



**VISION
PLANNING**

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan Examination

Written Statement on behalf of Crudwell Parish Council and Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

March 2019

Project Reference: 00001



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Produced by:	Stuart Miles BEng MA MRTPI	Stuart Miles BEng MA MRTPI		

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Written Statement has been prepared by Vision Planning on behalf of Crudwell Parish Council and the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

1.2 The Statement relates to the Ridgeway Farm site in Crudwell.

1.3 This site was proposed as a housing allocation (ref H2.13) in policy H2 of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (HSA): Submission Draft, May 2018. It is now proposed to be deleted (proposed change PC92) via the Schedule of Proposed Changes released for consultation on 27 September 2018.

1.4 The reason given by Wiltshire Council for Proposed Change PC92 is:

"To reflect the resolution of Wiltshire Council's Cabinet, the site at Crudwell is proposed to be deleted from the WHSAP. The reason for this is that in the wider context of completions that have already occurred in the Malmesbury CA over the WCS plan period, there is no longer a strategic need to allocate a site in the community area through the WHSAP. Given that good progress has been made on the preparation of the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to allocate sites, evidence indicates that the Council can defer housing allocation options to be developed through the emerging neighbourhood plan, rather than through the WHSAP process."

1.5 Crudwell Parish Council (CPC) and the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (CNPSG) support this proposed deletion.

1.6 When Ridgeway Farm was proposed for allocation in the May 2018 Submission Draft HSA, CPC and CNPSG objected on the basis that there was no strategic need for any housing sites in Crudwell and that the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan is the best mechanism by which to identify the level of local housing need and to determine how that should be met. This remains our view.

1.7 On that basis, this statement responds to the following matters and issues and questions:

Matter 2: Consistency with the Wiltshire Core Strategy

- Issue 2: Does the WHSAP make adequate provision to meet housing requirements as set out in the WCS?
- Issue 3: Does the distribution of site allocations accord with the spatial strategy in the WCS?
- Issue 4: Has the site selection process for housing allocations been soundly based?

Matter 3: Housing Site Allocations

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- Issue 5: Are the proposed sites justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

1.8 The statement responds to these matters and issues in the following way:

- Section 2: Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan Progress;
- Section 3: Core Strategy Context and Strategic Housing Requirement;
- Section 4: Rebuttal of Representations for Edenstone Homes.

1.9 We note that paragraph 9 of the Inspector's Guidance Note explains that sites removed from the HSA by the Schedule of Proposed Changes will be considered to be "omission" sites, and that such sites will not normally be discussed at the hearing sessions. This is understood. We would, however, reserve the right to appear at the hearing if anyone supporting the allocation of the Ridgeway Farm site is invited.

2 Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan Progress

- 2.1 The Crudwell Neighbourhood Area was designated under section 61(G) of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended) on 20 March 2015.
- 2.2 Edenstone Homes, the proposed developers of the Ridgeway Farm site, suggest in representation 446 that progress on the Neighbourhood Plan has been slow since then.
- 2.3 Although the Neighbourhood Area was designated in 2015, the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was only formed in August 2017. Since then, Vision Planning has been instructed to help produce the Neighbourhood Plan, and Regulation 14 consultation ran from 8th December 2018 to 1st February 2019. So in fact, progress has been remarkably rapid since the formation of the Steering Group.
- 2.4 The Regulation 14 draft Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) proposes a housing site at Tuners Lane sufficient to accommodate the identified local housing need of 20 to 25 dwellings.
- 2.5 75% of representations from parishioners support the proposed allocation. Nevertheless, objections have been raised which will, of course, need to be considered to ensure that the submitted draft Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 2.6 However, this only serves to emphasise the fact that CPC/CNPSG are taking their responsibility to provide for local housing need seriously.
- 2.7 Wiltshire Council shares this view of the CNP, where the reason for Proposed Change 92 includes:
- "... Given that good progress has been made on the preparation of the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to allocate sites, evidence indicates that the Council can defer housing allocation options to be developed through the emerging neighbourhood plan, rather than through the WHSAP process."*
- 2.8 As we explain in the next section, there is no strategic need for Wiltshire Council to identify any housing sites at Crudwell so it remains our strong view that the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan should be allowed to run its course by determining the level of local housing need and how this should best be met.

