

## North Wessex Downs AONB reply to SBC on proposed sites in draft SHELAA Nov 2018

The AONB is firstly disappointed that it was not consulted on the SHELAA given the location of sites within the AONB and setting of the AONB. Thankfully a local Parish Council brought it to our attention and although you are due to do a public consultation within 2019, early engagement with key stakeholders is always advisable and I have previously met with the Head of policy to request that we are kept in the loop and are always happy to engage with SBC on future policy work. It would be prudent to make the document more user friendly for the next consultation, by grouping the proposed site allocations within parishes and include a local map of the allocations as not everybody will be able to use the interactive maps so easily, although it was a very useful tool.

In terms of sites the AONB has some concerns over some of the currently accepted sites, particularly surrounding Chisledon and Alexandra Park.

The AONB unit supports the rejection of sites s0034, s0060 and s0076. s0034 has recently been subject to an SEA scoping report for the development of a Science Park which the AONB commented on and strongly opposed any development on the site due to its sensitive locality within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB. It is a relatively open site with important Views in and out of the AONB, in particular the Ridgeway and Liddington Hill. It is also an important visual and physical gap in preserving the non-coalescence policy.

### Sites:

- s003 – Land adjacent to Old Dairy Business Park, Badbury – The AONB unit would consider the site to be infill within the built environment, however given the character of the settlement a lower density of housing would be more appropriate, no more than 5 on the site.
- s007 – Land corner of Whittingham Drive and Comet Way, Alexandra Park – Object. Alexandra Park stands out significantly from the Ridgeway due to the poor materials used, any additional development would only make this worse. The site is within the AONB and 20 would be considered major development and therefore needs to demonstrate exceptional circumstances. If the site were to be taken forward to the next stage then a landscape assessment should be carried out and a design code created to ensure that design, layout and especially materials are of a high spec to ensure the same mistake is not made again which would further erode the landscape character of this part of the AONB.
- s0027 and s0028 – Land South of New Road, Chisledon – Object. The scale of development would overly urbanise this side of the village dominating the wider open countryside to the detriment of the natural beauty of the AONB and its special qualities. The whole of the site is currently open countryside under arable farming, in keeping with the surrounding countryside and contributes to the character of the AONB and Chisledon village. There are important outward views towards the Ridgeway and Skyline which forms part of the

special qualities of the AONB, which would be lost if any part of the site were to be developed. Development would not conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. A settlement's character in many cases depends critically on the presence of green land within or adjoining it. Therefore, a site's location within an assumed boundary or within the visual built envelope of a settlement may not always make it suitable for development if it is of landscape, heritage or open space value. Development would force the village to encroach into the landscape buffer which is inappropriate as buildings, in particular the roofscape would be more visually prominent when viewed from the public right of way which run between the sites in addition to the Ridgeway and Liddington Castle. There are other sporadic developments south of new road however they are not prominent in the landscape and form part of the main body of the village. This would not justify further degradation of the landscape. The current parcels of open countryside due to their open and gently sloping topography merging with the wider open countryside provides a sense of separation and spaciousness which reinforces its separation from the built environment. The planning history for site s0028 speaks for itself in that a Planning Inspector dismissed an appeal for 12 affordable housing units on the site as he did not consider there to be exceptional circumstances that outweighed the landscape harm.

- s0035 – Land south of Thorney Park, Wroughton – On its own the site has potential to provide a small expansion of Thorney Park however it is isolated away from services and has a poor access. There is the potential for a larger expansion of Thorney park if the site were merged with s0040 and to include some local services and an upgrade to the highway. If this were to be taken forward a design code should be included as part of the allocation to ensure a high standard of materials are used and the building heights copy those of the existing dwellings. The 2 sites would also provide the opportunity for landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures and the potential to improve access between Thorney Park and Alexandra Park for shared services. Development is likely to be major and therefore would need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances in accordance with para 172 of the NPPF.
- s0039 – Parcel 1, Land Adjoining Alexandra Park, Overton – Object. Would consider this site to be land adjoining Thorney Park rather than Alexandra Park. This site is visually and physically separate from the development of Thorney Park and forms part of a wider network of open fields which would result in the encroachment of development into open countryside.
- s0040 – Parcel 2, Land adjoining Alexandra Park, Overton – Would consider this site to be land adjoining Thorney Park rather than Alexandra Park. As per s0035 the site has potential as a joint approach in seeking to enhance accessibility to services and facilities for the local residents and enhance the local landscape subject to exceptional circumstances.

- s0041 – Parcel 3, Land adjoining Alexandra Park, Overton – Object. The site is an important visual and physical gap between two distinctly separate developments and should be preserved as a non-coalescence area to protect the AONB from over urbanisation of open countryside.
- s0066, s0067 and s0068 – sites within Bishopstone – The sites are within the setting of the AONB and therefore should be landscape led in terms of developing a scheme for the site which is of a high standard of design.
- s0078 – Hodson Road, Chisledon – A landscape sensitivity assessment would be required to assess the potential for development if exceptional circumstances were demonstrated in accordance with para 172 of the NPPF. Would agree that 72 dwellings on this site is too much and would fail to reflect the pattern of development within Chisledon and its edge of village locality adjacent to open countryside, 40 would be more appropriate for this rural locality, however the AONB unit would still consider this to be major development.
- s0221 – North of Mayfield. West of Kite Hill, Wanborough – Site is within the setting of the AONB and any future allocation or application should be led by a landscape assessment.
- S0384 – Hanger C2, Wroughton Airfield – Object. The site is open to long distance views and vistas and is set away from neighbouring residential development. The site forms part of the character of the airfield. The AONB objected to a residential application on land to the north of this site, the application was refused by SBC due to its unsustainable location and impact upon the character of the AONB.