



THE COLERNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PART A: DEVELOPMENT PLAN



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“Development that expresses community aspirations”

This Plan was commissioned by Colerne Parish Council following a public meeting held in December 2016. The objective was to provide a local framework by which Colerne parish could contribute to Wiltshire’s requirement for new employment and housing development in a manner that would reflect our community’s preferences, needs and criteria. Shortly afterwards, the proposal for development of MoD land associated with the original 1939 Colerne Airfield accentuated the need to address the future pace and form of development for the Parish.

This Plan should be read in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework(NPPF), Green Belt policy, and the fact that our whole parish is within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Within these constraints, the Plan expresses true community aspirations for future development within the Parish until 2036.

The COLERNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN consists of two inter-related parts:-

PART A - The DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PART B - The DESIGN STATEMENT

Undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan is a task beyond the resources of a Parish Council alone. Thus, a team of interested volunteers from the public meeting joined together with five parish councillors to form a Steering Group (SG), initially of 18, to steer the process of researching and writing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Colerne.

The SG has received professional advice and support, mostly financed through the local government agency, Locality. Place Studio consultants were appointed as our advisers and they have encouraged the Steering Group to follow a ‘bottom up’ process involving different community groups in researching this Plan.

The SG is indebted to all those local volunteers who have given their time and thoughtful consideration to supporting this process, as well as to the 40% of households who took the time to complete our Housing Needs Survey and our Community Consultation Survey in 2018.

The Parish Council has provided necessary funding to cover public consultations and to maintain good publicly available records of the process. Their councillors have also given of their time to support this Plan, and are committed to using the Plan to evaluate all future development projects within the Parish.

The SG received invaluable support from Wiltshire Council via our designated Link officer and the WC Spatial Planning Team; and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) that manages MoD sites has met with us on several occasions to explore possible options in any disposal process.

We are grateful to all the above mentioned for their support.

- Photos: Unless otherwise stated, all photographs were taken by members of the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or local volunteers.
- Sketch maps were drawn by Robert Child.
- All other maps were obtained through Parish Online as permitted by the Public Sector Mapping Agreement.

We commend this Plan to you! Not only, when adopted, will it be a formal part of Wiltshire’s Local Plan and a guide for all future planning decision-making in the parish, it is also an unprecedented record of how the parish and its community are composed at this moment in time.

Jane Mellett - Chair of Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (CNPSG)

Jacqui Bradburn - Chair of Colerne Parish Council until May 2020 and a member of the CNPSG

Anthony Clarke - Chair of Colerne Parish Council, May 2020 onwards.

Section 1: Introduction and Background

i. Structure of the Plan

This Neighbourhood Plan is presented in two Parts. PART A – this document – presents the planning background, narrative and Plan Policies. PART B presents, as a separate document, the Design Statement that forms an integral part of the overall Plan.

From a development planning point of view the key outcomes of the Plan are found in PART A - Section 4 Development Strategy, and Section 5 Planning Policies; and in PART B The Design Statement.

The Plan refers throughout to the outcomes of several different Reports and research projects. All Reports and sources referred to are **highlighted in green** and are listed by title in Section 10 Appendices and Evidence, where e-links to all sources and other evidence are given.

At many points the narrative contains cross-references to the Plan Policies given in Section 5. These cross-references are given in square brackets, thus: [BEP1].

ii. Plan designation and the planning context

The Designated Area for this Neighbourhood Plan, as approved by the Local Planning Authority, Wiltshire Council, in June 2017, is identical with the civil parish of Colerne. The qualifying body is the Parish Council of Colerne.

The framework within which this Plan is developed is set by the **National Planning Policy Framework**, as revised in 2019, and, sitting beneath that, the Wiltshire Local Plan of which the chief relevant element is the **Core Strategy** adopted in January 2015. We have been mindful that a Local Plan Review is likely to be completed shortly after this Plan is made, and the Plan is designed to be capable of review and re-iteration at that point as necessary.

Additional planning contexts are: the location of the parish entirely within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB); the bordering of the central village to the west and south by the Bristol and Bath Green Belt; and the designation of the older part of the central village as a Conservation Area. While the Parish lies entirely within the Unitary Council of Wiltshire, it borders both South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset (BANES).

The Plan aims to create development principles, ideas and guidance that will apply these higher-level frameworks at a local level so that local development will express community character and aspirations.

The planning period addressed by this Neighbourhood Plan is 2020-2036, the end-year being consistent with the period of coverage of the forthcoming Wiltshire Local Plan Review. As is explained later, the Plan Period Housing Need is not addressable until later in the Plan period and this first iteration of the Plan specifically addresses development issues relating to

the Short Term Housing Need (see Section 3).

iii. How the Neighbourhood Plan was developed

Plan management

The Colerne Parish Council agreed in the autumn of 2016 to initiate a Neighbourhood Plan. The idea was introduced to the community at a public meeting held in December 2016, as an outcome of which it was agreed that a Steering Group (SG) should be established to undertake research for and development of the Plan. The volunteer membership of this Steering Group was approved by the Parish Council. Membership included four Parish Council members (one of whom being the PC Chair). The Steering Group itself is independently chaired and the majority of its membership are not Parish Councillors. Its Terms of Reference are given in **SGTOR**

The SG held its first meeting in January 2017. At that point Jane Mellett agreed to be the Group's Chair. In its early days the Steering Group comprised around 18 members. Inevitably, some of these have had to retire in the period since, but at early 2020 the SG still had a regular monthly attendance of between 8 and 10 members who had been present for the whole journey. SG members, who comprise both long-established and more recent residents, possess a wide variety of professional backgrounds, which has meant that there has usually been one or more able to take a lead on particular aspects of the project.

Key Plan initiatives

An early initiative was a series of **informal parish consultations** – roundtable discussion sessions – in spring 2017, that provided an important initial overview of community concerns and priorities. Later, a **local business survey** was conducted which received input from many local businesses; while the core information-gathering project, conducted in mid-2018, was a wide-ranging **Community Survey**, circulated to all residents of the parish, which sought peoples' opinions and preferences on a range of development questions. The survey secured an excellent response rate of 40% of households and is reported on in detail in the Evidence Report referenced above.

Through a topic sub-group the SG commissioned a **Housing and Sites Report**. This presented recommendations from three strands of work: (a) an analysis of potential local development sites (derived from the SG's own Call for Sites and **Wiltshire Council's SHELAA**), entitled the Colerne Housing **Sites Assessment**; (b) research into the local housing market, and (c) a forecasting exercise to estimate potential future local housing needs and demand.

Also prepared by a separate sub-group was the **Design Statement**, aimed at identifying the key principles of building design for future development. This had been initiated by a **Community Design Open-Day** which featured an exhibition and collaborative field-work.

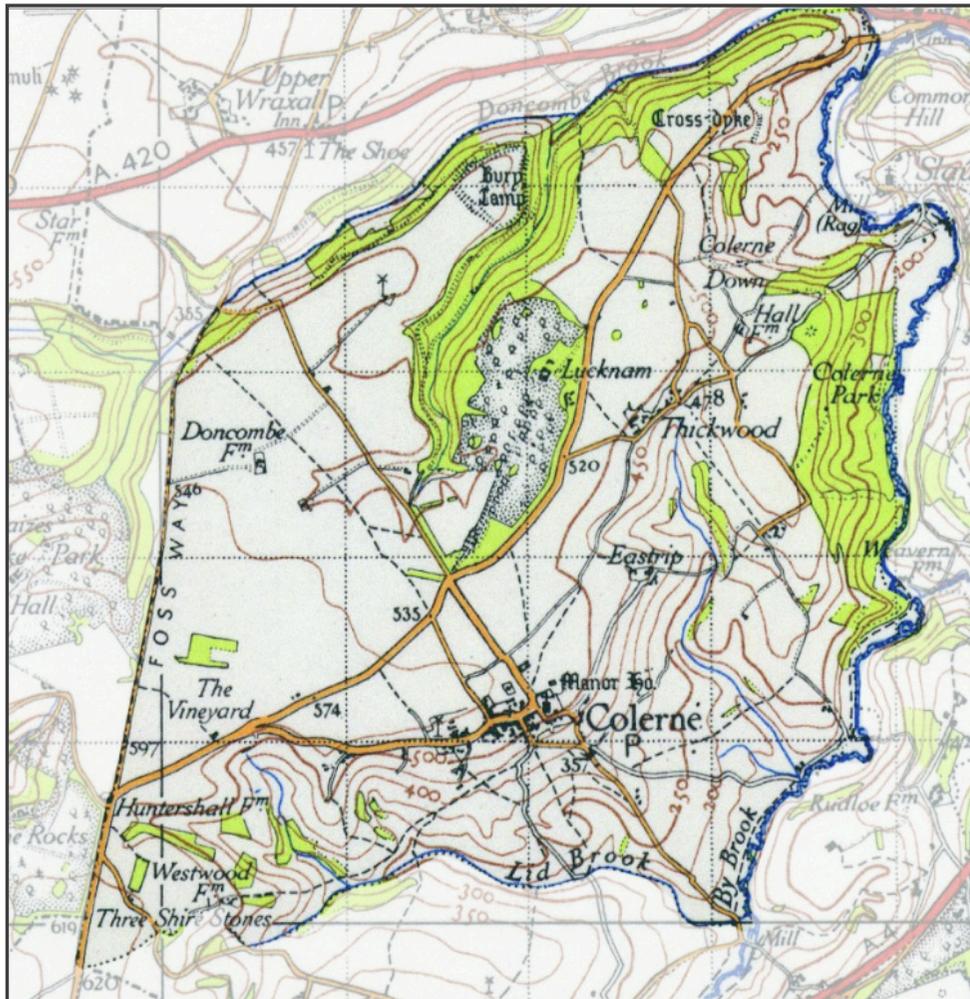
In March 2019 the SG held a **Vision Workshop** which, by reviewing findings from all the above initiatives, endeavoured to crystallize the principles of community development that were emerging, and set out a long-term vision for the community. This scoping session provided a valuable envelope for Plan recommendations and also a stimulant for the

development of a Concept Statement to be offered to the MoD and Wiltshire Council in considering the re-development of the MoD estate. This is set out in Section 7.

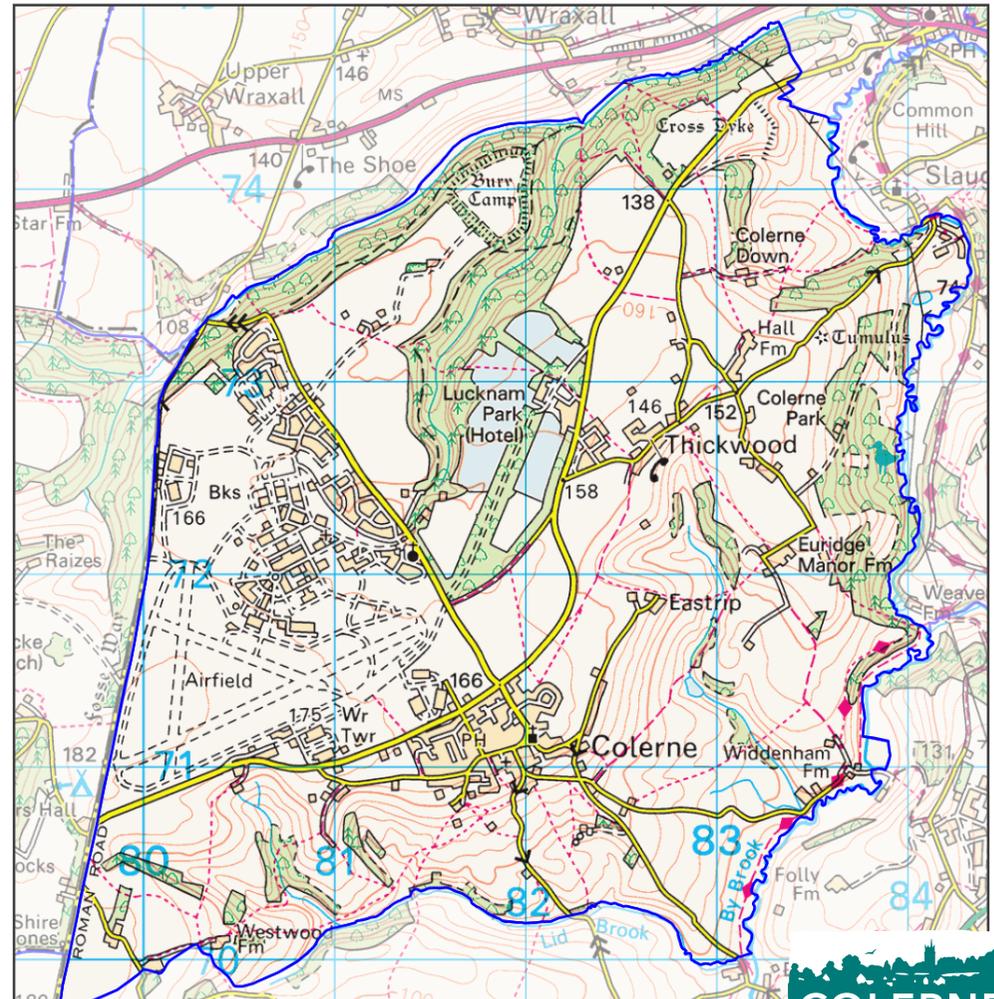
iv. A profile of the Colerne Community

The parish of Colerne lies at the southern end of the Cotswold Hills, 545 ft above sea level and within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parish overlooks the valleys of the By Brook to the south east and, further south, the Avon; and the southern uplands of the Cotswold hills to the north and west.

