may be reduced through the mitigation set out in this assessment). Development on this site would help to meet local housing needs and has the potential to deliver a significant level of affordable units alongside open market units. Major positive effects likely given likely number of dwellings that could be provided.

In terms of school capacity, there is no current evidence to indicate that additional pupils from development could not be accommodated, though this may

<sup>35</sup> HRA of West Lavington Neighbourhood Development Plan (Wiltshire Council, February 2019)

require expansion of schools. Additional housing development is likely to have a positive effect on the sustainability of local facilities such as schools and the doctor's surgery.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (+ + +)**

**SEA Theme: Healthy communities**

**SEA Objective: Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is well located in relation to sustainable travel and encouraging walking. It is in reasonable walking distance of the centre of the West Lavington village. There are local services and facilities within walking and cycling distance and there is access to public transport to travel to a wider range of services further afield. However, development at the village would be unlikely to create new employment opportunities in the village itself. Whilst a bus service visits the village, the majority of trips to work and wider services and facilities will likely involve use of cars.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (0)**

**SEA Theme: Land and soil resources**

**SEA Objectives: Ensure efficient and effective use of land and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings; Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site lies immediately adjacent to the core of the village of West Lavington and comprises an open, greenfield area of land. The quality of the land in relation to agricultural potential is not known. Development of the site would extend the envelope of the village and constitute a further urbanising of the area. The loss of greenfield land and potential impacts on existing residents would also need to be fully addressed through any subsequent planning application process.

In relation to efficient use of land, the development of the site would be capable of delivering appropriate housing densities in line with local planning policy and available evidence. However, given the site's prominence and in light of various constraints, it is unlikely that housing densities could be maximised on this site.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Water resources and flood risk**

**SEA Objectives: Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner; Protect people and property from the risk of flooding.**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 but is in close proximity to Flood Zones 2 and 3 (approx. 160m). Evidence indicates that there have been historical issues with storm water drainage in the locality. Therefore, development at the site would have the potential to exacerbate fluvial and pluvial flooding if

appropriate drainage systems are not incorporated into the design. At this stage there is no evidence to indicate that the site is not capable of incorporating adequate drainage solutions. To understand the detail of impacts and necessary mitigation, a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy would be required in support of any planning application.

Development would lead to an increase in demand for water and pressure on existing sewer system capacity.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Climatic factors**

**SEA Objective: Minimise our impacts on climate change and reduce our vulnerability to future climate change effects**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

Minimising the impacts of climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be possible through the implementation of measures outlined in 'Delivering strategic objective 2: to address climate change' and the related 'Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy' of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. These measures will ensure the incorporation of design measures to reduce energy demand and increase energy efficiency, as well as the promotion of low carbon energy sources and encouragement of sustainable building practices.

Development of the site has the potential to exacerbate climate change and design of the site and buildings must incorporate measures to mitigate the impacts on climate change and be resilient to the consequences of climate change.

The effect of the development of this site will be to increase greenhouse gas emissions overall which is considered a minor adverse effect against this objective.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Air quality and environmental pollution**

**SEA Objective: Improve air quality and minimise all sources of environmental pollution**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) but there are known congestion issues at Lavington Crossroads. That said, development of the site for housing may lead to short-term (construction) and long-term (occupation) impacts on local air quality (e.g. increased private car usage). Mitigation measures to limit the impacts of vehicular movements on local air quality would need to be developed and implemented in accordance with local plan policy and advice from relevant bodies. The site is located on the edge of the village of West Lavington and services at the village are accessible on foot.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Historic environment**

**SEA Objective: Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site has medium archaeological potential and a full archaeological assessment would be required in order to support any planning application.

The site adjoins the boundary of the Conservation Area which contains some important listed buildings therefore any development at the site has the potential to harm the setting of these heritage assets. The Conservation Area Appraisal states that there is a '*landscape view*' from the High St across the site. Site 3 is a backland area which has the potential to be harmful to the setting of the conservation area and the listed No.52 High Street. Glimpses of the open fields, caught between the built-up frontage of the street currently contribute to enhance the character of the conservation area by reinforcing its rural character and setting. An estate type engineered access (introducing kerbs, footpaths, lighting etc.) onto White Street also has the potential to harm the rural character of the lane.