3 Core Strategy Context and Strategic Housing Requirement

Wiltshire Core Strategy

- 3.1 The Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) was adopted in January 2015.
- 3.2 WCS Core Policy 1 sets out the Settlement Strategy for the area. The policy explains that
- "The Settlement Strategy identifies the settlements where sustainable development will take place..."*
- 3.3 WCS Core Policy 13 sets out the settlement strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area and explains that
- "Over the plan period (2006 to 2026), approximately 1,395 new homes will be provided of which about 885 should occur at Malmesbury. Approximately 510 homes will be provided in the rest of the Community Area. Growth in the Malmesbury Community Area over the plan period may consist of a range of sites in accordance with Core Policies 1 and 2."*
- 3.4 WCS Core Policy 13 defines the village of Crudwell as a "large village".
- 3.5 WCS Core Policy 1 explains that
- "Large Villages are defined as settlements with a limited range of employment, services and facilities..."*
- Development at Large ... Villages will be limited to that needed to help meet the housing needs of settlements and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities.* (Vision Planning emphasis)
- 3.6 Paragraph 4.15 of the policy's supporting text explains that
- "At the settlements identified as villages, a limited level of development will be supported in order to help retain the vitality of these communities. At Large Villages settlement boundaries are retained and development will predominantly take the form of small housing and employment sites within the settlement boundaries... Small housing sites are defined as sites involving fewer than 10 dwellings (i.e. not a major application). Development outside the settlement boundary will be strictly controlled. Relaxation of the boundaries will only be supported where it has been formally reviewed through a subsequent DPD or a community-led neighbourhood plan, which includes a review of the settlement boundary to identify new developable land to help meet the housing and employment needs of that community..." (Vision Planning emphasis)*
- 3.7 Paragraph 4.17 explains that
- "Proposals for improved ... housing growth (over and above that allowed by this Core Strategy) ... outside the defined limits of development will*

not be supported unless they arise through community-led planning documents, such as neighbourhood plans, which are endorsed by the local community and accord with the provision of this plan...”

- 3.8 WCS Core Policy 2 sets out the Delivery Strategy for the area.
- 3.9 It divides the area into three housing market areas (HMA), and specifies the minimum housing requirement for each HMA.
- 3.10 Crudwell, and the Malmesbury Community Area in which it is located, is included within the North and West Wiltshire HMA, for which a minimum housing requirement of 24,740 dwellings (out of a total of 42,000 dwellings across Wiltshire) is set.
- 3.11 This strategic context supports allowing the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan to determine how and where to meet any identified local housing need. It is clear, particularly from the emphasised sections of text above, that the Core Strategy proposes “limited” and “small scale” housing development on “sites involving fewer than 10 dwellings” which help meet local housing needs.
- 3.12 Despite this, the CNP has proposed to allocate a site for 20 to 25 dwellings because the CNPSG and CPC take seriously their responsibility to meet the identified local need for housing.
- 3.13 It is also clear that the WCS prefers new housing outside the current settlement boundary, such as the Ridgeway Farm site and indeed the Tuners Lane site, to be identified through Neighbourhood Plans, even going as far as saying that these proposals “*will not be supported unless*” they arise through Neighbourhood Plans.
- 3.14 Topic Paper 2: Site Selection Process Methodology, July 2018, explains Wiltshire Council’s view of neighbourhood planning in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.10. This includes the following extracts:
- 3.6 *“The Council supports passing direct powers over planning to local communities as a part of building up the resilience of local communities.”*
- 3.8 *“It is only necessary for this Plan (i.e. the HSA) to allocate land for housing development where it is a strategic priority to do so. WCS Core Policy 1 proposes that development at Large Villages should be limited to that needed to help meet the housing needs of settlements and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities. Unless there is a strategic priority to deliver the homes needed in an HMA, then the most appropriate means to assess local needs and plan growth at each Large Village is through the neighbourhood planning process.”* (Vision Planning emphasis)
- 3.15 We explain in the next section that there is no strategic priority to deliver homes at Crudwell, although the CNP has determined that there is a local need. There is, therefore, no need for the HSA Plan to identify a housing site or sites at Crudwell. This is best left to the CNP.