1920's



Today



Geographically it is a large parish, stretching from the Fosse Way in the west, to the thickly-wooded Doncombe Valley in the north, and it neighbours the small communities of Ford and Slaughterford to the east. To the south it descends steeply to the parish of Box. It comprises three main centres of population – the village itself, the Redwood, Southwood, Northwood and Pinewood estates to the north (described as North Colerne), and Lucknam and Thickwood to the east, with scattered farmhouses and dwellings between. To the west and south-west the parish includes a section of the Bristol & Bath Green Belt.

Whichever minor road, lane or path is used for access, there is a steep hill at some point. The winds blow in from the Bristol Channel, and sometimes the village disappears into the clouds. This is Colerne - 'The Village on the Hill'. It is this elevated – and even today somewhat isolated – position, with views outwards into the surrounding countryside and inwards from Rudloe and Kingsdown, which gives the parish its distinctive and valued character.

Geographical barriers have over centuries contributed to that degree of isolation and also to a sense of independence. This is reinforced by the inadequate nature of the infrastructure linking Colerne to Bath, Chippenham, Bristol and beyond. Even the key access road is only a minor road (C151), and narrows to a single lane as it approaches both the A4 to the south-west and the A420 to the north-east. The C151 descends steeply via a series of bends towards Batheaston following the edge of Bannerdown Hill, along a route that is little changed since Roman times. The direct route south to Box and the A4 is merely a single track lane with passing places. Access to the village is unsuitable for large vehicles or high volumes of traffic, and even today a fall of winter snow can make the parish inaccessible.

The parish is an ancient English settlement that has evolved over centuries. Its height made it a place of safety, borne out by finds of Stone Age tools and by the Bury Wood Camp of the Iron Age. The Romans built the Fosse Way, which borders the parish to the west, and a villa dating from 4th/5th centuries was found beneath the land where the Airfield (formerly RAF Colerne) now lies.

Colerne was a settlement in the Domesday Book, in *The Hundred of Chippenham* and the county of *Wiltshire*. It had a recorded population of 28 households in 1086, putting it in the largest 40% of settlements at that time.

From 1300 onwards, sheep farming and the wool industry centred around Bath helped the parish to prosper and by the 17th century, there were major farms and mills that generated agricultural and woollen-trade work for around 1,000 people. This declined when the wool trade moved away from the Cotswolds. From the early 1800s, stoneworking and quarrying were central to the wealth of the parish, while agriculture and paper milling maintained the activity of the three mills along the By Brook river at Slaughterford, Drewitts and Widdenham. New employment opportunities arose with Brunel's construction of the Box Tunnel in the mid-19th century, which brought labourers into the area.

By 1931, however, the village had again become a quiet, rather isolated place and home to only 844 persons. But its relative isolation (a carrier to Bath just twice a week) ensured a robust self-sufficiency, and, through to the 1980s, the main street supported a wide range of independent businesses and services, ranging from shoemaker to brewer to butcher.

The village dynamic changed markedly when in 1939 the government decided to take advantage of the hill-top Cotswolds plateau position to build one of ten major airfields for RAF fighters.

Throughout World War II, Colerne Airfield was a strategic centre for western defences and provided employment, accommodation and services for military personnel. The airfield played a major role in the War – the historical significance of which has since become widely recognised. An active RAF presence continued until relatively recently, though somewhat diminished; and still today the Azimghur Barracks, situated on the northern part of the old airfield, is home to the No. 21st Signals Regiment. In 2018, however, the MoD announced an intention to dispose of the site for development.

Housing development over the centuries has been scattered and diverse resulting in the three separate residential areas within the parish. These areas (described in detail in the Design Statement) are:

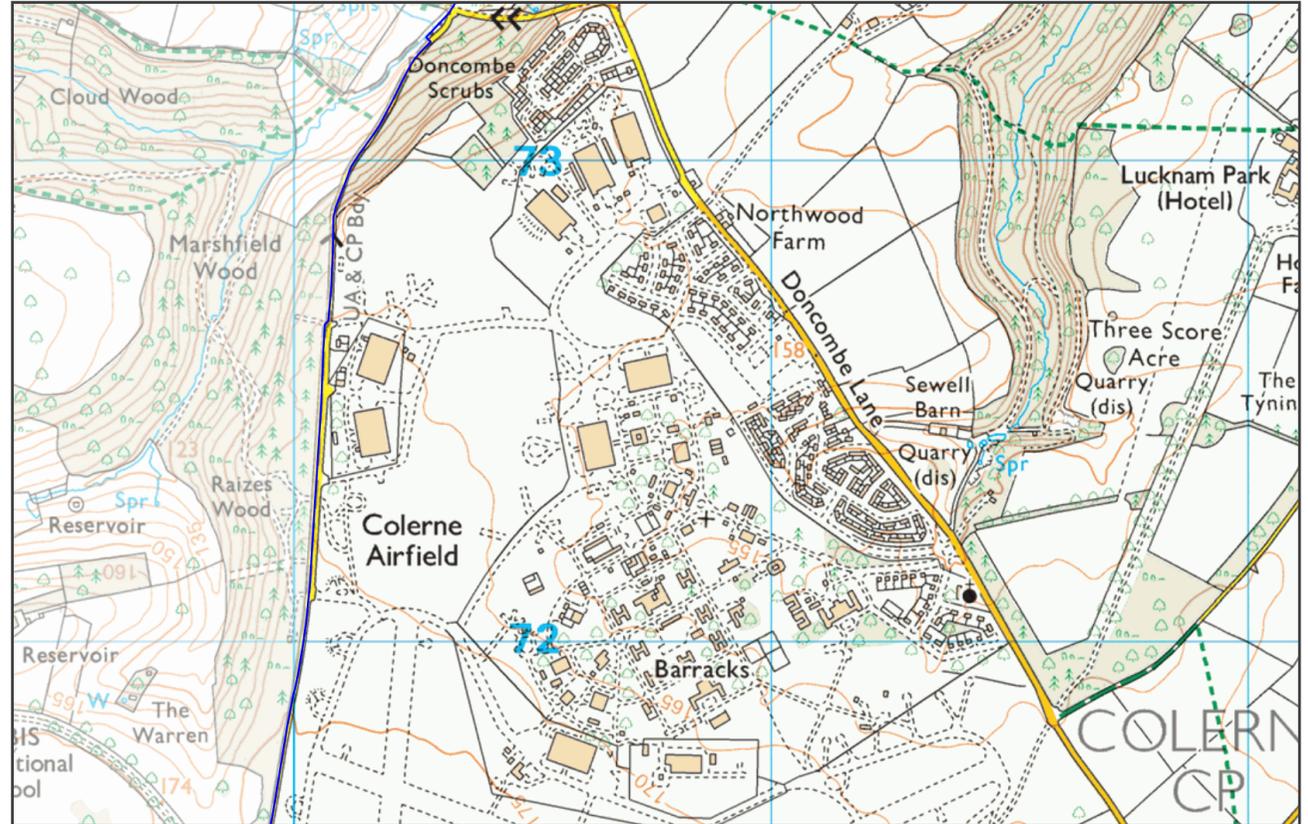
1. The village of Colerne

In 1875, the core of the old Colerne village extended as far as Old Martins Croft **A** to the north, the horse trough on Tutton Hill **B** to the south, the Fox and Hounds to the west and the Watergates **C** well to the east. The Victorian developments along Bath Road reflect the first major expansion of the village since the 18th century. The provision of council houses in Martin's Croft **D** and Hitchings Skilling **E** was begun soon after World War II and the majority had been built by the 1960s; some of these houses are now in private ownership. During the late 1940s and 1950s development took place on the outskirts of the village, along Eastrip Lane **F** and in Roundbarrow Close **G**. The additional private estates of Forrester Green **H**, the Firs **I** and Trimmells **J** were completed during the 1960s and 1980s respectively. Since then development has been focused mainly on upgrading old cottages and agricultural buildings.



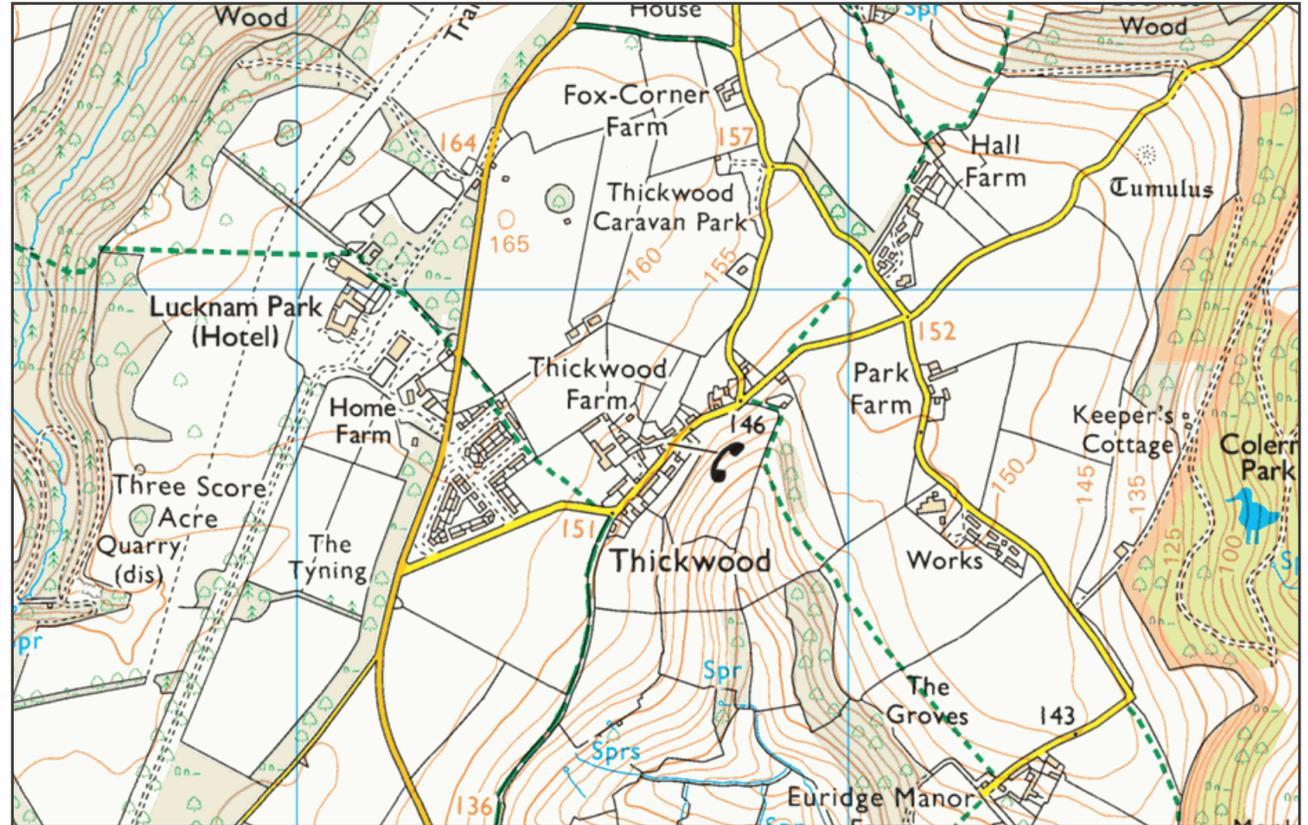
2. North Colerne

At the beginning of the 20th century there was a sizable farm and some smaller farmsteads on the plateau at Doncombe, about a mile north of the village centre, but there were few other dwellings there. However, the construction of RAF Colerne marked a time of extensive development. Most of the housing estates visible along Doncombe Lane (some 350 properties) were built to house wartime or post-war service personnel. Today, some are privately owned, others are still rented or used by military personnel. Pinewood Estate, the northernmost development in North Colerne, lies on the edge of the airfield plateau before the steep descent into the Doncombe valley.



3. Thickwood

The hamlet of Thickwood was, until after World War II, primarily agricultural, with tied cottages and sizable farms including Euridge Manor and Lucknam Park. Thickwood Estate, now privately owned, was originally built for Royal Air Force personnel in the late 1950s. In parallel, a number of individual bungalows were built along the south east side of the road in Thickwood overlooking the By Brook valley.



These three settlements lie some distance apart from each other but are inter-connected from a community point of view. Families use the Colerne village facilities extensively – the school, social clubs, church and shops - and Colerne villagers visit North Colerne and Thickwood for leisure facilities and employment. There is an infrequent interconnecting bus service, but there are connecting pathways of varying quality, well-used at peak-times. But much interconnection is by car and this can cause parking issues in the village. Travel outside the parish is usually by car as bus services are very limited.

Colerne is not an area that easily attracts new business, mainly because of access and transportation issues and its traditional role as a predominantly agricultural community. The main employer remains Azimghur Barracks. Of the few larger businesses, most have developed for historical reasons in existing buildings (eg Lucknam Park Hotel, and Jetway

and the former Carpenter Oak in ex MoD buildings) or because they serve the local community. The minor businesses, of which there are several, are primarily home-based.

The parish is well served by community facilities such as the Primary School, two GP Surgeries, a few small shops, four pubs or social clubs, two sports fields and play-parks and a Village Hall. These, together with many groups supporting recreational and social activities, help to keep the community alive, welcoming and vibrant.

Centred on a true English village in spirit, character and history, the parish of Colerne is now a large community of about 3,000 and still a working village – not just residential, not just retirees, not a ‘second-home ghetto’, but enlivened by working folk, young families and their activities.