Due to the proximity to West Lavington Manor and the Conservation Area and the potential to harm the settings of these heritage assets, the site is assessed as moderately adverse.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (- -)**

**SEA Theme: Landscape**

**SEA Objective: Conserve and enhance the character and quality of West Lavington NP's rural and urban landscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is at the edge of the settlement which opens up to the countryside. The field is undeveloped and reasonably well contained by mature boundary hedgerows. It is considered that housing development on this site would result in potential landscape and visual impacts but there is no evidence to suggest that these could not be successfully mitigated with robust mitigation and enhancement strategies.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

### **Site 5/6: West Lavington - High Street, within Equestrian Centre**

**SEA Theme: Biodiversity**

**SEA Objective: Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site does not have specific ecological issues and the habitats within the site appear to be of relatively low ecological value, however any planning application should be supported by a Phase I habitat survey as a minimum requirement.

Refer to the findings of the WLNP HRA<sup>36</sup>. This site is within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA and has been ‘screened in’ for appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. For this reason, there are likely significant effects in terms of the SEA. Evidence from research has demonstrated that Stone-curlew are particularly susceptible to recreational pressure and active and ongoing conservation management is needed to protect, maintain and restore the function of supporting habitat both within and outside the SPA. Additional housing has potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA. However, mitigation for the impacts of the Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and comprised Council funding for monitoring breeding bird numbers and working with farm managers to maximise breeding success. As a consequence, the HRA for the Core Strategy was able to conclude no adverse effect. The HRA of the WLNP similarly concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with other plans and projects.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (- -)**

**SEA Theme: Population and housing**

**SEA Objective: Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

Taken together sites 5 and 6 offer potential for approx. 30 dwellings, which would result in a significant contribution towards the local housing need and strategic indicative housing requirement and has the potential to deliver a significant level of affordable units alongside open market units. Major positive effects likely given likely number of dwellings that could be provided.

In terms of school capacity, there is no current evidence to indicate that additional pupils from development could not be accommodated, though this may require expansion of schools. Additional housing development is likely to have a positive effect on the sustainability of local facilities such as schools and the doctor’s surgery.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (+ + +)**

**SEA Theme: Healthy communities**

**SEA Objective: Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

This site is centrally located and is within good walking distance of the village centre. There are good footway links which provides the opportunity for walking. There are local services and facilities within walking and cycling distance and there is access to public transport to travel to a wider range of services further afield. However, development at the village would be unlikely to create new employment opportunities in the village itself. Whilst a bus service visits the village, the majority of trips to work and wider services and facilities will likely involve use of cars.

<sup>36</sup> HRA of West Lavington Neighbourhood Development Plan (Wiltshire Council, February 2019)



<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (0)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Land and soil resources</b> <b>SEA Objectives: Ensure efficient and effective use of land and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings; Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.</b>
Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:  The site lies immediately adjacent to the core of the village of West Lavington and comprises an open, greenfield area of land. The quality of the land in relation to agricultural potential is not known. Development of the site would extend the envelope of the village and constitute a further urbanising of the area. The loss of greenfield land and potential impacts on existing residents adjacent to the site would also need to be fully addressed through any subsequent planning application process.  In relation to efficient use of land, the development of the site would be capable of delivering appropriate housing densities in line with local planning policy and available evidence. However, given the site's prominence and in light of various constraints, it is unlikely that housing densities could be maximised on this site.
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Water resources and flood risk</b> <b>SEA Objectives: Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner; Protect people and property from the risk of flooding.</b>
Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:  The site is located in Flood Zone 1 but is in close proximity (within 150m) to Flood Zones 2 and 3. Evidence indicates that there have been historical issues with storm water drainage in the locality. Therefore, development at the site would have the potential to exacerbate fluvial and pluvial flooding if appropriate drainage systems are not incorporated into the design. At this stage there is no evidence to indicate that the site is not capable of incorporating adequate drainage solutions. To understand the detail of impacts and necessary mitigation, a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy would be required in support of any planning application.  Development would lead to an increase in demand for water and pressure on existing sewer system capacity. The site is in close proximity to Semington Brook. Any discharge into the local watercourses would need to be at a controlled rate.
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Climatic factors</b> <b>SEA Objective: Minimise our impacts on climate change and reduce our vulnerability to future climate change effects</b>
Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:  Minimising the impacts of climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be possible through the implementation of measures outlined in

'Delivering strategic objective 2: to address climate change' and the related 'Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy' of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. These measures will ensure the incorporation of design measures to reduce energy demand and increase energy efficiency, as well as the promotion of low carbon energy sources and encouragement of sustainable building practices.

