

Date of Meeting	15 January 2015
Application Number	13/02543/OUT
Site Address	Matrons College Farm, Castle Lane, Whaddon, Salisbury, SP5 3EQ
Proposal	Erect 28 dwellings and Local Health Centre on land to north and north east of Matron's College Farm, change of use of land south east of Matron's College Farm from agricultural to allotments, develop new access adjacent to Oakridge Office Park
Applicant	Mr Tim Leech
Town/Parish Council	Alderbury
Ward	Alderbury and Whiteparish
Grid Ref	419581 126120
Type of application	Outline Planning
Case Officer	Warren Simmonds

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The proposal has wider strategic implications due to the scale and location of site, which is outside of the Alderbury Settlement boundary.

Purpose of Report

To consider the recommendation of the Area Development Manager (South) to **REFUSE** the application.

1. Report Summary

The main issues in the consideration of this application are as follows:

1. Principle of proposal;
2. Suitability of the proposed access and other highways considerations;
3. Impact upon residential amenity and the character and appearance of the area;
4. Ecological and environmental impacts;
5. Impact on infrastructure made necessary by the development - recreational open space, education, and waste & recycling facilities.

The application has generated a total of 37 representations from the interested parties, as follows:

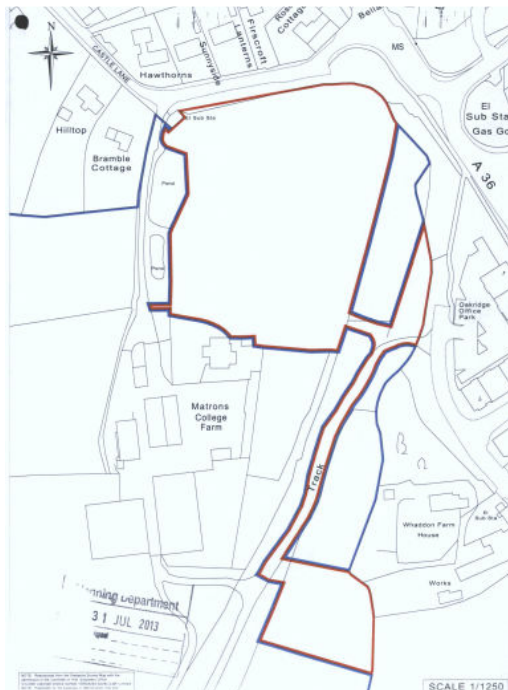
- Twenty four representations in support of the proposed development
- Thirteen representations objecting on grounds including -
 - I. Highway safety and traffic generation
 - II. Benefit of health centre too vague/not deliverable
 - III. Urban incursion into countryside
 - IV. Development outside of housing policy boundary
 - V. Adverse impact on the character of the area
 - VI. Noise pollution and light pollution

Alderbury Parish Council does not support the proposal.

2. Site Description

The 1.43 ha application site consists primarily of an undeveloped field that is located on the south eastern edge of Whaddon, close to Alderbury, and also includes an additional area of agricultural land further to the south (linked to the main site via a track) on which it is proposed to provide allotment gardens.

In policy terms the site lies within the countryside, outside the settlement boundary of Alderbury.



3. Planning History

13/00451/FUL Demolition of existing out buildings and erection of 3 new dwellings with associated garages and parking at Whaddon Farm **REFUSED, Appeal Dismissed**

4. The Proposal

The application is for outline planning consent with all matters reserved except for access. It proposes the erection of 28 dwellings and a local health centre, and the change of use of land from agricultural to allotments. The access to and from the proposed development is adjacent to the adjoining Oakridge Office Park to the immediate east of the site.



In support of the application the agent makes the following comments in his Planning Statement:

In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, determination of this planning application should be made in accordance with the development plan 'unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.

It is recognised that the application site is outside of the Housing Policy Boundary (HPB) as defined on the 2003 Salisbury District Local Plan. However, given the statutory requirements identified above this document identifies the full range of 'material considerations' that must be taken into account in determining the application.