Strategic Housing Requirement

- 3.16 Paragraph 29 of the NPPF explains that
- "Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies."*
- 3.17 The CNP does not propose to do so.
- 3.18 As set out above, the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) sets a minimum housing requirement of 42,000 dwellings between 2006 and 2026, with 24,740 of these dwellings being delivered in the North and West Wiltshire Housing Market Area. Of these, 1,395 homes are expected in the Malmesbury Community Area, of which 885 should occur at Malmesbury. This leaves 510 to be delivered in the rest of the Malmesbury Community Area.
- 3.19 Table 3.1 of Topic Paper 3 - Addendum: Housing Land Supply, July 2018, shows the residual housing requirement by community area. Paragraph 3.5 explains that these figures exclude the housing allocations.
- 3.20 Table 3.1 shows that, as at 2017, there was no residual housing requirement in the Malmesbury Community Area as a whole, nor in Malmesbury Town, nor in the rest of the Community Area.
- 3.21 In other words, the target set out in Core Policy 13 for 1,395 dwellings to be delivered in the Malmesbury Community Area by 2026 had been met by 2017.
- 3.22 Further, Table 3.3 shows the five year housing land supply position for each HMA, excluding the proposed allocations, and shows that the North and West Wiltshire HMA has 5.90 years housing supply.
- 3.23 That a five year housing land supply exists in the North and West HMA has been confirmed by a number of appeal Inspectors. The most recent such appeal being APP/Y3940/W/18/3195518. The decision letter relating to this appeal noted that it was common ground that there was no housing shortfall in the HMA.
- 3.24 For both these reasons, there is no strategic need to identify any new housing at the "large village" of Crudwell.
- 3.25 This assessment accords with Wiltshire Council's view. In their reasoning for Proposed Change 92 they note:
- "... in the wider context of completions that have already occurred in the Malmesbury CA over the WCS plan period, there is no longer a strategic need to allocate a site in the community area through the WHSAP..."*
- 3.26 As there is no strategic need for housing in the Malmesbury Community Area, there is no need for the HSA to identify any sites in the Community Area.

3.27 There is, however, an identified local housing need, and this is best met through the CNP.

4 Rebuttal of Representations from Edenstone Homes

History and Context

- 4.1 Edenstone Homes is the developer promoting the Ridgeway Farm site for development.
- 4.2 They achieved outline planning consent (ref 15/03136/OUT) for ten dwellings on the former Ridgeway Farm farmyard fronting Tetbury Lane in Crudwell, in March 2016. At this stage, an appeal Inspector had recently found that Wiltshire Council could not demonstrate an adequate five year housing land supply, and this was a material consideration in the determination process.
- 4.3 Edenstone then obtained reserved matters consent (ref 16/09797/REM), in February 2017. This ten dwelling development is now built and occupied.
- 4.4 During the pre-submission consultation for the HSA Plan, Edenstone supported the proposed allocation of the Ridgeway Farm site.
- 4.5 The Ridgeway Farm allocation was proposed to be deleted via the Schedule of Proposed Changes, so Edenstone raised a number of objections. These objections are rebutted below.
- 4.6 To complete the context, Edenstone submitted an application for 39 dwellings on the formerly proposed allocation in July 2018. During the determination process, the number of dwellings was reduced to 36. This application was refused on 7 December 2018.
- 4.7 In essence, Edenstone's objection to the deletion of the Ridgeway Farm site from the HSA Plan focusses on concerns about the Regulation 14 draft CNP not currently proposing to allocate the Ridgeway Farm site for housing.
- 4.8 Similar representations have been submitted on behalf of Edenstone in relation to the Regulation 14 draft CNP. These representations will be considered before the next draft CNP is released and, ultimately, the CNP Examiner will consider whether the CNP meets the basic conditions and therefore whether it should be made.
- 4.9 There is nothing in the Edenstone representations that explain why the HSA should override this process by determining where local housing needs are to be met in Crudwell when "*good progress*", in the words of Wiltshire Council, is being made on the CNP.
- 4.10 In this context, it is our view that there is no need for the HSA Examination to consider Edenstone's objection in any detail. However, should this view not be shared by the HSA Inspector, we respond to Edenstone's key points below.