Development of the site has the potential to exacerbate climate change and design of the site and buildings must incorporate measures to mitigate the impacts on climate change and be resilient to the consequences of climate change.

The effect of the development of this site will be to increase greenhouse gas emissions overall which is considered a minor adverse effect against this objective.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Air quality and environmental pollution**

**SEA Objective: Improve air quality and minimise all sources of environmental pollution**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) but there are known congestion issues at Lavington Crossroads. That said, development of the site for housing may lead to short-term (construction) and long-term (occupation) impacts on local air quality (e.g. increased private car usage). Mitigation measures to limit the impacts of vehicular movements on local air quality would need to be developed and implemented in accordance with local plan policy and advice from relevant bodies. The site is located on the edge of the village of West Lavington and services at the village are accessible on foot.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Historic environment**

**SEA Objective: Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site adjoins the boundary of the Conservation Area which contains some important listed buildings (30 High St, 52 High St, Home Farmhouse, 63 & 65 High St, West Lavington Manor House and Mill Farmhouse) therefore any development at the site has the potential to harm the setting of these heritage assets. The Conservation Area Statement lists the 'Grounds of West Lavington Manor House' as '*Green space contributing to Conservation Area Character*'.

A heritage impact assessment must inform any proposals at this site. Due to the proximity to West Lavington Manor and the potential to harm its setting the site is assessed as moderate adverse.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (- -)**

**SEA Theme: Landscape****SEA Objective: Conserve and enhance the character and quality of West Lavington NP's rural and urban landscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is at the edge of the settlement which opens up to the countryside and Salisbury Plain beyond and the stream corridor. Therefore, long views may be impacted. Careful visual and landscape mitigation measures would need to be incorporated in the design in order to protect and enhance the existing features.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)****Site 7: West Lavington – Land South of Lavington Lane****SEA Theme: Biodiversity****SEA Objective: Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features and avoid irreversible losses**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is ecologically sensitive. There are mature trees and hedgerows (BAP Priority Habitat) on and adjacent to the site which would require protection of a Green Infrastructure buffer. The site is in close proximity to ancient woodland (Manor House Woods), woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook which are also BAP Priority Habitats. It is considered that there would be likely significant effects on the woodland due to effects of lighting of the development and any associated works to the access road. An ecological assessment will be required in support of any planning application to demonstrate how adverse impacts on these habitats can be reduced.

Due to the proximity of the woodland CWS on the opposite side of the road, any development would need to demonstrate that there will be no increase in lighting levels at the edge of the trees. Mitigation measures could include sensitive design and layout of the site, possibly a reduction in the number of dwellings and parts of the site remaining free from development.

Refer to the findings of the WLNP HRA<sup>37</sup>. This site is within 6.4 km of Salisbury Plain SPA and has been 'screened in' for appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. For this reason, there are likely significant effects in terms of the SEA. Evidence from research has demonstrated that Stone-curlew are particularly susceptible to recreational pressure and active and ongoing conservation management is needed to protect, maintain and restore the function of supporting habitat both within and outside the SPA. Additional housing has potential to increase recreational pressure on the SPA. However, mitigation for the impacts of the Core Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and comprised Council funding for monitoring breeding bird numbers and working with farm managers to maximise breeding success. As a consequence, the HRA for the Core Strategy was able to conclude no adverse effect. The HRA of the WLNP similarly concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain SPA, alone or in- combination with other plans and projects.