Section 2: Long-Term Vision and Objectives

i. Our Vision

The community regards a Neighbourhood Plan as providing an opportunity to secure development that will be welcomed as a fitting contributing to the unique character and environment of this Cotswolds hilltop community and its sense of place, and ensuring the sustainability of a lively and demographically-balanced rural community. Our Vision is that by the end of its term the Neighbourhood Plan will have ensured that:

- i. The three residential areas of the parish have maintained their distinctiveness whilst developing organically and in close association to meet local housing, employment and community services needs .
- ii. Development has enhanced and developed community identity and cohesion and not diluted them.
- iii. The design of new developments, contributed to by the community, has helped to reinforce and enhance the distinctive character of the parish, its settlements and buildings.
- iv. The corridor of existing greenfield and light industry to the north of the village has retained current usages dedicated to agriculture, recreation and employment.
- v. Ribbon development between the three residential areas has been prevented, and their surrounding agricultural landscape has been maintained.
- vi. Future development, including the MoD site (the former “RAF Colerne”), has been compatible with infrastructure capacities, and given emphasis to autonomous and regenerative building.
- vii. Building development and restoration has enhanced the rural nature of the parish, and also responded to the economic and environmental challenges of climate change.
- viii. Transport infrastructure has been enhanced to encourage better interconnectedness and low-carbon impact within and without the parish.
- ix. To the extent feasible development plans will have incorporated resilience to the overarching social challenges of the coming decades – such as climate change and possible new threats to public health.

ii. Plan Objectives

The following Objectives express the Vision at a practical level and provide the basis of the Policies set out in Section 5. The Objectives are evidence-based and reflect the revealed needs and aspirations of the community as ascertained via public meetings, the community survey and other project work. They are:

1. To ensure that new development is sympathetic with the rural landscape within the parish and the Cotswolds AONB and its agricultural character; and with the characters of its varied built environments [NEP1-4 and Design Statement];
2. To ensure that housing development maintains the community’s demographic and economic balance, encourages community coherence, fosters integrated community growth, and retains proportionality to the village and its hinterland [BEP3,5];
3. To encourage the provision of housing aimed at identified local needs, and on a small scale that does not overwhelm the existing settlements [BEP3 i, iv];
4. To encourage existing and new low-impact businesses and services, support Wiltshire’s policy that new incoming population can occupy local jobs, and in the interest of community-building minimise out-commuting to remote employment locations [EBP1,2 and BEP8];
5. To strive for a low carbon footprint and carbon offsetting in all future development by the adoption of innovative and creative ideas about sustainability, construction, landscaping and service-provision [SEP1, BEP4];
6. Through its Design Statement, to elaborate and make locally relevant the general design requirements of the Wiltshire Local Plan [Design Statement, PART B of this Neighbourhood Plan];
7. To provide a framework by which development can be conditioned so as to contribute to supporting services and infrastructure (including existing community facilities) [CWBP1-4 and CP1];
8. To preserve identified significant views out of the settlement that constitute an important community benefit, as well as ensuring the protection of “views in” [NEP4];
9. Though there may be few Neighbourhood Plan policies that can specifically bring this about, to emphasise the need for improvement of transport links – roads, bus services, cycleways, footways [CP1,2] and to support their provision in a way that encourages emerging technologies to facilitate inter connectivity across the Parish.

Section 3: Community Needs and Preferences

This Neighbourhood Plan is based on a series of research and survey projects. Several of these dealt with housing needs and community housing preferences set against a profile of the community's current stock. This research is set out in the **Housing & Sites Report**, of which the key outcomes are as follows. How, and how far, these preferences can be met is explored in Section 4 Development Strategy.

(i) Stock and economic infrastructure

Average house prices in the parish of Colerne are at the lower end of the range compared with other adjacent local settlements, but are slightly high compared with Wiltshire and England averages. The range of prices across the parish is wide, meaning lower cost housing is occasionally, although not frequently, available. Such properties are numerous enough to yield an average house-price below other local communities and offer some availability within the reach of some first-time buyers, but there are few financially-assisted homes in the current stock.

There is limited existing and potential employment in the parish. This is unlikely to change quickly because of poor transport links and road connections. This has two consequences for housing policy. Therefore additional housing supply, whether for private market or significant social housing, will need to be calibrated against the intensified out-commuting that will follow, which is against the Local Plan and constrained by the limitations of road access and public transport.

(ii) Future housing requirements

Research undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Housing & Sites Group based on national and regional statistics examined:

The current (2015) Wiltshire Local Plan, which requires no housing growth for Colerne. This is currently under review but no targets for additional housing have yet been set.

Household growth: were national trends in the number of households to be mirrored in Colerne, our estimates suggest that 114 more households would require accommodation in Colerne in 2036 compared to 2018.

And on the same basis, estimates based upon population forecasts suggest that 123 more dwellings would be required in Colerne in 2036 compared to 2018.

Projection from dwelling completion rates was not regarded as an accurate method of predicting future requirements because so little land has recently been available.

An additional reference source was the **Housing Needs Survey (HNS)** conducted by Wiltshire Council in April 2018. This concluded that there was "a low level of sustained need for housing in the parish" and a short current waiting list. It indicated that a minimum of ten affordable dwellings, either as subsidised rented housing or shared ownership/discounted market homes, would be needed in the parish in the following three years. This Plan adopts this number and refers to it as the community's **Short-Term Housing Need**.

Information provided by Wiltshire Council in 2020 supplements the HNS data with details from the Wiltshire Housing Register and the Help to Buy South Register. Although there may be some overlap in the figures, the overall picture in the 2020 report is broadly consistent with the 2018 survey.

Overall, the need identified in the HNS is for a range of accommodation, from small (1 bedroom) to larger (3 bedroom). The HNS study suggested that, of those indicating a need for different accommodation, most were impeded by lack of availability rather than by a need for financial assistance. The findings of the Colerne **Community Survey** of June 2018 are largely consistent with those of the HNS.

Based on this research and sources a first estimate of additional housing requirement for the Plan period was constructed, yielding an approximation of an additional 120 dwellings. However, on the advice of Locality that national figures are unlikely to be directly applicable to small rural communities, some judgemental adjustments were made to allow for the specific character of the Colerne community. These reflected, and were weighted for, the village's location, its population growth, and the relative mobility of both incomers and "returners".

As a result a recommendation was put to, and accepted by, the Steering Group that a planning target of an additional 80 new dwellings for the Plan period was reasonable and supportable. This is inclusive of the Short-Term Housing Need, and is referred to as the Plan Period Housing Need.

(iii) Community preferences - dwellings, sites and housing trajectory

A mix of types and size of new housing was preferred in the Community Survey. This should include smaller properties to include starter homes, and smaller homes designed for retirees or veterans, affordable housing for people making a start on the housing ladder, as well as larger properties for families moving up the housing ladder and those working from home. While not precluded, respondents saw limited need for houses of 4 bedrooms or more. Also recognised was the place for alternative delivery models – Community Led Housing or Housing Association or shared ownership – to deliver affordable housing.

The scope for housing development by major developers was recognised but the survey suggested this should demonstrate intent to meet local needs and preferences and not simply represent speculative development of general market housing promoted to a non-indigenous market.

For new-builds, Survey respondents were in favour of building plots large enough to accommodate gardens and preclude on-street and pavement parking.

The Survey showed a strong preference for small scale development sites of a few houses taking place in a range of different locations. Larger scale single site developments and estates of more than 25 houses were unpopular. The large-scale “standard” family housing estates built for out-commuting, of the type developed frequently in Wiltshire over the last decade, would receive little support.

Housing development should take place incrementally over time, and to meet the Plan Period Housing Need this preference would imply a housing trajectory of around 4-5 dwellings per year over the 18 year period of the Plan.

There was strong support for preservation of the character and natural environment of the parish, with the majority of respondents to the Survey (92%) indicating that retaining key landscape views should be protected even at the expense of new housing or economic development. Development of brownfield sites over greenfield was fully supported.



Section 4: Development Strategy

i. Our approach to development

The development thinking that drives this plan and its Policies is centred on five over-arching ideas.

(a) Preserving village identity - a landscape rationale

The central area of the original village is described in Section 1 iv. With some small modern housing estate additions around the perimeter, it still preserves its essential Cotswolds Village style and atmosphere. It is a priority of the community that, irrespective of development that may occur elsewhere in the parish, this identity of place should be protected.

This objective could be jeopardised by the apparent availability of developable greenfield land north of the C151 and south of the airfield. The southern edge of this area defines the current settlement boundary. There are cogent reasons for avoiding change of use of this ribbon of (largely) greenfield and preserving its current uses – agriculture, sports or light industrial.

These reasons include, first, that development would represent a possible conflict with national policy. The NPPF policy [paras 117, 137(a), NPPF 2019], that brownfield development should be given as much priority as possible, has already been noted. Short to medium term development of this area north of the C151 would frustrate this because in the medium to longer term there will be a great deal of developable brownfield land available when the Azimghur Barracks site within the MoD estate becomes available.



“Greenfield” and “Brownfield” in the Parish

It must be noted also that this land (as with the entire parish) lies entirely within the Cotswolds AONB, and this Plan fully supports the AONB criteria for development and place-making. But the overriding local reason for avoiding development north of the C151 is to preserve the landscape setting of Colerne village.

Colerne is known as the ‘village on the hill’ in part because of the way it runs along the very top of the hill and then straggles down into the valley to the south. But this is also reinforced by the contrast at the clear northern limits of development, now along the C151, where the landscape opens into the relatively flat plateau chosen by the RAF for the airfield. Views to the north are occasional because of heavy tree and shrub cover, but the plateau is clearly visible, framed by the hangars further north of the road now regarded by the AONB as an important part of the heritage of the landscape.

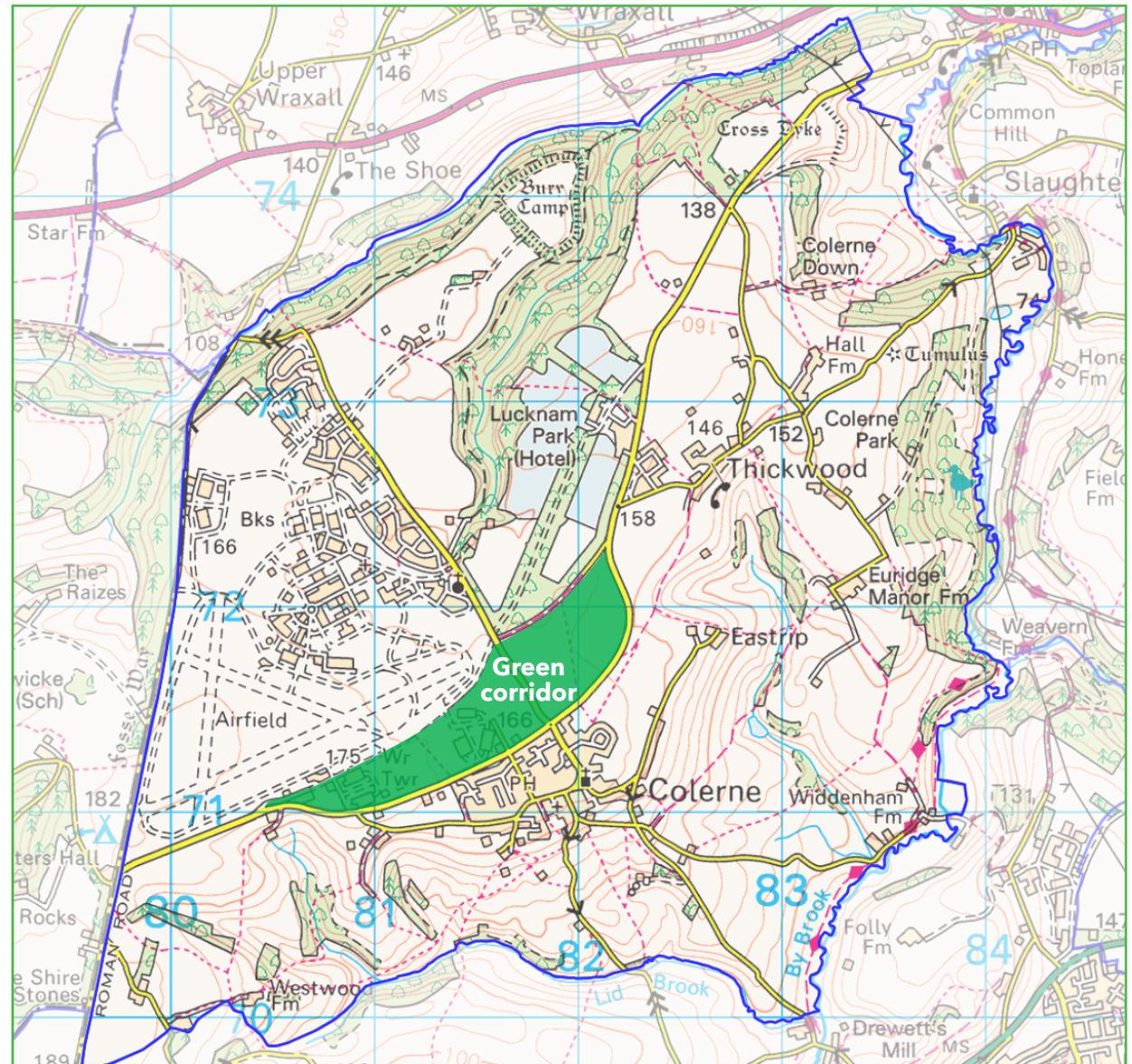
There are further important considerations which would advise against development north of the C151, notably:

- (a) The C151 is a commuter route from Chippenham to Bath and carries a good deal of fast-moving traffic at certain times of day. Linking across this would have serious safety implications.
- (b) Any residential development on the fields north of the road would be separated from the main village both physically and psychologically.
- (c) Even the development of a single site would deliver far more houses than needed or likely to be needed (the ‘three hangars’ site was once subject of an application for 140 houses); and that would prejudice the future use of what would otherwise be priority brownfield land on the released MoD site.

- (d) The Satellite Ground Station located in the southern part of the MoD site, which will remain, limits development feasibility of housing within certain distances due to safeguarding requirements.
- (e) **The Community Survey** notes a community preference for continued use of the airfield for light general aviation if reversion to agriculture is not possible. This would necessitate retention of airfield safeguarding zones, as well as flight safety and noise footprint constraints, that would make housing development on large parts of this area inappropriate.
- (f) There is a risk of setting a precedent if any one site were to be developed, leading to the knock-on “domino” development of adjacent sites.