Having regard to the development plan and material considerations, it is clear that this proposal should be viewed favourably. In particular, the application:

- *Represents sustainable development, and is thus consistent with the NPPF;*
- *Is widely supported by the local community, as evidenced by two separate consultation exercises;*
- *Other than in terms of the HPB, is in accordance with all other policies of the development plan, including its overall strategic objectives;*
- *Complies with all other policies and strategies of relevance, including emerging Core Strategy policies;*
- *Is necessary in order to meet the requirement for new homes in the area;*
- *Would give rise to no significant adverse effects in terms of ecology, landscape, or other environmental issues;*
- *Would bring forward a range of important benefits to the local area, most notably a major new health centre, as sought by the Alderbury and Whaddon Parish Plan.*

This document concludes that the above factors are of such magnitude as to outweigh the site's position outside of the HPB, particularly in the light of paragraphs 214-215 of the NPPF which consider the weight that decision-makers should attach to older planning policies from March 2013 onwards.

The application is supported by various reports including a “Local Health Centre: Summary of Proposal” which states the following:

The proposed centre would comprise the following key elements:

- *a clinical room from which a GP service would be provided to the general public and users of a Day Room.*
- *a second clinical room to provide associated health care services with a focus on reducing morbidity and managing patients better within the community and thus away from secondary care. Services would include (but not be limited to) podiatry, physiotherapy, back care, diabetic support, medication support, and dietetics*
- *a large Day Room with well designed chairs for mobility aids and appropriate seating. This would be used by up to around 20 users at any one time.*
- *1 carer per 3 patients to enable to enable “gold standard” care.*
- *Kitchenette, accessible toilet and shower, and office space*
- *a mini bus with a hoist would provide transport.*

The Summary further states:

The day centre is the solution that the Government needs to help solve the problem of increasing elderly care and morbidity within a caring social environment.

There are central NHS directives alerting us to the financial implications of long stay patients and urging us to get them discharged. Every week, we receive data relating to the costs of its long-stay patients in Salisbury District Hospital, from which it is clear that there is a compelling need for patients to be discharged whenever possible. However, frequently we are unable to arrange this due to lack of local facilities and available care.

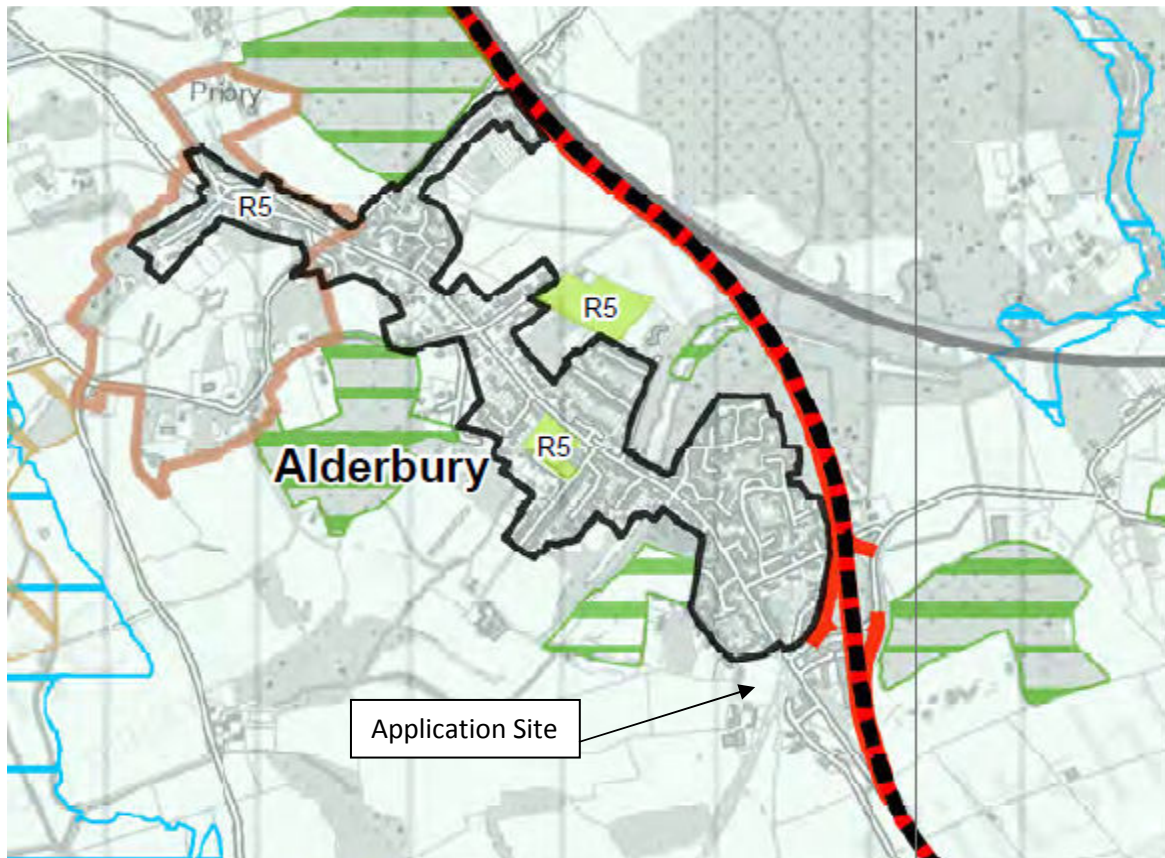
As reported continuously through the media, costs to the NHS are escalating beyond control and hence the Government are now promoting new systems and practices to reduce costs.