<sup>37</sup> HRA of West Lavington Neighbourhood Development Plan (Wiltshire Council, February 2019)

<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (- -)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Population and housing</b> <b>SEA Objective: Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures</b>
<p>Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:</p> <p>The whole site provides capacity for up to 50 dwellings (though this may be reduced through mitigation measures). Development on this site would help to meet local housing needs and has the potential to deliver a significant level of affordable units alongside open market units. Major positive effects likely given likely number of dwellings that could be provided.</p> <p>In terms of school capacity, there is no current evidence to indicate that additional pupils from development could not be accommodated, though this may require expansion of schools. Additional housing development is likely to have a positive effect on the sustainability of local facilities such as schools and the doctor's surgery.</p>
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (+ + +)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Healthy communities</b> <b>SEA Objective: Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live</b>
<p>Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:</p> <p>The site is well located in relation to sustainable travel and encouraging walking. It is in reasonable walking distance of the centre of the West Lavington village, as well as being within walking distance of some facilities at Market Lavington (secondary school). There are local services and facilities within walking and cycling distance and there is access to public transport to travel to a wider range of services further afield. However, development at the village would be unlikely to create new employment opportunities in the village itself. Whilst a bus service visits the village, the majority of trips to work and wider services and facilities will likely involve use of cars.</p>
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (0)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Land and soil resources</b> <b>SEA Objectives: Ensure efficient and effective use of land and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings; Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.</b>
<p>Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:</p> <p>The site lies immediately adjacent to the core of the village of West Lavington and comprises an open, greenfield area of land. The quality of the land in relation to agricultural potential is not known. Development of the site would extend the envelope of the village and constitute a further urbanising of the area. The loss of greenfield land and potential impacts on existing residents to the immediate west would also need to be fully addressed through any</p>

subsequent planning application process.

In relation to efficient use of land, the development of the site would be capable of delivering appropriate housing densities in line with local planning policy and available evidence. However, given the site's prominence and in light of various constraints, it is unlikely that housing densities could be maximised on this site.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Water resources and flood risk**

**SEA Objectives: Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner; Protect people and property from the risk of flooding.**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 but is adjacent to Flood Zones 2 and 3. Evidence indicates that there have been historical issues with storm water drainage in the locality. Therefore, development at the site would have the potential to exacerbate fluvial and pluvial flooding if appropriate drainage systems are not incorporated into the design. At this stage there is no evidence to indicate that the site is not capable of incorporating adequate drainage solutions. To understand the detail of impacts and necessary mitigation, a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy would be required in support of any planning application.

Development would lead to an increase in demand for water and pressure on existing sewer system capacity. Current evidence indicates that development of this site for up to 50 houses could be supported by water supply and sewage infrastructure. The site is in close proximity to Semington Brook. Any discharge into the local watercourses would need to be at a controlled rate.

**Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

**SEA Theme: Climatic factors**

**SEA Objective: Minimise our impacts on climate change and reduce our vulnerability to future climate change effects**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

Minimising the impacts of climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be possible through the implementation of measures outlined in 'Delivering strategic objective 2: to address climate change' and the related 'Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy' of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. These measures will ensure the incorporation of design measures to reduce energy demand and increase energy efficiency, as well as the promotion of low carbon energy sources and encouragement of sustainable building practices.

Development of the site has the potential to exacerbate climate change and design of the site and buildings must incorporate measures to mitigate the impacts on climate change and be resilient to the consequences of climate change.

The effect of the development of this site will be to increase greenhouse gas emissions overall which is considered a minor adverse effect against this objective.