With reference to Policies EBP1 & EBP2, it is relevant to note that in this area north of the C151 there are to be found some of the few business sites in the Parish. Former MoD hangars on two sites provide covered work-spaces and employment opportunities, and their loss would have a significant impact on existing employment and on the ability to encourage new employment.

In summary, allowing for some established employment development linked to ex-MoD structures, this stretch of land between the C151 and the airfield creates a highly significant **green corridor** and boundary of the built form of Colerne Village. It is essential that this corridor remains.



(b) Character and design

The Wiltshire Core Strategy provides general design principles, in particular in relation to landscape and the historic environment, but as it applies county-wide it does not provide the detail necessary for the enhancement of local distinctiveness as required by the National Planning Policy Framework in Sections 13 (Green Belt) and 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment), particularly policy 172 regarding AONBs.

The purpose of the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan Design Statement (DS) – a major component of the Steering Group work programme – is **to provide design principles at a local level of detail that will “work” within the parish environment to protect and ensure respect for its architectural and historic character while encouraging modern standards, sustainability and innovation.**

The DS follows an established format as used by other communities within the UK, and is presented as **PART B** of this Neighbourhood Plan. It is an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan in guiding the preparation and assessment of planning and development proposals, as required by the Built Environment Policies (BEP) of the Neighbourhood Plan. It does not propose where development should happen but it aims to condition the design of development. Its policies and guidance must be taken into account by designers and developers in preparing planning applications; by planning authorities in their decision-making; and by parish residents, businesses and landowners who may wish to improve home, garden or business premises. To this end, applicants will be required to demonstrate how their applications relate to the Design Statement.

Delivery of high-quality design cannot be ensured by a DS alone, but requires discussion between those proposing development and the community concerned. This needs to occur at a sufficiently early stage to ensure a shared understanding of design principles in the particular context. To that end, potential applicants are advised to refer to the Pre-Application Protocol that is the subject of Policy CPA1. Because the focus of the Design Statement is local distinctiveness based on community views, following the Protocol is a key way for applications to demonstrate required compliance with design guidelines.

It would not be possible to devise a “one size fits all” design policy for the range of settlements found in the parish, from 18th and 19th-century buildings, to small private estates from the 1940’s to the 1980’s, to housing developed for military personnel in the 1940’s-1950’s. The DS therefore identifies 15 “character areas” within the parish, and provides development design principles for each of them.



The CDS sets out some general principles of design in its Section 6 Overall Guidance, which, in accordance with NPPF Policy 172, draws extensively on the Cotswolds AONB **Landscape and Strategy Guidelines**. These general principles address the following main themes.

- (a) maintenance of openness and views;
- (b) configuration of new development with contours and pre-existing roof and tree lines;
- (c) respect for pre-existing build character, materials, and site and boundary layouts;
- (d) avoidance of standardised “imported” development styles, layouts and streetscapes;
- (e) promotion of local stone and building styles, and respect for the local vernacular;
- (f) minimisation of light pollution and protection of local ‘dark skies’;
- (g) where possible protection, enhancement and re-use of existing stone farm buildings and structures in preference to new build;
- (h) preservation of surface archaeological and historic features, with which adjacent development should harmonise;
- (i) protection of and addition and links to the Public Rights of Way network;

- (j) a preference for design that incorporates sustainable construction and supply principles, for example in energy supply and conservation (‘passivhaus’), waste management, autonomous housing design, etc.

While this may suggest a conservative approach to design, the CDS, which is an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan, makes clear that the Plan will support proposals that are of their time from a design and architectural point of view as long as they still respect the general CDS standards and those of the relevant Character Area. This is of particular importance for Colerne village because much of it is in a Conservation Area for which there is no Assessment/Appraisal or Management Plan. Therefore the Design Statement goes into more detail than usual for this area. There are also numerous listed buildings in the parish, many within the village, as well as large numbers of monuments and archaeological features.



(c) The three settlements

The parish of Colerne includes three discrete residential areas, as introduced in Section 1iv. Only one of these – the central village, with approximately 1,600 population – is currently defined as a “Settlement” in planning terms. The other two are included in the planning category of “Open Countryside”, which is not at all an accurate description of their appearance or size. Thickwood and North Colerne are in themselves sizeable, characterful residential areas with their own profile; and all three settlements are interconnected by shared services and social links.

This Plan aims to provide a basis for development in each of the three in a way that is appropriate to each, for they are not identical. **The Design Statement (PART B)** describes the individual characters of these three areas and provides for this diversity, as, in particular, does the proposal in Section 4id below for specific growth within the North Colerne area with the objective that it may qualify in due course as a Settlement in planning terms.

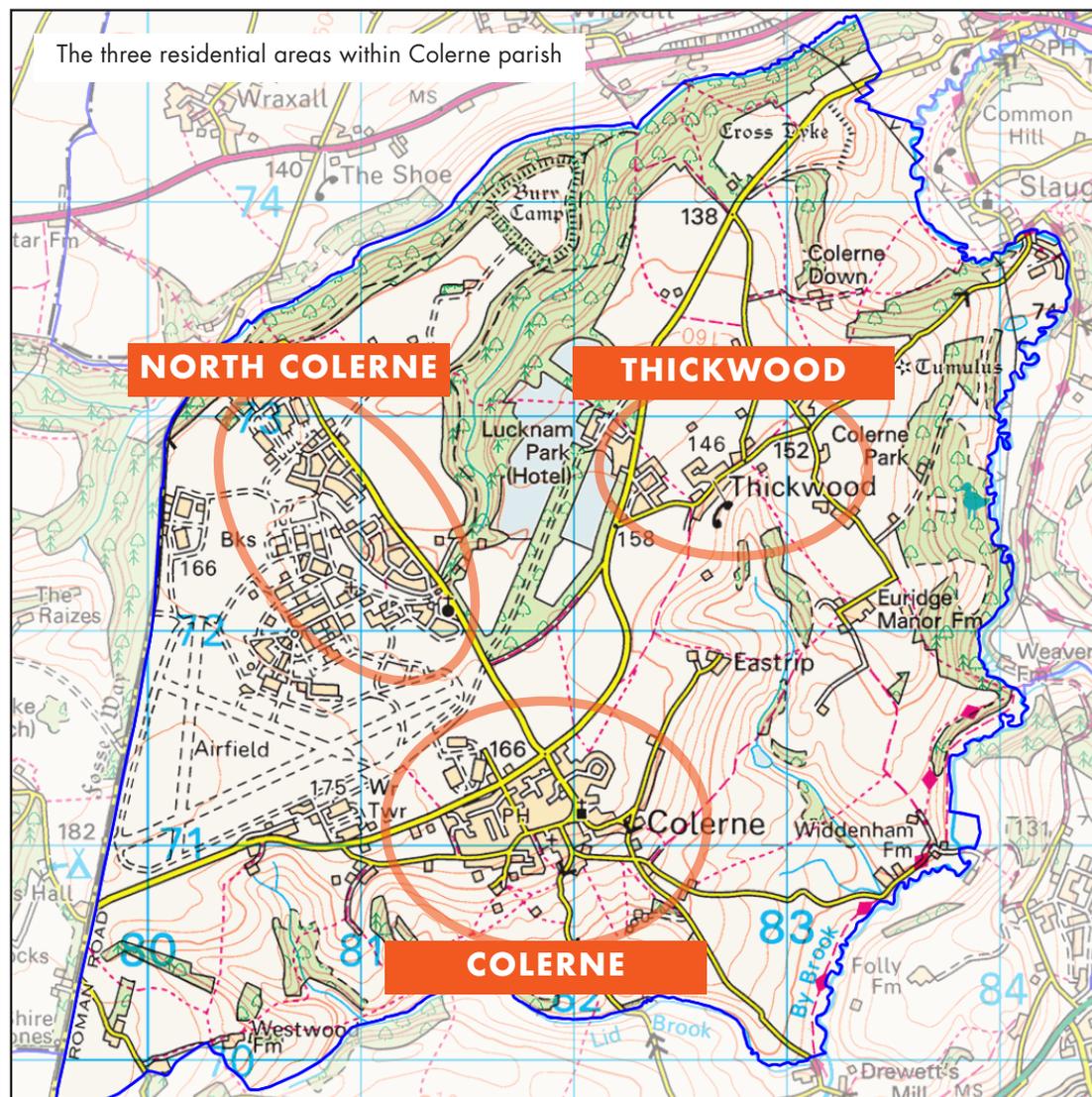
The three residential areas within Colerne parish

The economic and social interlinkages merit further description here. Each of the three residential areas incorporates some facilities used by the whole parish, which creates an active social and economic network between the areas.

Thickwood residents (who number approximately 400) routinely go to Colerne village for its range of facilities– doctors, school/playgroup, shops/pubs etc., while villagers go to Thickwood for employment (four major employers — Lucknam Park, Calderhouse School, Jetway, Euridge Manor) and for recreation (Lucknam Park facilities; dog walking/riding, running, cycling).

The larger residential area of North Colerne consists of four named areas, Redwood, Southwood, Northwood, and Pinewood, and has a population of approximately 1,100. It is dominated by its current and historical links to the MoD site, to which it is entirely adjacent. The MoD has historically been a major local employer, and remains so to a lesser extent today. North Colerne residents, including service families, go to Colerne village to access the same facilities as Thickwood residents, while villagers travel to North Colerne for swimming/badminton clubs (in the military facility but civilian run); employment; pop-up youth facilities (civilian run and open to all).

Both of these sister communities have pedestrian/cycle pathways of variable quality to the central village, and have some public transport (bus) services which, however, are very infrequent and irregular. The Plan intends that, where feasible, larger developments (only conceivable in North Colerne) should facilitate transport infrastructure improvements. Beyond that, it emphasises the shorter-term opportunity for new cycleways and pathways to better connect the three settlements.



(d) A community identity for North Colerne

The **Vision workshop** of March 2019 considered what criteria and principles might be offered for future re-development of the MoD site. That session and other initiatives informed the SG's preparation of a Concept Statement which is intended as a community contribution to the masterplanning of the MoD site and is given in Section 7 below.

There are limitations and opportunities surrounding this site – e.g. infrastructure, road access (see a **December 2019 opinion from Wiltshire Highway Control**); and the required continuation of the Satellite Ground Station which effectively precludes development of the airfield to the south, and means that the only value-adding future for the airfield itself may well be retention for light aircraft flying along with a museum and visitor centre to show its important wartime heritage.

These points, and the development opportunities that nevertheless remain, are more widely explored in the Concept Statement. But the Vision workshop also noted that development of the MoD site could offer an opportunity to ease a long-standing community problem, namely the physical and social separations within residential North Colerne, and also to improve the connectivity between itself and Colerne village.

North Colerne consists of some 400 dwellings. Civilian families living there can access on an informal basis some facilities within the the MoD establishment – hairdressers; general stores; infant play facilities/family centre; sports facilities and childrens' playground. Being within the MoD establishment these facilities will be withdrawn when Azimghur Barracks closes. But they could be replicated within a strategic redevelopment of North Colerne designed to include them and other facilities such as allotments and local produce outlets.

The Community Survey showed support for specific development that could integrate the existing sub-communities of North Colerne. Put simply, infill of the vacant areas that currently exist between Pinewood, Northwood, Southwood and Redwood, could create an integrated North Colerne community. The objective should be, in due course, to create an identifiable integrated Settlement for a community that would be big enough to justify it.

The key to this idea would be the availability and redevelopment of the currently derelict open land, sometimes referred to as the 'Drill Ground'. While this cannot yet be regarded as an allocated site, our support in principle for its development is described in Section 6.

New and improved cycleways and footpaths around and through what is currently the MoD site could connect the elements both within the new Settlement and to Colerne village and beyond, with benefit to parents with buggies, school connections for young children, disability transport, and walkers and cyclists.



(e) Climate emergency and the environment

In the three year process of preparing this Plan, the expectations and standards required to mitigate the impact of climate change have moved, and are still moving, fast. This Plan has tried to balance both the community aim to respect the outstanding natural environment of this parish and expected more extreme weather patterns. Biodiversity, the protection of green spaces and development of nature corridors, are not a luxury for the future. They are an essential and fundamental building block to mitigate the impact of climate change [NEP 2,3].

The Plan contends that high standards of building process and a carbon-neutral living environment have to be established for all new building locally, and to act as examples of good practice that can encourage and support older properties to be retrofitted to reduce fuel usage and costs, and improve the quality of life for all [BEP6].

Car use is an important climate emergency consideration. Sixty percent of all working age residents in this parish commute out of the area to work by car. Recognising that any built development will lead to increased car usage, this Plan aims to support measures that promote a reduction in car commuting, and the creation of improved infrastructure for walking and cycling and disabled access. A more distant goal (see Section 8 Projects) is the establishment of a local carbon-neutral community transport scheme that is flexible and frequent enough to be used by all sections of our local community [CP1].

Energy production has to be addressed so as to meet existing needs and also mitigate the impacts of future developments of housing or employment facilities. The community has strongly supported the creation of a “community energy scheme”, discussed further in SEP1-3.

It is essential that future developments include, appropriate to the site, the highest possible quality and quantity of ‘green’ features – trees, shrubs, grassland, hedgerows, and verges, with a presumption not just in favour of preservation of existing such features but also an overall ‘net gain’ (as proposed in the Environment Bill of 2019).

The Plan has been written with the assumption that there will be no major improvements to highways in the Parish, and that all planning has to demonstrate how developments will provide facilities that address the limitations of our local landscape and infrastructure.