Comment ID 446

- 4.11 Edenstone suggests that the decision to delete the Ridgeway Farm site from the HSA *"appears to have been made on the basis of a purely political decision rather than on planning merits."* They go on to note that PC92 refers to the good progress made on the CNP.
- 4.12 Edenstone fail to note that PC92 also explains that there is no longer a strategic need for the HSA Plan to allocate a site in the community area, as we explain above.
- 4.13 Wiltshire Council is clear that the Ridgeway Farm site is no longer proposed to be allocated for these two reasons combined. The planning merits of this decision are clear.
- 4.14 Edenstone's next point is that *"Neighbourhood Plans that are at an early stage should not dictate the overall strategy for strategic plan making within Wiltshire."* With reference to the weight to be given to the emerging neighbourhood plan, they refer to PPG paragraph 07 (we assume Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 41-007-20170728) and 2012 NPPF paragraph 216.
- 4.15 The CNP is not attempting to dictate Wiltshire's planning strategy; it is seeking to help to meet it. As explained above, there is no strategic need for additional housing in Crudwell, but there is a local need. This local need is to be met by the CNP in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and Core Policies 1 and 2 in particular.
- 4.16 The references to the 2012 NPPF are confusing given that the representation was submitted five months after the 2018 NPPF had been released. Paragraph 216 of the 2012 NPPF is now, effectively, paragraph 48 of the current NPPF. This refers to *"determining applications."*
- 4.17 PPG Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 41-007-20170728 is headed *"What weight can be attached to an emerging neighbourhood plan when determining planning applications?"* (Vision Planning emphasis)
- 4.18 On that basis, the national policy references made by Edenstone in relation to the weight to be given to an emerging neighbourhood plan are not relevant because the issue at hand is not the determination of a planning application; it is the allocation of a housing site in one or other of two emerging development plans.
- 4.19 Edenstone then refers to paragraphs 16 and 184 of the 2012 NPPF which, they say, *"states clearly that Neighbourhood Plans should, inter alia, support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans"* and *"the ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan (or, in this case, the Site Allocations Plan)."*
- 4.20 Neither paragraphs 16 nor 184 are repeated in the current NPPF, so both points are, to a certain extent, irrelevant.

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- 4.21 In relation to the former paragraph 16, the most relevant paragraph now, in the 2018 NPPF, is paragraph 29. We explain in paragraphs 3.16 to 3.27 above that the proposed CNP will meet this requirement.
- 4.22 In relation to the former paragraph 184, footnote 16 of the 2018 NPPF requires Neighbourhood Plans to be *"in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area."* We would argue that this is the case with the CNP but, in any event, the CNP Examination is the place for that debate.
- 4.23 Edenstone suggests that the HSA is a strategic policy document. Paragraph 28 of the NPPF shows that site allocations are *"non-strategic policies"*, and paragraph 30 explains that, if the HSA were to be adopted before the CNP was made, then the CNP would *"take precedence over"* the HSA for the Crudwell neighbourhood area.
- 4.24 Edenstone then claim that the CNP is *"at an extremely early stage"*, *"progress has been slow and the Regulation 14 stage has not been reached"*, *"there is little content to take into consideration"* and *"as such, no weight can be given to the Neighbourhood Plan at this stage."*
- 4.25 We explain the progress with the CNP above. Since the Steering Group was formed the CNP has reached Regulation 14 stage very quickly. In any event, the matter for consideration at the HSA Examination is not the weight to be given to the CNP because, as set out above, that relates to planning applications. Instead, the matter at hand is whether the CNP should be allowed to continue to determine where housing should be located in Crudwell Parish.
- 4.26 Edenstone's representation then goes on to explain that the Ridgeway Farm site is deliverable and to note, with reference to table 3.4 from Topic Paper 3 Addendum, that Wiltshire Council may not be able to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply beyond 2024 in the HMA.
- 4.27 Any sites allocated in the CNP will need to be deliverable. The CNPSG has and will assess all potential housing sites on that basis, and the CNP Examiner will ensure that they are so.
- 4.28 In terms of table 3.4, the most significant point to note is that supply falls away towards the end of the WCS plan period because the Wiltshire Local Plan dealing with the period up to 2036 is not yet drafted, so the sites to provide that supply are not yet identified.
- 4.29 In fact, the distribution of housing between the four HMAs likely to be included in the next Wiltshire Local Plan is not yet resolved, so Wiltshire Council is not yet able to define the housing requirements for smaller geographical areas.
- 4.30 Furthermore, table 3.4 excludes any HSA allocations, so the allocation of land in the CNP for residential development will improve the housing supply situation in the same way that the allocation of land for residential development in the HSA would.