Under current payment figures, the centre would cost £60 per shift per carer. If the centre is run at full capacity, with meals and all other social care, costs would be in the region of £30 per patient per day. This is a much more realistic figure than patients being admitted to a high tech hospital for social care.

And:

The location of the proposed facility is ideal in terms of being adjacent to Alderbury with an immediate population of over 2,000, filling a large ‘gap’ in provision of existing GP services between Salisbury, Downton and Whiteparish.

With a position almost directly from the A36 the site also provides excellent accessibility from the surrounding area by road, but also immediate access to bus services.



Extract from eWCS map

5. Planning Policy

South Wiltshire Core Strategy

Core Policy 1 (Settlement Strategy)
Core Policy 2 (Strategic Allocations)
Core Policy 6 (Housing Needs for Salisbury)

Salisbury District Local Plan (saved policies)

G1, G2, C2, H23 & C6

Wiltshire Core Strategy

CP1 (Settlement Strategy)
CP2 (Delivery Strategy)
CP34 (Additional Employment Land)
CP43 (Providing Affordable Homes)
CP45 (Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs)
CP50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)

CP57 (Ensuring high Quality Design and Place Shaping)
CP58 (Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment)
CP64 (Demand Management)

The Inspector's report for the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy has now been published and it concludes that the Strategy is 'sound'. It follows that the Strategy must now be given very significant weight in the decision making process prior to its final consideration and assumed adoption by Wiltshire Council in the new year.

Following its adoption some of the existing development plan policies referred to above will be replaced by the WCS policies whereas others will be 'saved'. In the meantime all of the existing policies remain in force and so continue to be the starting point for the consideration of the application.

NPPF & NPPG – In particular paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 17 & 55

6. Summary of consultation responses

Alderbury Parish Council – Objection in second response.