The particular Policies in the Plan that seek to endorse climate change mitigation are:

Sustainable design and construction [BEP6]; Permeable surfacing [BEP9]; Home working [BEP10]; Local Green Spaces [NEP3]; Walking and Cycling [CP2]; Renewable energy [SEP1]; Electrical Car charging Points [SEP2]; Allotments Provision [CWBP3].

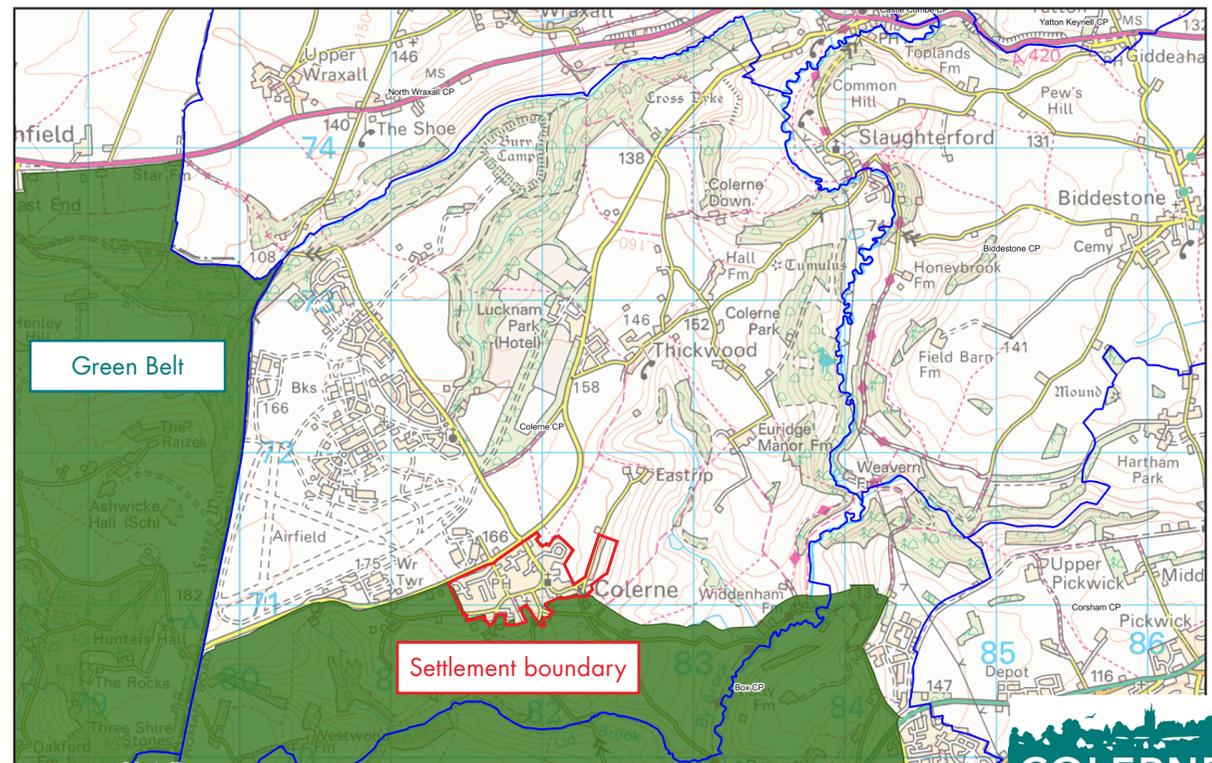
ii. Challenges and opportunities

The research reported in Section 3 above shows that the community conditionally supports development, the main parameters being:

- a limited number of small-scale, incremental new-builds;
- employment-led development, consistent with the constraints of geographical access;
- new housing that aims to address local needs,
- development that protects its village and parish character.

The Neighbourhood Plan aims to balance these preferences and requirements with a number of local constraints and planning challenges.

The **first major constraint** facing a conventional development plan results from land classification. The current **Settlement Boundary** sits closely around the main village, and there is no significant land within it available for development. The community preference for small scale development of three or four houses to take place in a range of different locations is unlikely to be practical as there are currently few small “pockets” for development. The village is bordered at the west and southwest by the Bristol and Bath **Green Belt**, the regulation of which would prevent significant development even where it may seem to offer a



iii. Development sites

Even though the reviewed Local Plan and detailed MoD disposal intentions must be awaited before it is possible to meet Plan Period Housing Needs, proposals can be made to deliver the identified Short-Term Housing Need. These are summarised here, and Section 4iv notes some additional drivers of development that could offer short- to medium-term opportunities.

Potential areas for development were examined by analysing sites from three sources: Wiltshire Council SHELAA, the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites, and the work of the SG's Housing & Sites Group. Full details are given in **Colerne Housing Sites Assessment** adopted by the CNPSG on 15 March 2018 and revised in September 2019 and January 2020 and the **Housing and Sites Report**.

Seven sites were identified for detailed consideration for their development potential. As a result of this evaluation, two sites are allocated as being suitable, labelled the Thickwood Field and the Constitutional Club. These are detailed in Section 5 Policy BEP4. Further details of the evaluation of some non-allocated but interesting sites are given in Section 6.

iv. Other development drivers

(a) Changes to rural exception site regulation

It is understood that some or all of the following ideas may be considered in the Local Plan Review as revisions to the planning treatment of rural exception sites (**Wiltshire Council Rural Housing Workshop, Calne, October 1 2018**):

- Allowance for greater proportion of affordable housing on rural exception sites;
- More precise, and additional, definitions of “affordability”;
- Allowance for starter homes to be included, and homes for retirees and downsizers;
- More flexibility on criteria of access to employment and services;
- Acceptability of Community Led Housing within rural exception sites.

Were such ideas included in the Local Plan Review, there would be greater short-term options to meet identified needs. This may require a reiteration of this Plan following completion of the Local Plan Review. However, limits noted earlier – employment limitations and car commuting – could restrict the volume of rural exception housing that would qualify as sustainable.

(b) The contribution of Community-Led Housing

A housing model which might be able to bypass some of the identified short-term development constraints is Community-Led Housing provided on a small scale on rural exception sites.

Because such a large proportion of this parish is classified as rural/open country, Community Led Housing schemes could be considered, at a proportionate scale, for small pockets of land not approvable for commercial development, to pursue the provision of local housing needs via Rural Exception planning policies.



Section 5: Planning Policies

Introduction

The planning policies included in this Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help determine planning applications within the Colerne Parish Neighbourhood Area. Each planning policy has a unique reference number which can be quoted when comments are made on planning applications, and referred to by planning officers. The 28 individual policies are set out below, as indexed on p2.

Theme A. Built environment policies

As described in Section 1 iv and Section 4 i, the inhabitants of Colerne parish live in three main residential areas, each displaying a distinctive heritage and character. All these residential communities are set within the environment of a pastoral landscape designated as AONB and in part as Green Belt.

All new developments should enhance their immediate environments and public areas as places worth living in, capitalizing on the local community's assets, character, and potential in order to promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. Thus, 'placemaking' will be a constant theme when considering the impact of any development. The BEP Policies aim to deliver these outcomes.

Policy BEP1: Character and design

Context

With the publication early in 2020 of '**Living with Beauty**' (the report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission), and commitments about locally derived design characterisation in the Conservative Party manifesto of late 2019, locally distinctive design has become a more significant aspect of national planning policy. The following national publications are therefore directly relevant:

- **The National Design Guide**
- **Building for Life 12**
- **The Forthcoming National Model Design Code**

Much of what is in these documents had already been picked up by the commitment of the Steering Group to produce a thorough, locally-based and community-led **Design Statement (PART B of this Plan)** and to also introduce the Pre-Application Policy (CPA1) as a key way to ensure the delivery of locally distinctive design.

In addition, Section 17 of the **Cotswolds AONB Position Statement on 'Housing and Development'** highlights key design criteria for developments within the AONB.

Guiding Evidence

Responses to the Community Survey generated the following information:

- 87% of respondents (Q.3) supported the preservation of the existing character of the parish
- 69% strongly agreed, plus 23% agreed (Q.19) that key landscape views should be protected even at the expense of housing or economic development.
- 87% thought it extremely important (Q.18) that the natural environment (especially valued local green spaces) should be protected.

The Design Statement (PART B of this Neighbourhood Plan) was also produced with its own stages of community involvement (as explained in the Statement).

Policy BEP1: Character and design

Development proposals will be supported where their designs are in compliance with the relevant guidance in the Design Statement and show a congruence with or enhancement of their surroundings in terms of built form, height, materials, historic character and boundary treatments.

Applicants are required to demonstrate compliance with the Design Statement by submitting a Design Compliance Statement with any planning application.

Policy BEP2: Heritage

Context

The history of the parish of Colerne is summarised in Section 1.iv. In the present context we can note additionally that the Church of St John the Baptist is Grade I listed, as are a number of the graves and the Celtic cross that marks the original early Christian settlement prior to the Norman church. The farmhouse Daubeney's (Grade II* listed) is situated at the east end of High Street and is a surviving example of a 'long house'.

The Lucknam Park estate remains largely intact, with its Palladian building and unique half-mile avenue of mature trees. The farms and workers' cottages associated with the estate and, before that, the Norman fiefdom of Castle

Combe, remain in the hamlet of Thickwood. Euridge Manor was owned by Malmesbury Abbey until confiscated by Henry VIII on the dissolution of the monasteries. Elizabeth I later granted the house and estates to Sir Walter Raleigh. The MoD site includes features of longer-term heritage value including a number relating to its World War II historical significance.

Guiding evidence

The **Historic Evidence Report** includes details from the Historic Environment Record of monuments, listed buildings, events, parks and gardens and historic landscapes.

Over the past 40 years, the local History Society has collected evidence that confirms the depth of history evident within the parish, published in two volumes (1990, 1995) under the title The Village on the Hill.

Policy BEP2: Heritage

- a. Planning applications for the demolition or development of, or substantial alterations to, the buildings or structures listed in the **Historic Environment Record**, or those identified in the Design Statement, will be expected to show that priority has been given to the retention of distinctive and important features.
- b. Applications must also demonstrate that there are no negative impacts on the setting and surrounds of any feature(s), or indicate measures to mitigate any such impacts.
- c. Where appropriate, Heritage Impact Assessments will be required to accompany applications.



Policy BEP3: Housing policy

Context

There is a wide range of interlinked criteria and standards of judgment relating to housing development. Therefore, these Housing Policies are combined into one set because they have a common purpose, which is to provide a practical framework for evaluating the fitness of development applications in the context of the local environment with which this Plan is concerned.

The policies should be read against the background of the Plan Development Strategy, Section 4, the key outcomes of the **Housing and Sites Report** and the contexts of the **NPPF** and **Wiltshire Core Strategy**.

Pursuant to eventual availability for development of large brownfield sites, 'mixed-purpose development' will be favoured. [See also Concept Statement, Section 7]

Guiding Evidence

Responses to the Community Survey generated the following data:

- Rate of development: 47% (Q. 1) felt that development should take place in a "step-by-step way".
- Scale of development: 59% (Q.6) favoured small-scale developments taking place in a range of different locations; 45% supported infill; 6% supported larger scale developments (more than 25 houses).
- Phasing of development: 58% (Q. 7) favoured the gradual addition of a few houses per year; 37% favoured midsized developments; 5% supported large scale single-site projects.
- Sorts and size of houses: 50% (Q. 5) felt that there needs to be a balance of all sizes of dwelling. Affordable Housing provision was supported by nearly all (92%) of respondents (Q. 2).

Policy BEP3: Housing policy

- i. Development must demonstrate how it meets residents' revealed preferences for small scale developments capable of offering a mix of different dwelling type.
- ii. The mix of housing stock within any development must demonstrate how it responds to local needs across a broad range, including provision for an ageing population (disability and 'downsizers'); units for younger people and first-time buyers; financially-assisted homes; and properties designed to accommodate home-working and those moving up the property ladder.
- iii. When Local Plan policy requires affordable housing, developers should offer affordability through one of the following routes:
 - social housing (Local Authority rental);
 - Housing Association;
 - shared equity;
 - a Community Land Trust.
- iv. The design and character of development must demonstrably satisfy the principles of the Design Statement.
- v. In line with the NPPF, where there is developable brownfield land, or a reasonable prospect thereof in the Plan timeframe, brownfield development will be supportable and greenfield development opposed.

Policy BEP4: Housing allocations

Context of the two allocated sites

1. Thickwood field (0.4 ha)

This site is situated at the northeast edge of the Thickwood estate and is opposite the rear entrance to Lucknam Park Estate. Like all the land around it in Thickwood, it was historically part of the listed Lucknam Park Estate.

Thickwood currently lies outside the Colerne settlement boundary in open countryside and Wiltshire Council does not regard it as a sustainable community in its own right. However, as described earlier, the inhabitants of Thickwood routinely depend upon Colerne facilities, and vice-versa in terms of employment. There are widely-used footpaths between Thickwood and Colerne village.

The site is a flat field bordered by a line of large TPO trees to its west. It faces, on the opposite side of the the C151 road, a high listed curtilage wall which borders the Lucknam Park Estate. Road access to the site is available directly from the C151, but visibility would need to be improved. There is a short footpath from the site into the

main Thickwood Estate. The site is in the Cotswolds AONB. This site could be developable for a small number of dwellings through a Community Led Housing initiative. Costs associated with existing covenants on this land would preclude low-cost rental. The Plan is therefore recommending development to provide around 5 units of Community Custom and Self-Build. The current landowner is proposing a Community Led Housing scheme as currently defined in the NPPF. He proposes a Community Co-operative for self/custom build for military veterans, with the ownership of the land remaining with the Co-operative. The Neighbourhood Plan regards such a specialist co-operative scheme, catering for the accommodation needs of military veterans, as valid in view of the long and close association between this community and the military, and the idea of "homes for veterans" was well-supported in the Community Survey.