<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Air quality and environmental pollution</b> <b>SEA Objective: Improve air quality and minimise all sources of environmental pollution</b>
<p>Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:</p> <p>The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) but there are known congestion issues at Lavington Crossroads. That said, development of the site for housing may lead to short-term (construction) and long-term (occupation) impacts on local air quality (e.g. increased private car usage). Mitigation measures to limit the impacts of vehicular movements on local air quality would need to be developed and implemented in accordance with local plan policy and advice from relevant bodies. The site is located on the edge of the village of West Lavington and services at the village are accessible on foot. The site is also within an accessible distance from the Local Service Centre of Market Lavington.</p>
<b>Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)</b>
<b>SEA Theme: Historic environment</b> <b>SEA Objective: Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment</b>
<p>Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:</p> <p>The site has medium archaeological potential and a full archaeological assessment would be required in order to support any planning application.</p> <p>The site has no heritage assets within or adjacent to the site. On its west side the site abuts modern housing estate development at Eastfield and Newby Close and to the south of the site adjacent is a modern primary school. A linear Conservation Area covering West Lavington and Littleton Panell was designated by the Local Planning Authority in 1975 and the closest part of that lies approximately 150m to the west of the site, west of the modern housing estate.</p> <p>The Heritage Assessment<sup>38</sup> submitted with the WLNP has assessed the effects of the proposed development on any significant settings that have been identified. It states that <i>'the closest part of the Conservation Area is separated from the site by intervening post-war housing developments and there is no direct inter-visibility with the development site. Lavington Lane provides an interconnecting route between the crossroads and the northern edge of the site but again distance, changes in level and tree cover dictate there is no inter-visibility.'</i> The Assessment concludes that <i>'the settings of Clyffe Hall, and the West Lavington &amp; Littleton Panell Conservation Area, and the hitherto unrecognised Cornbury Mill seemed the most likely to be impacted. It became clear however the development site does not contribute meaningfully to setting of these items. The appraisal found, in fact, that two-storey development at Lavington Lane would not be injurious to the survival, or the settings, of any of the relevant heritage assets. In these circumstances the historic environment would not be harmed and a positive view can be taken of the housing proposals contained in the Neighbourhood Plan'</i>.</p> <p>Access to the site is proposed from Lavington Lane and the site is elevated above Lavington Lane and any prominent or extensive development has the</p>

<sup>38</sup> Land South of Lavington Lane, West Lavington Wiltshire Heritage Assessment (Ian Lund, February 2018)

potential for adverse effect on the wider setting of the Conservation Area by changing the eastern gateway into the village. This means that careful consideration must be given to the extent and positioning of development within this site and any access arrangements.

The Heritage Assessment recommends that *'a point towards the lower end of the Lavington Lane frontage would play down visual impact beyond the immediate vicinity and would not impinge upon the setting of any heritage assets. The quality of the Conservation Area nearest to the site has been found to be low, and the proposed development of the site could take place without altering or changing its status'*.

On balance, this SEA considers that likely effects of the site on heritage assets are not likely to be significant given that mitigation measures to avoid harm are implementable with appropriate layout, design and use of materials. However, the key issue is considered to be the proposed access to the site allocation and the likely visual change to the rural character of Lavington Lane. It is recommended that further work is undertaken to consider how the potential adverse effects of accessing the site could best be mitigated, exploring further opportunities for accessing the site.

#### **Assessment outcome (on balance) (-)**

##### **SEA Theme: Landscape**

##### **SEA Objective: Conserve and enhance the character and quality of West Lavington NP's rural and urban landscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place**

Discussion of potential effects and mitigation measures:

This site is elevated above Lavington Lane and dwellings may appear very prominent from the road. The key issue is the proposed access and the likely visual change to the rural character of this section of Lavington Lane to a more urban one. It is considered that the introduction of housing development on this site could result in potential landscape and visual impacts, but these could be successfully mitigated with robust mitigation and enhancement strategies, for example a strong Green Infrastructure buffer to Manor House Woods and woodland to the east of the site and Semington Brook.

However, it is considered that any proposals that take access from Lavington Lane and involve a high degree of engineering to navigate the steep bank from the lane up to the site, as well as removal of mature trees, have potential to result in significant landscape impacts. These impacts specifically relate to changing the rural character of the lane and undermining the potential to achieve the necessary Green Infrastructure. Further options for accessing the site should be explored.

The site contains desire lines which link existing footpaths and public rights of way. The development has the potential to maximise the opportunity to retain public access and extend the public footpath network. Public open space provision should be considered for a site of this size.

The potential for significant environmental effects from a landscape perspective is scored as moderate adverse. It is considered that mitigation to reduce the likely landscape constraints is possible, though could be problematic. Mitigation measures should include a strongly landscape-led strategy and should be informed by a robust Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that assesses the constraints and design parameters, enabling sufficient Green Infrastructure to be incorporated, and a substantial landscape buffer along the eastern edge to the river corridor and ancient woodland.

#### **Assessment outcome (on balance) (- -)**