Initial response dated 11/09/13:

Support –

- *Provision of the health centre is a key part of the development which must be supplied for the community. This is a key reason why the PC have supported the application.*
- *The Pc would like to see more than 60 spaces provided for parking to avoid any overspill onto the pavements and neighbouring areas to allow for visitors and often third or fourth cars for households.*
- *The width of the highway should be large enough to support the traffic entering and leaving the development, together with pavements supplied to ensure pedestrians have a clear route to the bus stop and village services.*
- *As the development will be at the southern entrance to the village from the A36, clear signage must be provided to direct traffic and keep the amount of additional vehicles travelling through the village to a minimum.*
- *The drainage issues raised by a local resident must be resolved with oversight from the EA to prevent further flooding of Alderbury Farm Cottage and Witherington Road.*
- *A proposal to create a cycle and pedestrian route primarily along the route of the old railway line which runs alongside the proposed development site, should also be taken into consideration and supported by the landowner.*
- *There is a requirement in the village for properties for older residents who want to downsize but stay local. The PC would like to see some of this type of housing incorporated into the final housing design.*
- *The proposed new allotments are provided as part of the development as there is already a waiting list in the village.*

Second response dated 09/04/14:

The amended plan and additional information were considered by Alderbury Parish Council at their meeting on Tuesday 1st April. As a result of the discussion the Council resolved to 'withdraw' the initial support given to this application.

The 'provision of a local health centre' was the key reason why the Parish Council initially supported the application, however additional information supplied since the original decision has shown that in fact a satellite health centre is not viable in Alderbury from a funding perspective. As a result of this, the definition of the services that could be provided within the local health centre for the community has changed and is not what was originally proposed. This has increased the Council's concern about the realistic delivery of the 'health facility' as part of this development and whether the revised facility will provide as strong a benefit to the local community in Alderbury. Therefore the Council has withdrawn its initial support.

WC Housing officer – Requirement for 40% on-site affordable housing provision

Scottish & Southern Energy – No response received

WC Rights of Way officer – No response received

Highways Agency – No objection

WC Public protection – No objection, subject to Conditions

WC Highways – No Highway objection in principle, access is acceptable but internal arrangement of site is not acceptable

WC Ecologist – No objection, subject to Conditions

WC Drainage – No response received

WC Urban Designer – Various comments

WC Education – Financial contributions by way of S.106 agreement will be required

WC Archaeology – No objection, subject to Condition(s)

WC Open space/adoptions – Requirement for contributions in respect of open space provision

Wessex Water – No objection, standard letter of advice

WC Landscape officer – No response received

WC Tree officer – Arboricultural assessment is required

Natural England – No objection

WC Spatial planning team – Proposal is contrary to local plan policies in respect of residential development outside of housing policy boundaries. Recommend refusal.

WC Conservation officer – A variety of comments

Environment Agency – No objection, subject to Conditions

7. Publicity

The application was advertised by site/press notices and neighbour consultation letters.

The application has generated a total of 37 representations from the public, as follows:

- Twenty four representations in support of the proposed development on grounds including well designed scheme, welcomed health facility and welcomed additional housing.
- Thirteen representations objecting on grounds including highway safety and traffic generation, benefit of health centre too vague/not deliverable, urban incursion into countryside, development outside of housing policy boundary, adverse impact on the character of the area, noise pollution and light pollution.

The application has also received support from John Glen MP. In a letter to Whiteparish Surgery he states the following:

“Many thanks for your letter about the prospect of building a daycentre for dementia sufferers. I absolutely appreciate the importance of this type of provision and applaud your aims. Alzheimers and age-related diseases have been a major interest of mine since I was elected.

I have long argued that this is a time bomb. This part of Wiltshire has a significantly larger older population than the national average and our particularly challenging demographics need to be recognised and resourced sooner rather than later.”.

The letter continues by querying how the centre would be facilitated – through land purchase, gift, etc..

8. Planning Considerations

Principle

Policy principles -

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. According to the NPPF proposed development that accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

South Wiltshire benefits from an up-to-date development plan through the South Wiltshire Core Strategy (SWCS) and the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy (eWCS).

The SWCS being the adopted local plan must be given full weight in the decision-taking process; and the eWCS must be given very significant weight having regard to the stage it has reached in the plan-making process, with its examining Inspector's report now published.