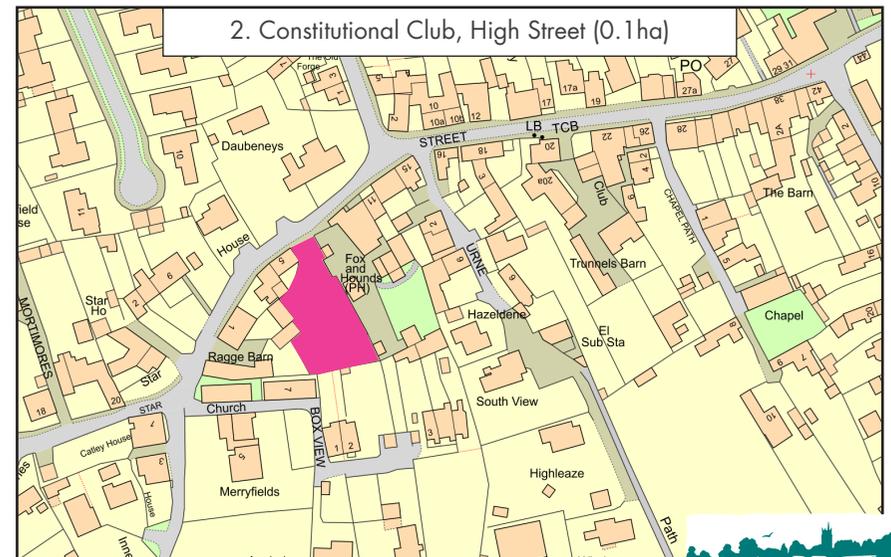
The development proposed would contribute to meeting the housing needs defined by the 2018 Housing Needs Survey under the category of shared ownership discount market homes.

2. Constitutional Club, High Street (0.1 ha)

This is a small site in the village centre currently occupied by the Constitutional Club and its adjoining carpark. The Club site has been a community resource for more than 100 years. There are concerns regarding the future viability of the Club, and in order to ensure that the site remains a community resource a proposal that it be registered as a Community Asset is being advanced.

At such time as the Club closes the site will be disposed of on behalf of the Association of Constitutional Clubs and its status as a Community Asset should provide a basis for acquisition for development for the benefit of local people through a Community Land Trust or Community Led Housing scheme. The site would be suitable for affordable housing.

This is a natural site for small scale development as favoured by the local community, and although it is an infill development it is being allocated in order to ensure delivery of social housing. The site has established vehicular access off the High Street. It is effectively backland development with limited frontage on the High Street. It is bounded to the east by a wall to a private



access road to the pub garden, to the south by a wall with trees and sheds in a back garden, and to the west mainly by outbuildings.

The site is in the Conservation Area (in Area 1 in the Design Statement, p. 14). Immediately adjacent to the west of the site entrance is 3, High Street, Grade II Listed and immediately adjacent to the east is 9, High Street, the Fox and Hounds Public House, also Grade II Listed. Development of the site would be towards the rear, with potential impacts on the rear of both listed buildings (see penultimate development criterion below).

Policy BEP4: Housing allocations

Two sites are allocated for development:-

1. Thickwood Field (0.4ha.)
2. Constitutional Club, High Street (0.1 ha)

These two allocated sites will make a major contribution to the short-term housing needs of the parish as defined by the Wiltshire Council Housing Needs Assessment 2018, in the early years of the Plan period. (See Section 3 ii)

Development Criteria --

Site Allocation: Thickwood Field, Site area: c. 0.4 ha.

Development of around 5 houses to meet identified specific local housing needs in accordance with all relevant policies in the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan. In particular:

- Delivery of the development to be led by a community-led initiative such as a Community Co-operative Custom and Self-Build.
- Vehicular access to be from the C151, retaining the current TPO tree line which borders the road.
- Development within the site to be outside the drip-line of the TPO trees.
- Parking to Wiltshire Highways standards to be provided on site.
- The boundary wall to the northeast to be retained.
- Design, materials and layout character to be congruent with and sensitive to the neighbouring Thickwood estate houses (see CDS).
- Attention to be given to sustainable drainage.
- Any street lighting to ensure no prejudice to the Plan's dark skies policy and no detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.
- Development proposal to offer contribution to a Thickwood play area.

- An assessment of potential impacts on bats, following the latest best practice guidelines, must be submitted with any application in line with the recommendations of the Habitats Regulations Assessment associated with this Plan (see NEP1).
- Heritage implications related to the Lucknam Park estate to be addressed and if required supported by a heritage assessment within the contingency that although the main building of Lucknam Park and some outbuildings are listed, the grounds are not, and the listed buildings are some 300 metres from the perimeter wall opposite Thickwood.

Site Allocation: Constitutional Club, Site area c. 0.1 ha.

Development of around 5 affordable houses/apartments to meet identified local housing needs in accordance with all relevant policies in the Colerne Neighbourhood Plan. In particular:

- Delivery of the development to be by a Colerne Community Led Housing project or by a local social housing provider.
- Vehicular access to be from the High Street.
- Parking to be provided on site to Wiltshire Highways standards.
- Design character to be consistent with that of the Colerne Conservation Area (see the DS).
- Particular attention should be paid to the avoidance of overlooking to adjacent properties.
- A heritage impact assessment will be necessary in relation to the nearby listed buildings and the general Conservation Area context.
- An assessment of potential impacts on bats, following the latest best practice guidelines, must be submitted with any application in line with the recommendations of the Habitats Regulations Assessment associated with this Plan (see NEP1).

Policy BEP5: Meeting longer-term housing demand

Context

As referred to above, the Housing Allocations in Policy BEP4 will deliver a significant part, if not all, of the defined Short-Term Housing Need.

The overall, longer-term need has been defined as 80 houses (see Section 3 ii). This Plan adopts the reasonable expectation that, in line with Policy BEP3 v, delivery of the residual requirement of around 70 houses can be met by release of Brownfield land associated with MoD site disposals during the Plan period.

Policy BEP5: Meeting longer-term housing demand

In line with NPPF policy [*paras 117, 137(a), NPPF 2019*] for brownfield preference, this Plan sets out a Policy that full delivery of the Longer-Term Housing Need should be met in due course by the announced intention to release for development MoD sites from the former Colerne Airfield/Barracks.

As described in more detail in Section 6 i below, there would be strong Plan and community support for re-development of the 'Drill Ground' (also locally known as the 'Parade Ground'). This area would provide adequate land for the defined demand, as well as delivering certain social benefits as described elsewhere in this Plan.

Policy BEP6: Sustainable design and construction

Context

The government National Design Guides (2019) [LINK](#) states that:

"... Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change. ... It identifies measures to achieve mitigation, primarily by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising embodied energy ...

"... Well-designed places: have a ... form ... that reduces their resource requirement ... [and] use materials and adopt technologies to minimise their environmental impact."

Sustainable design and construction involves making use of a range of 'eco building' methods such as low carbon, renewable energy, water use reduction, waste-water management, waste reduction and the use of locally-sourced materials – thus requiring the use of auditing tools such as environmental impact analysis.

This is not just about construction (and hence Building Regulations) because sustainable design also relates to ensuring:

- A mix of uses and facilities within a neighbourhood to reduce travel demand and energy demands.
- Places that are durable and adaptable to help make them less resource hungry over time – including the layout of infrastructure servicing and development.
- The layout of buildings and planting to reduce energy and water use and mitigate against flooding, pollution and overheating.
- Passive solar design in the siting of buildings to maximise the use of the sun's energy for heating and cooling.

Guiding evidence

The Community Consultations raised the following general points with respect to sustainable design and ecobuilding:

- an aspiration for all new development to have a zero carbon footprint
- the potential of prefabricated units for housing
- minimisation of infrastructure requirements (e.g. sewage disposal)

The Community Survey showed (Q.3), as criteria for new buildings, that 75% of respondents supported the use of energy-efficient technologies and 57% supported the inclusion of 'eco-home' design.

The policy below is also supported in the **Design Statement** which stresses that: "... designs which make use of sustainable construction methods in terms of energy conservation and supply, waste conservation and so forth will be supported".

Policy BEP6: Sustainable design and construction

- a. Colerne Parish will support development and infrastructure proposals that contribute to the Wiltshire-wide target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and strongly encourages developers to positively address issues relating to climate change.
- b. Any new development in the Parish should aim to meet a high level of sustainability in both design and construction, and be optimised for energy efficiency.
- c. Encouragement will be given to applications which include sustainable design and construction approaches in advance of national standards in force at that time.

Policy BEP7: Infill or backland development

Context

Colerne village has several post-war housing estates in which there is little space for infill, while the older areas of the village have grown up organically over time and are relatively tightly packed. In many cases the gardens are of an inadequate size for further development without detracting from their surroundings. Consequently, within the settlement boundary, the opportunity for infill or backland development is limited, without inappropriately increasing the density of the village or losing small areas of open space. There may be opportunities to improve or convert small existing buildings such as garages and sheds for uses such as a studio or workshop.

Guiding evidence

Community consultations raised the general point that the village has already been built, adapted and infilled to capacity. The Community Survey showed a 59% support for small-scale developments (Q.6), with 45% support for infill, in a range of different locations. Though not applying solely to infill, support was expressed for new homes to have gardens and for the reduction of on-street and pavement parking.

Policy BEP7: Infill and backland development

1. Infill and backland development will be supported for small-scale developments, or schemes such as studios or workshops, subject to the following criteria:
 - a. The designs comply with the relevant guidance in the Design Statement, with particular care needed for proposals within the Conservation Area
 - b. The proposals do not impose on neighbouring properties (e.g. in terms of overshadowing, overlooking or loss of sunlight or daylight).
 - c. The layout will provide for safe access, waste storage, adequate parking space and a garden area for ground-floor homes in flatted developments.
2. If proposed, conversion to studios or workshops of buildings (sheds, barns etc.) that are within the gardens of existing buildings will be supported if it can be demonstrated that there are no negative service access, noise or social impacts.

Policy BEP8: Custom and self-build

Context

The **Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015** (amended by the **Housing and Planning Act 2016**) does not distinguish between self-build and custom housebuilding, and provides that both occur when "... an individual, an association of individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals".

In considering whether a home is a self-build or custom-build home, relevant authorities must be satisfied that the initial owner of the home will have primary input into its final design and layout. Self-build and custom housebuilding projects are, by definition, small-scale. They attempt to minimize the cost of new-build and renovation and also tend to be minor contributors to overall development.

New self-build development must be of a high standard of design and take account of the guidance in the **Design Statement**.

Guiding evidence

The Community consultations identified that even smaller houses may be out of reach for new buyers, as many are renovations or extensions of older 'two-up-two-downs', or purchases for second homes, or for letting for high market rents.

Against this background, the following general points were raised about custom and self-build housing:

- Self-builds provide greater flexibility for individual needs.
- Establishing a Community Led Housing project would provide a route for building on undeveloped land to supply a mix of new private /rented/self-build houses.
- Self- and custom-builders are more likely to build energy-efficient houses than commercial volume builders.

The Community Survey information pertinent to self-build and custom housebuilding projects includes consideration of the scale of projects, building design and purpose, and sites that are appropriate.

- 47% of respondents (Q.1) felt that development should take place in a "step-by-step way".

- 59% of respondents (Q.6) favoured small-scale developments taking place in a range of different locations. There was some support for infill (45%).
- 92% of respondents (Q.2) indicated that 'affordable housing' should be highly or moderately encouraged.

Policy BEP8: Custom and self-build

Self-build and custom-build housing development proposals will be supported where they:

- a. Offer clear evidence that the initial owner of the home will have primary input into its final design and layout.
- b. Represent an initiative driven by local individual or group needs.
- c. Complement the scale and pace of medium-term development in the parish.
- d. The designs comply with the relevant guidance in the Design Statement.

Policy BEP9: Permeable surfacing

Context

Natural (undeveloped) land adapts over centuries to cope with the rainwater that falls on it. The type of open grassland and woodland in Colerne parish is capable of absorbing large volumes of rainfall without surface run-off, feeding underground aquifers that contain enormous volumes of ancient water feeding springs and underground watercourses.

The built environment covers absorbent natural land with impermeable surfaces such as houses and roads.

These surfaces impede the natural drainage of water and concentrate it into gullies and drains, leading to accelerated run-off of surface water that can overload sewerage systems. The use of permeable surfaces can help manage or reduce flooding and other adverse impacts.

In some cases (e.g. total paved area less than 5m²), paving front gardens and installing hardstanding can be undertaken without the need for planning permission via permitted development rules. Guidance is available to advise householders of the options for achieving permeability and meeting the condition for permitted development status.

Policy BEP9: Permeable surfacing

1. Development proposals will not be supportable unless they:
 - a. Incorporate permeable surfaces for driveways and hard standing areas in excess of 5m².
 - b. Mitigate roof water run-off by the provision of on-site storage, for example, by means of water-butts, soakaways or rain gardens.
2. New commercial and public parking areas should provide permeable surfaces.

Policy BEP10: Design for homeworking

Context

Provision for home working should not be confused with the provision of 'live/work' units; it is concerned only with the availability of spaces in homes, from which the homeowner, perhaps with one other person, can either operate a small business or 'tele-commute' via good Broadband and mobile phone systems.

Homeworking or 'tele-commuting' is a type of flexible working that can be used in conjunction with other arrangements such as flexible hours, working part-time, term-time working or meeting employer's core hours requirements. Homeworking is supported nationally, as it reduces car-based commuting and contributes to the growth of sustainable communities, by widening employment opportunities for the owner or occupier. It can also reduce out-commuting by enabling residents to both live and work in their locality, and provide more support to other local businesses.

Guiding evidence

The Community Consultations addressed the topic of Business and Employment Opportunities and Needs: a consensus arose "... to cater for more people working from home". The Community Survey included a question (Q.11) about encouraging home working and found 93% in favour, of whom 31% strongly agreed.