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- 4.31 None of this alters the fact that, in the absence of a strategic need for housing in Crudwell, the CNP is better placed to determine how to meet local housing need than the HSA.

Comment ID 447

- 4.32 Edenstone supports the change to the settlement boundary proposed by Wiltshire Council at Crudwell and suggests that *"the Ridgeway Farm site is located between the existing settlement boundary and the proposed July 2018 amendment. As a result, the allocation of land at Ridgeway Farm would 'round off' this area of Crudwell."*
- 4.33 In this regard, the CNPSG and CPC would note that the proposed amendment to the settlement boundary is simply based on the revised methodology set out in Topic Paper 1.
- 4.34 There remains a debate about the best location to provide for Crudwell's local housing need, and the best place for that debate is the CNP. Representations have been received in relation to this issue through the Regulation 14 CNP consultation, and these representations will be thoroughly considered before the CNP is submitted for examination.

Comment ID 448

- 4.35 Edenstone questions the consideration of land at Tuners Lane through the submission draft HSA Sustainability Appraisal as it was not considered in earlier versions of the SHLAA. They also question the site's deliverability.
- 4.36 Our response is that it is reasonable for sites submitted at any point before the HSA is submitted to be considered for inclusion in the HSA, subject to report writing time and Member consideration. Any other outcome would be unfair and potentially subject to challenge.
- 4.37 The deliverability of the Tuners Lane site has been raised through the CNP Regulation 14 consultation, along with the deliverability of other potential housing sites. These representations will be considered before the CNP is submitted.
- 4.38 This does not alter the fact that the CNP remains the best place to determine where and how to meet Crudwell Parish's local housing need.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 This written statement supports the proposed deletion of the Ridgeway Farm site in Crudwell from the Housing Site Allocations Plan.
- 5.2 We explain that there is no strategic need for housing to be allocated at Crudwell Village, so there is no need for the Housing Site Allocations Plan to identify any housing sites at Crudwell.
- 5.3 However, we explain that a local housing need for the Parish has been identified through work undertaken as part of the emerging Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan, and that the Neighbourhood Plan proposes to meet this identified local need.
- 5.4 The Neighbourhood Plan has made good progress in a short time, with Regulation 14 consultation being undertaken in December 2018 to February 2019.
- 5.5 Representations have been received in relation to the housing site proposed and in relation to the merits of competing sites. Edenstone Homes, the proponent of the Ridgeway Farm site, has made representations through this process.
- 5.6 These representations will be assessed thoroughly before moving forward with the next draft of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.7 On the basis that the Neighbourhood Plan is making good progress to identify and deliver housing to meet the identified local housing need, this is the best mechanism by which to meet this need.
- 5.8 There is no need for the Housing Site Allocations Plan to override this process by allocating any sites at Crudwell.
- 5.9 Therefore, in relation to the matters and issues raised by the Inspector, this response demonstrates that, as far as the proposed deletion of the Ridgeway Farm site is concerned:
- The WHSAP makes adequate provision to meet housing requirements as set out in the WCS (Issue 2)
 - The distribution of site allocations accords with the spatial strategy in the WCS (Issue 3)
 - The site selection process for housing allocations has been soundly based (Issue 4)
 - The proposed sites are justified, effective and consistent with national policy (Issue 5)