Local Plan 'Settlement Strategies' and 'Delivery Strategies' –

Both the SWCS and the eWCS set out objectives for the delivery of new development via 'Settlement Strategies' and 'Delivery Strategies'. Strategic objective 1 of the SWCS seeks to ensure that South Wiltshire is a place where the role and function of settlements is understood and the location of development addresses the causes and effects of climate change. Strategic objective 3 of the eWCS seeks to provide everyone with access to a decent affordable home.

To achieve its objective the SWCS focuses growth at established settlements where there are existing facilities, and so where local housing, service and employment needs can be met in a sustainable manner. The settlements are set out in a hierarchy based on their size and function, and so their ability to absorb different scales of growth (the Settlement Strategy).

The hierarchy of settlements starts with Salisbury (where the largest proportion of growth is concentrated), then Amesbury and the garrison towns (the largest focus for strategic growth outside Salisbury) and then the Local Service Centres (where growth must have regard to local constraints). The SWCS states that these first three tiers of the hierarchy are the primary focus for growth in the overall Settlement Strategy. Next in the hierarchy are Secondary Villages (where growth proportionate to their size, character and environment will be supported), and then Small Villages (where infill and exceptions development will only be supported). The final 'tier' is Other Settlements and the Countryside which are unsustainable locations where new development is unlikely to be accepted.

The eWCS provides a similar hierarchy of settlements in Policy CP1, although covering the entire county. At the top are the Principal Settlements (the primary focus for development), then the Market Towns (with potential for significant development to help sustain and enhance services and facilities and promote better levels of self-containment), the Local Service Centres (modest levels of development to safeguard their role), Large Villages (growth proportionate to their size, character and environment), and Small Villages (infill and exceptions development only). Below the Small Villages are 'other' settlements and the countryside which are unsustainable locations where new development is unlikely.

In line with the hierarchy of settlements, Policy CP2 of the eWCS sets out a Delivery Strategy. This defines the quantity of new development 'needed' in the county during the life of the core strategy, and how it will be distributed in terms of the Settlement Strategy. The Delivery Strategy states that 42,000 homes will be delivered across the county during the life of the WCS, with 10,420 of these in the South Wiltshire HMA. The specific distribution is set out in the Community Area Strategies elsewhere within the core strategy. Policy CP2 states that "... sites for development in line with the Area Strategies will be identified through subsequent Site Allocations DPDs and by supporting communities to identify sites through neighbourhood planning". More particularly it states that within the defined limits of development of the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and

Large Villages there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, but outside the defined limits of development, new development will not be permitted, and that the limits of development will only be altered through the identification of sites through subsequent site allocations and neighbourhood plans.

The eWCS examining Inspector's report –

The examining Inspector's report has recently been published. In assessing Policies CP1 and CP2 the report concludes that the Settlement Strategy, as proposed to be modified, is justified by the evidence base and will be effective in realising the objectives and Vision of the core strategy as a whole. More particularly in relation to the Delivery Strategy the report states

The overall indicated quantities of development provide a flexible and positive basis for provision to meet predominantly the needs of the area. These are appropriately expressed as minimums. The policy is underpinned by an aspiration to deliver sustainable patterns of development based upon the settlement hierarchy and through the appropriate use of, where suitable, previously developed land. Furthermore, the policy enables strategic development for certain sites to occur which will be subject to individual masterplanning and community engagement; Overall, the general approach embodied in CP2, as proposed to be changed, is consistent with national policy, is justified and consequently sound. [Paragraph 40].

The report continues

Within defined settlement limits the CS maintains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Outside of such limits, including Small Villages, development will be limited to that which meets certain criteria. The exceptions policies of the CS may also be applied. CP2 therefore relies heavily on the existence of settlement boundaries to manage growth. Whilst the principle of such an approach may be justified in terms of providing plan led clarity to what development may go where, the efficacy of the plan is partially undermined by the absence of particularly robust evidence in support of the identified limits for each settlement. Whilst a combination of commitments, windfalls and strategic allocations may ensure a supply of development land to meet needs in the shorter term, the effectiveness of CP2 in combination with CP1 is dependent upon a timely review of settlement limits [paragraph 41].