Policy BEP10: Design for home working

Developments and designs that provide space and telecommunications infrastructure to facilitate home working will be encouraged if in line with all other Plan policies.

BEP11: Sustainable land-preparation and contamination control

Context

The largest brownfield area within the parish was originally a World War II operational airfield, remaining in active RAF use until the 1970s. All of this land is assumed to have some level of contamination. Areas earlier disposed of include hangars with asbestos as well as concrete runways and access roads. Current operational

MoD areas scheduled for disposal include other such buildings, as well as areas known to have been used to bury unwanted aircraft parts (aluminium; heavy metals; possible radionuclides) and fuel spillages (organo-metallic compounds). The land covered by these facilities is also an important water collection area with complex underlying aquifers (ref. NEP2).



Policy BEP11: Sustainable land-preparation and contamination control

This policy is relevant to the demolition, alteration, extension or refurbishment of existing buildings on ex-MoD sites within the parish and to new developments thereon.

Proposals should comply with the following requirements:

- a. At the planning stage, a scoping exercise will be carried out to identify the likely contaminants to be encountered at the proposed site.
- b. On full application, evidence should be provided to demonstrate that any potential contamination of the site has been fully investigated and any remediation found to be necessary has been satisfactorily planned prior to commencing construction work.
- c. At site clearance and ground preparation stages, measures will be taken to identify or confirm the type and nature of any contamination that is revealed. Appropriate remediation measures will be agreed with the local planning and environmental authorities.
- d. Contaminated material to be removed from the site will be securely contained during excavation or demolition and for transport off the site and will be subject to secure disposal procedures.
- e. Proposed on-site containment and off-site disposal of identified contaminants will meet the requirements of current environmental legislation.

Theme B. Natural environment policies

These policies aim to protect the landscape setting of the parish, in particular the setting of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CAONB) and to maintain the distinctive views and visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside from public places within the parish. This Neighbourhood Plan also requires that green spaces within housing areas and recreational spaces are adequately protected, as set out in the Local [Green Spaces Report](#).

Policy NEP1: Landscape and natural environment

Context

The parish of Colerne is set into (as well as on) the surrounding landscape. It has an unusual geology and topography, with several unique character areas, as defined by the [Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment](#) (LCA) and the [Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidance](#), which are summarised in the [Design Statement](#). The LCA classifies and describes the local landscape and identifies features and characteristics that contribute to this locality's particular

'sense of place' generated by its agricultural and farming base. All of the undeveloped parts of the Parish could potentially constitute supporting habitat for foraging bats associated with the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats SAC

Guiding evidence

The Community Consultations identified the desire to develop more green spaces around and within housing developments, allowing community access, with 99% of 536 respondents reporting it "extremely important/important" (Q.18) that development should respect the natural environment and character of the parish.

Policy NEP1: Landscape and natural environment

1. Future development must maintain adequate open landscape space, rural and agricultural in character, between Colerne and other settlements in the Parish so that the landscape continues to provide the overall character and context of the parish.
2. Development will only be supported where it can demonstrate compliance with the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) or any subsequent update, and where it will not adversely affect any European site or Core Roosts and sensitive features within the Core Areas which are regarded as functionally linked to European sites.

All development brought forward within Core Areas shall produce a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment of the development's impact on the integrity of the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC.



Policy NEP2: Green infrastructure and biodiversity

Context

In the context of Colerne parish – including the MoD Airfield and Barracks sites after disposal – green infrastructure includes walking, cycling and horse riding routes that are not on public highways, as well as hedgerows, tree lines and other natural features that provide wildlife corridors.

The parish of Colerne is bordered to the west by the Bristol and Bath Green Belt and to the South East by Colerne Park, which includes a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** dedicated to nature conservation and managed by the Woodland Trust. To the north of the C151 there are a number of dense woodland areas leading into South Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds and these, together with the surrounding agricultural pastures, provide essential habitats and corridors supporting a rich biodiversity. There is a well-used system of public footpaths and bridleways connecting the different parts of the parish (**Parish Council walk map**). The narrow lanes with hedgerows provide essential insect-hunting areas for local bird and bat populations. (**Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan**).

Guiding Evidence

The Community Consultations raised the following general points with respect to green infrastructure and biodiversity:

- A concern that new developments should encourage good community inter-connectedness
- That they should embody community access to open spaces
- That new tree-planting should feature in any new development.

The Community Survey included a section on the general parish environment.

- 53% of respondents (Q.1) thought it important that green spaces providing habitats for wildlife are protected.
- 70% chose “Wildlife conservation” (Q.33) as a priority for the redevelopment of the MoD site.

Policy NEP2: Green infrastructure and biodiversity

- a) Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate the provision of a net gain in biodiversity through enhancement and creation of ecological networks within and, where possible, beyond the site. Net gain is an approach that uses the planning process to protect and enhance biodiversity. As per NPPF para 174(b), plans should:
 - i) identify, map and safeguard ... local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks; ... wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;
 - ii) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks;... the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- b) Proposals should demonstrate what consideration has been given to a range of factors as relevant, including but not limited to:
 - i) Maintaining and improving the quality of existing green infrastructure, including local networks and corridors, specifically to increase value as a recreation asset and as a habitat for biodiversity;
 - ii) measures to reduce damage/disturbance to surrounding wildlife and green corridors and watercourses during the demolition/construction process;
 - iii) demonstrating how existing green areas and trees will be protected;
 - iv) respecting and accommodating the essential systems constituted by the numerous aquifers that flow down from the wolds into the Box valley and the By Brook river, feeding springs and watercourses;
 - v) County Wildlife Sites and designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- c) Development proposals shall also demonstrate that the mitigation hierarchy has been followed sequentially in accordance with the principles of: i. Avoid; ii. Reduce, moderate, minimise; iii. Rescue e.g. translocation; iv. Repair, reinstate, restore, compensate or offset.
- d) Development will only be supported where it can demonstrate compliance with the Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015) or any subsequent update, and where it will not adversely affect any European site or Core Roosts and sensitive features within the Core Areas which are regarded as functionally linked to European sites. All development brought forward within Core Areas shall produce a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment of the development’s impact on the integrity of the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC.

Policy NEP3: Local green spaces

Context

'Local Green Space' is defined as "... a green area of particular importance to a local community designated as such through a local plan or neighbourhood development plan". The designation should only be used where the green space is:

1. in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.
2. demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife.
3. local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

The parish of Colerne contains a number of green areas of varied character that can fall under this definition. The **Local Green Spaces Report** identified 25 potential Local Green Spaces and their significance to their area and communities, and assessed them against the government guidance, supplemented by a more detailed local set of criteria. All but two spaces were determined to already have adequate protection under Green Belt, AONB, listed monument etc. The following further spaces were identified, for which the full statutory process of designation was carried out:

- Pinewood Playground
- Northwood Football, Play and Open Area

The **Local Green Spaces Public Consultation** details the statutory process of designation carried out.

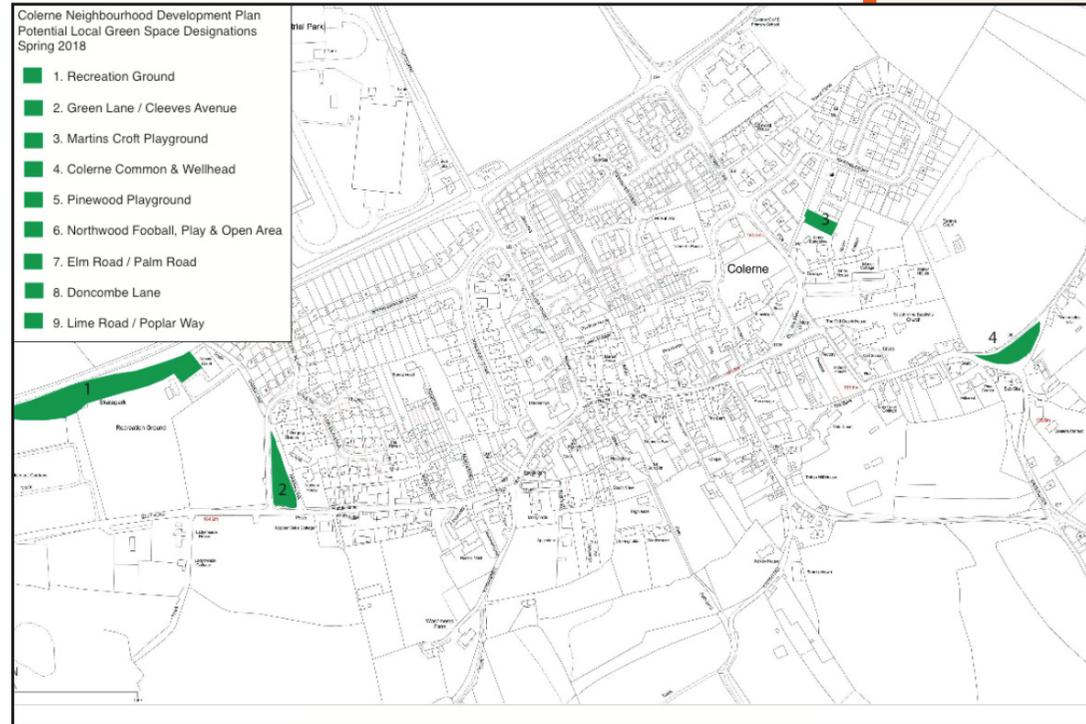
Guiding Evidence

Responses to the Community Survey showed

clear support for the conservation of landscape and green infrastructure, with 98% support (Q.20) for the proposition that Local Green Spaces – of historical, archaeological, recreational or wildlife value – should be identified to protect them from housing or economic development.

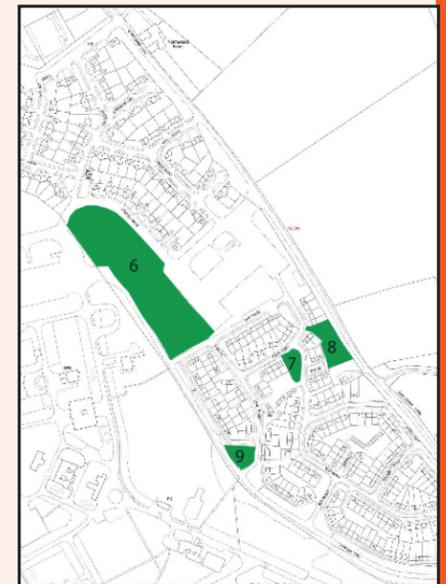
The Community Consultations identified the desire to develop more green spaces around and within housing developments, allowing community access.

- 99% of 536 respondents thought it "extremely important/important" (Q.18) that development should respect the natural environment and character of the parish
- 98% agreed that the NP should "...designate small 'Local Green Spaces' within our settlements (if they have historical, archaeological, recreational or wildlife value) [to protect] them from future development" (Q.20).



Policy NEP3: Local green spaces

The plan proposes that the green spaces as shown on maps – to be added and listed in the **Local Green Spaces Report** be designated as Local Green Spaces in accordance with the provision of paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework.



Policy NEP4: Key Views

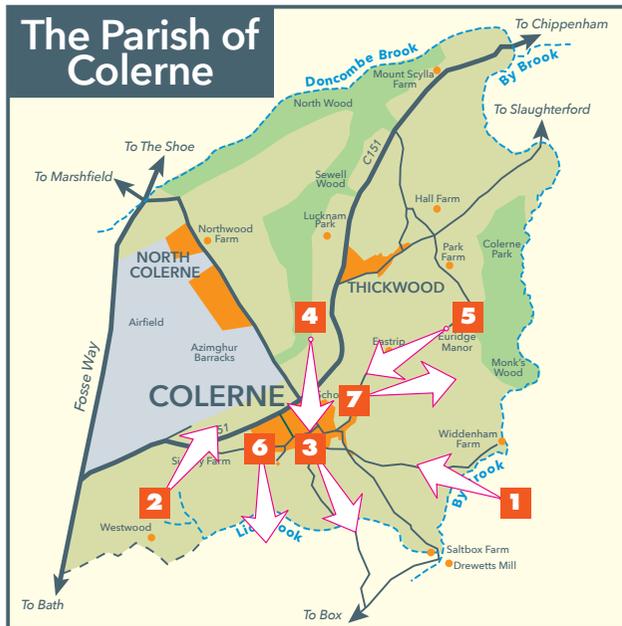
Context

Being within the Cotswolds AONB, the central village, the outlying hamlets and the wider environment require special conservation considerations due to their significant landscape value within a rural setting. Key Views into, within, and out of the parish and its settlements contribute significantly to its character and are valued by the local community.

While policies cannot entirely prevent development within Key View lines, they can limit the impact that development has upon them. **The Key Views and Valued Views Reports** identify the many important landscape aspects of the whole parish in respect of views.

Guiding Evidence

The Community Consultations returned repeatedly to the general point that “the parish of Colerne is a beautiful place to live” – an observation dependent on the existence and maintenance of the key views out of (and into) the parish.



Results from the Community Survey showed clear support for the conservation of landscape and key views. 70% of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ and a further 20% ‘agreed’ (Q.19) that “... Key landscape views are community assets” and that these views should be protected.



Policy NEP4: Key Views

- a. The seven key views identified in the Key Views report must be maintained and protected and any development must avoid any significant adverse impact.
- b. Planning applications proposing development which is of a scale that could impact on any Key Views must demonstrate how the proposal enhances and protects the character of the parish given its setting within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Theme C. Employment and business policies

The **Colerne Business Survey** revealed that Colerne is not an area that easily attracts new business. Of the larger businesses, most are here for historical reasons (Azimghur Barracks, Lucknam Park) or because they serve the local community (schools, doctors, shops). The small businesses (e.g. sole traders) are here, almost without exception, because they are home-based.

