

Chiseldon Parish Council



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SHELAA Q&A January 2019

Q. Would the sites provide needed housing for local children to continue living in the village? Some people think developers build for profit and there is much less profit in social housing and developers are adept at justifying why they can't deliver on initial commitments.

A. The evaluation of a SHELAA site(s) is quite different from assessing an actual planning application. The SHELAA identifies sites with potential for future development. It does not allocate sites to be developed, nor does it provide approval for potential developments.

When SBC approves planning applications, there are conditions listed for items such as affordable housing. The nature or type of this affordable housing is something that should be a discussion by all parties before the application is approved (if it is approved). The Parish Council would want to ensure that if they felt an application warranted a possible approval, then such a provision would be in place. Furthermore, the type of arrangement within the status of 'approved housing' is governed by clear statutory rules. .

Q. Were site appraised on whether, if one site were approved, it would give a stronger stance on sites not approved?

A. The Parish Council didn't approve the site on the SHELAA in return for a favourable reception to the other SHELAA sites. Each site was investigated on merit. The AONB confirmed that the AONB would not object in principle to sympathetic development on the Hodson Road AONB site. It is important to note that special circumstances will need to be evidenced by the developers as stated in para 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework review of 2018 (NPPF). The Parish Council would also ensure that special circumstances could be demonstrated before accepting any future proposal. It should be stressed that the Parish Council are required to follow clear planning rules and evaluate all planning applications based on evidenced based criteria. We also do not consider this process a 'battle with developers' and neither will the Planning inspectorate when they evaluate the arguments for or against potential development should any development progress to appeal. The Planning process as stipulated by the revised NPPF is evidenced based and as such each development site and planning application should be considered separately and objectively.

Q. The recommendation from the AONB was that they would support a development of 40 houses on Hodson Road. This ignores the fact that Hodson Road is down for 80 houses on the SHELAA and we have abandoned this site regardless of the number of houses that are eventually proposed.

A. The listing of 80 houses on the SHELAA is not an indication of what is being proposed for an application. It is a standard Swindon Borough Council algorithm for calculating a standard amount of houses per hectare. The current site proposal at Hodson Road is for 40 homes. It should be noted that this algorithm does not take into account the nature of the land – rural or urban etc.

Q. It has been stated that Home Close had been developed on the AONB. Is this correct, as I've been led to believe that Home Close was built before the area become AONB land.

A. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was in fact created in 1972, see:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Area_of_Outstanding_Natural_Beauty

and the construction and development of Home Close took place in the early 1980s.

Q Finally, this is still in the AONB which is supposed to be protected under the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework. If we don't defend it as the people closest to it, no-one else will.

A. The Parish Council are evaluating each SHELAA site not a potential development. Each site should and must be evaluated under the 2018 NPPF separately and for and against points should be clearly evidenced.

Development on AONB site does take place and with AONB approval albeit these developments adhere to very high standards again as stipulated in the 2018 NPPF. The AONB has stressed that the AONB is not in existence to block all development on AONB land. The approach to assessing development should follow a constructive and objective approach and be supported through evidenced based argument. Declaring that this 'site is on AONB land' and therefore must be protected is not enough particularly robust when developers can site a significant shortfall in the Housing land supply - which in the case of Swindon Borough is below 3 years well short of the required 5 year criteria.

The Parish Council responsibility is to remain neutral and objective from both sides - residents and developers when making a decision on the SHELAA vote. We use evidenced based arguments and factual information to hand including, planning case law; information and guidance from the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework(NPPF) and expert guidance from the AONB. This was the case up to the Parish council vote on the 10th December 2018.

Had we expressed support for the resident's views beforehand the Parish council decision could be used by potential developers to state in a judicial review that Chiseldon PC were biased and their views should be disregarded. Developers have vast funds and are not afraid of employing legal teams with this sort of experience and tactics.

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