In considering actual delivery on the ground, the Inspector concludes that the Council's housing land supply, and so the core strategy, does demonstrate an adequate five year supply of housing land (the 'shorter term' delivery referred to above). The Inspector also accepts that the slight shortfall in housing arising from the increased requirement can be addressed over the remaining plan period, in particular having regard to the Council's planned early review of settlement boundaries and the core strategy. It follows that Policies CP1 and CP2 are currently 'working' as intended, and in the longer term will continue to work as intended following the Council's reviews.

Policy conclusion -

The eWCS's Settlement Strategy and Delivery Strategy have been found sound by the examining Inspector, subject to a review of settlement boundaries and an early review of the Core Strategy itself being undertaken. The Strategies show how all of Wiltshire's housing needs during the life of the core strategy can be delivered in a sustainable manner, primarily via allocations, re-development of suitable previously developed land and the review of settlement boundaries through DPD's and/or neighbourhood plans.

Housing delivery in the county is now happening in accordance with the Strategies, and so in pure policy terms there is no need for 'other' sites which do not accord being considered. At this time under-delivery is not a sound reason for overruling policy. In the context of an up-to-date and delivering core strategy, sites which do not accord with the Settlement and Delivery Strategies must be considered unsustainable and so contrary to the core strategy and the NPPF.

The current application –

The application relates to a site located outside the 'Large Village' boundary for Alderbury, and so in the countryside. The Delivery Strategy set out in Policy CP2 of the eWCS specifically states that outside the defined limits of development new development will not be permitted. So, in pure policy terms, and as a matter of principle, the proposal is unacceptable. The proposal conflicts with the sustainable development principles of the Settlement and Delivery Strategies of the SWCS and eWCS. It, therefore, comprises unsustainable development and, as such, is unacceptable in terms of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

The explanatory notes accompanying Policy CP1 of the eWCS state that at Large Villages development will predominantly take the form of small housing and employment sites within the settlement boundaries. Small housing sites are defined as sites involving less than 10 dwellings. Notwithstanding that this site lies outside of the defined boundary for Alderbury, its scale (namely 28 dwellings) is significantly above what the Strategy envisages. Development at a scale significantly above that envisaged would not be sustainable having regard to the limited range of employment, services and facilities these villages offer and the scale of change anticipated by the Area Strategy.

The NPPF states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case there are no material considerations which outweigh the policy presumption against unacceptable unsustainable development. This is considered further below.

The core strategy includes exception policies under which development may be acceptable outside of the settlement strategy – for example, sites which would deliver a high percentage of affordable units. None of the exceptions policies apply in this case.

Other material considerations

As set out earlier in the report, planning legislation states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case the proposal includes a 'local health centre' and allotments, and the potential benefits from these for the well-being of those occupying the development together with those in the wider community are material considerations to be considered in the balance.

In relation to the local health centre the application is accompanied by health centre reports and updates already referred to and which also state that the facility

- *is the solution that the Government needs to help solve the problem of increasing elderly care and morbidity within a caring social environment;*
- *is ideally located in terms of being adjacent to Alderbury with an immediate population of over 2,000, filling a large 'gap' in provision of existing GP services between Salisbury, Downton and Whiteparish;*
- *would significantly reduce hospital admissions, improve the day-to-day life for many patients within our community and those of their carers, stop illnesses and chronic conditions developing any further, and keep the costs of care both in primary and secondary care to a minimum;*
- *is consistent with healthcare and planning policies and strategies both locally and nationally.*

It is recognised that these are benefits which would improve health-care provision in general. However, it is not accepted that they are sufficiently material to justify 'other' otherwise unacceptable development (specifically the 28 houses also forming part of the overall proposal) contrary to the Core Strategy's Settlement and Delivery Strategies referred to above.

A key purpose of the health centre would to provide general healthcare via a day centre, and this aspect is not unanimously supported by the local community. Local support is a material consideration which can also be given weight, but not where there is also objection. It is considered that the presumption against unsustainable development outside of the defined settlements, and the resulting conflict with the Strategies of the Core Strategy is overriding in this respect.

Other material considerations include the allotments (for which the PC states there is demand), affordable housing, and other infrastructure. However, none of these are considered to outweigh the policy presumption against unacceptable development outside of the settlement strategy. As the Delivery Strategy points out, the need for housing and all related infrastructure can be delivered through the reviews of the Core Strategy and/or neighbourhood plans in any event.

Highways/access considerations

The application is for outline planning consent will all matters reserved, save for access. The Highways Agency raises no objection to the proposal. The Wiltshire

Council Highways officer raises no objection to the proposed access to the site, subject to further details of the access showing junction radii, sight lines, drainage and the specification of surface materials. The Highways officer commented that the indicative internal road layout is unacceptable (inadequate space to turn delivery and refuse vehicles). Such issues would be addressed at the reserved matters stage.

Impact upon residential amenities and the character and appearance of the area

The application is outline, with all matters reserved save for access. The final design and layout of the development would be considered in detail and on its merits at a later (reserved matters) stage in the event of planning permission being granted.

However, by reason of the location of the site, the existing screening and the topographical and general relationship of the land to the closest neighbouring dwellings and uses, it is considered the proposal should not necessarily result in adverse impacts on local amenity or adversely affect the existing character of the surrounding or wider landscape if appropriately.

Ecological and environmental impacts

Whilst the application is outline, with all matters reserved save for access, Natural England and the District Ecologist have each provided consultation responses raising no objection in principle, subject to appropriate mitigation Conditions.

Archaeological and other Heritage considerations

The Assistant County Archaeologist has assessed the proposal and raises no objection subject to Conditions.

Similarly, the conservation officer has raised a variety of comments but does not object to the proposed development in principle.

Provision towards recreational open space, education, and waste & recycling facilities

The applicant has indicated he is content to enter into a legal agreement with the Council to make relevant financial contributions in respect of recreational open space, education contributions and contributions towards waste and recycling facilities in accordance with the requirements of local plan policies.

9. S106 contributions

The applicant has indicated he is content to enter into a legal agreement with the Council to make relevant financial contributions in respect of recreational open space, education contributions and contributions towards waste and recycling facilities in accordance with the requirements of local plan policies.

10. Recommendation

That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The application site is located in the countryside and so outside of any settlement defined in the South Wiltshire Core Strategy and the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy (including the 'large village' settlement of Alderbury).

The 'Settlement Strategy' and 'Delivery Strategy' set out at Core Policies 1 and 2 of the existing and emerging Core Strategies state that in the interests of sustainability new development will be focused at the defined settlements only, in forms and at scales appropriate to the size and character of the settlements, or on other suitable allocated land or previously developed land, and not in other settlements or the countryside. These policies define sustainable development in the Wiltshire context, and so it follows that this proposal, by reason of its location in the countryside and so not within a sustainable settlement, is unacceptable as a matter of principle, failing to accord with the settlement and delivery strategies of the core strategies and so comprising unsustainable development.

There are no material considerations which outweigh this fundamental policy position, including the proposals to provide a local health centre, allotments and affordable housing. The Core Strategies are relevant and up-to-date, and demonstrate an adequate supply of land for new housing in the housing market area in any event.

2. The application does not make provision for essential infrastructure made necessary by the proposed development – namely, affordable housing, recreation facilities (on- and off- site), and education facilities, and waste and recycling facilities. This is contrary to Policies CP3 of the South Wiltshire Core Strategy, saved policies G9 & R2 (within the South Wiltshire Core Strategy), and Core Policy 43 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

INFORMATIVE

It is acknowledged that the applicant is willing to enter into a S.106 legal agreement with the Council to make provision in respect of the essential infrastructure requirements detailed above in reason for refusal 2, however this reason is necessary to ensure the matters are adequately considered in the event of an appeal.