Several major businesses make use of redundant hangars from the airfield. There are two small 'business parks' using farm buildings and a derelict mill, amounting to no more than a dozen units, whose low cost is a primary attraction. Otherwise there are, at present, no premises or facilities in the parish that are likely to attract a significant increase in business activity.

There are only seven businesses that employ more than 20 people, of which two have more than 100 employees (Azimghur Barracks and Lucknam Park Hotel), a significant proportion of whose employees are from outside the parish either as daily commuters or live-in staff. The majority of people owning or employed by the smaller firms live in the parish. None of the existing major businesses expressed a need for expansion of their premises or interest in moving to a more modern facility if this was created. A few of the smaller concerns would like more space, with some interest in live-work units.

Policy EBP1: Sustaining existing employment

Context

The parish of Colerne has historically been primarily agricultural, but now has some commercial mix, albeit with only seven businesses that employ more than 20 people. Small businesses and self-employment provide additional local employment opportunities. Loss of any of these businesses will increase the numbers of residents already commuting to Bath, Chippenham and beyond for work.

Guiding Evidence

The Community Consultations revealed significant support for the retention of existing businesses, where possible, and to sustain employment opportunities within the parish. Responses to the Community Survey showed(Q.9) that 77% of respondents supported the retention of existing businesses and their protection from change of use.

Policy EBP1: Sustaining existing employment

1. The loss of land and buildings currently used for employment purposes will not be permitted
 - a. unless evidence is produced to show that the redevelopment for alternative employment use is not possible, and
 - b. the land and/or the buildings shall be genuinely marketed to local markets on reasonable terms for employment use, for at least 6 months, and have remained unsold or unlet and no reasonable offer has been refused. Full details of marketing must accompany any development proposal.
2. The development of land and buildings already used for employment purposes will be supported, subject to the proposal meeting 1a. above, where the proposal:
 - a. supports the more effective and efficient use of the site as employment land;
 - b. results in no loss in full-time-equivalent jobs;
 - c. is supported by a plan which demonstrates the need for additional space for the business to grow; and
 - d. complies with the Policy EBP2.

Policy EBP2 – Encouraging new employment

Context

There is recognition from the community of the need to encourage business development to enable more residents to work locally, provided that these businesses are small in scale. In the Neighbourhood Plan context, the aim is to:

- increase the employment opportunities within the parish of Colerne, while protecting the rural character of the local area, including key views in and out;
- limit business development to small industries which have a low impact on local infrastructure and the environment.

Guiding Evidence

Responses to the Community Survey gave the following information in relation to encouraging new employment:

- 60% of respondents (Q.8) agreed that the Plan should encourage business and employment growth in the parish.
- Q.13 asked about the development of the parish economy, with the following results:
 - Encourage homeworking: 93% in favour
 - More entrepreneurial start-ups: 86% in favour (of whom 24% strongly agreed)
 - More hi-tech businesses: 63% in favour
 - More manufacturing businesses: 67% strongly disagreed / disagreed
 - Remain largely agricultural: 85% in favour.

Policy EBP2 – Encouraging new employment

The establishment of small-scale employment enterprises on existing sites or on new sites will be supported if:

- a. they do not reduce the quality or quantity of employment opportunities offered
- b. they provide adequate access and car parking, and do not create traffic flow problems or generate traffic inappropriate to country roads
- c. the proposals are compatible with the uses of surrounding buildings
- d. there is no significant adverse impact on residential amenity
- e. they are compatible with the Design Statement.

Theme D: Communications policies

The field of communications includes the movement of people on foot, on horseback and by vehicle – which includes buses, cars, motorcycles, bicycles and even scooters. Such movement requires the provision of infrastructure in the form of roads, pavements, footpaths and cycleways.

Communications also includes postal services and telecommunications via email or internet and by telephone – especially mobile phones. Efficient telecommunications supports social interaction, both within and without the parish. It is also a prerequisite for the functioning of modern businesses and requires the provision of up-to-date infrastructure, including super-fast internet broadband and dependable 4G/5G coverage.

Policy CP1: Traffic and transport

Context

The parish is constrained by particularly poor road connections. Doncombe Hill northwards to The Shoe, the C151 eastwards to Ford, Tutton Hill to Box in the south and the C151/Bannerdown Road to Batheaston to the west are all, at points, little more than country lanes. All contain bottlenecks. Increased housing plus any business developments will increase the number of vehicles using these roads – a point that must be borne in mind for all new developments in the parish.

The roads in the parish are generally narrow and often without kerbs. They are ill-equipped to deal with modern HGVs, which is causing road conditions to deteriorate. Traffic speed on the C151 has been highlighted as a major ongoing issue, with 50 and 40 mph limits now in place

There are partial bus services linking the parish with other areas. From Colerne, there are infrequent and inconvenient services to Bath, Marshfield, Biddestone, Corsham and Chippenham and Bristol. Consequently, there are high levels of car ownership, which has highlighted the deficit in household car parking provision. In the oldest areas of the parish roadside parking is a major issue, especially in the central village, where potentially obstructive parking on pavements and on double-yellow lines is evident. Roads around the school entrance are particularly congested at arrival and departure times.

Development proposals should aim to reduce the impact of traffic movement from vehicles, minimise the use of the private car, and re-order priorities between motorised vehicles, cycles and pedestrians (**Wiltshire Core Policy 60 and Core Policy 61**).

It is recognised that traffic capacities and transport services are not directly subject to planning law and therefore cannot form part of a neighbourhood plan. However some of them can be treated as community aspirations and separately pursued by a parish council (see Section 8 Projects), and **Wiltshire Core Policy 60**.

For example, applications could include a statement to demonstrate how the impact of construction traffic during the construction period will be minimised and enforced; and embody consideration of optimal access to public transport options, improved links for walking and cycling, and provision of any adjacent road infrastructure required to service the development (**Wiltshire Core Policy 62**).

Guiding evidence

The Community Consultations showed that Colerne's position facilitates daily commuting by car to Bristol, Bath and Swindon but that:

- Inadequate public transport links frequently make destinations other than Bath impossible to reach within reasonable times.
- Poor public transport provision restricts independence and can lead to isolation, and impacts the social life of young people in the parish (no buses after 6 p.m.).
- It was noted that community bus schemes operate in

other villages and that a community transport scheme is required for the whole parish – if only a shuttle bus to the A4 in Batheaston where frequent services offering a full range of destinations are available.

The Community Survey (Q.30) provided information on road use by car commuters, identifying that 60% of respondents regularly work outside the parish and a further 22% commute but not regularly.

Policy CP1: Traffic and transport

All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, as per Wiltshire Core Policy 62, and this should show how specific local factors will be addressed. These being: the constrained highway access to Colerne parish; the formal and practical HGV access limitations; the paucity of public transport services to and through the parish; inadequacy in cycle/pedestrian/wheelchair/buggy mobility in the parish.

Policy CP2: Walking and cycling

Context

Most homes in Colerne village are within easy walking distance of the village shop, the Post Office, village hall, doctors' surgeries, and school. However, people living in Thickwood currently face a one-mile walk to the High Street on a narrow pavement alongside a de-restricted section of the C151; inhabitants of the most distant parts of North Colerne at Pinewood have a journey of 1.7 miles along a route that is incompletely provided with pavements. During term-time, there is a significant twice-daily flow of pedestrians along these routes to the village school.

The public footpath network around and into the parish is reasonably comprehensive, but there is no provision for cycling other than along roads. Several adjacent areas of the main village are only indirectly connected by road, rather than by direct footpaths or alleyways. Where they do exist the passages and alleyways between houses are an important part of the pedestrian network within the three main settlement areas.

Following on-going national initiatives to reduce the use of private transport for short journeys, it is important that developments integrate measures to promote access to public transport, walking and cycling, through the provision of enhanced footpaths, and cycle links to green space, schools, the local centre and the wider countryside.

Wiltshire Core Policy 61 refers to the need to reverse the priority for infrastructure so as to create the following hierarchy - a) disabled, b) pedestrians, c) cyclists, d) Public Transport, e) goods vehicles, f) powered two wheelers, g) private cars.

Guiding evidence

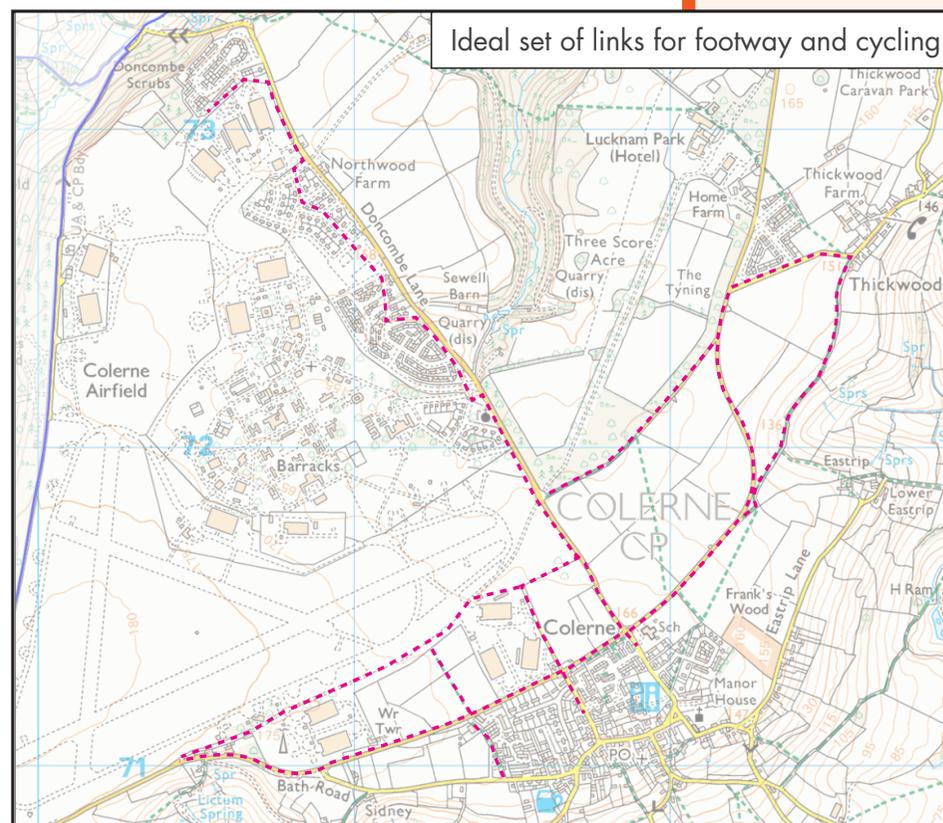
The Community Consultations identified an incomplete provision of connecting paths, both within and between centres of population. Footpaths are often circuitous, adding to the time taken for parents to take children

to school or playgroup. In the absence of direct, safe, footpaths, many opt to use their cars for these daily journeys. See: **Footpaths Report** and **Colerne Primary School Safety Project**.

The Community Survey included a question (Q.33) about the redevelopment of the MoD site, which has all the housing groups comprising North Colerne along its western edge.

- 67% wanted community amenities to be given priority
- of these, 64% identified new footpaths, cycleways and bridleways as a priority.

A projection of an "ideal" set of links for footway and cycling is shown in the following Steering Group "concept map".



Policy CP2: Walking and cycling

- a) In line with Wiltshire Core Policy 63, developments that have a Transport strategy advocating new and improved networks of routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be supported. In particular where they increase accessibility to all, including wheelchair users and mobility scooters.
- b) Where public footpaths or cycleways are newly routed or re-routed, their routing should be sympathetic to landscape and wildlife corridors.
- c) Applications for any development adjacent to Public Rights of Way should, where appropriate, ensure that links are provided to those routes.

Theme E: Sustainable energy policies

The UK government set the target to source 15% of all energy and 10% of transport fuels from renewables by 2020.

Core Policy 42 of the **Wiltshire Core Strategy** identifies how stand-alone renewable energy installations, of all types, will be encouraged and supported. However, the **UK Renewable Energy Strategy** states that the parish environment is most suited to solar photovoltaic arrays (domestic and commercial), heat pumps and CHP (combined heat and power) installations. Individual properties and public buildings are already encouraged, where appropriate, to install PV panels.

Lack of off-street parking in the parish, particularly within the old village, inhibits the uptake of all-electric cars.

Policy SEP1: Renewable energy

Context

National policy:

- i) NPPF para.151 stresses the need for plans to provide a positive strategy for renewable energy.
- ii) The NPPF states that local planning authorities “should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy” (paragraph 152).

Local context:

The SG undertook a study into how the high level guidance might be applied across the Parish and sought the views of its members through the Community Survey. The SG was given a briefing by a renewable energy consultant on prospects given Colerne’s location, geography, infrastructure; and on 15 March 2018 it received its **Renewable Energy Group Report** It found that the use of renewable energy technologies in small-scale developments in the parish is likely to be limited to solar PV and heat pumps. The viability of Renewable Energy technologies at the airfield/barracks, if they are developed, offers additional potential and is discussed in the Concept Statement (Section 7). Their application would be supportable according to the Community Survey, although the Steering Group was informed that the viability of a large-scale solar generation “farm” may well be weakened by practical and technical difficulties on that site.

Sustainable energy Policies aim to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and to increase energy autonomy as a contribution to community resilience. They can be seen as incremental, bringing improvement with each and every development approved.

Guiding evidence

During the Community Consultations, all discussions of sustainability included reference to low-carbon heat sources and the micro-generation of renewable electrical energy, notably from solar, wind and biomass resources. It was suggested that an integrated parish-wide initiative could be viable. Responses to the Community Survey (Q.21) showed the following levels of support for renewable energy technologies:

- 56% for photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation from panels mounted on private houses and commercial buildings
- 45% would be supportive of a large-scale PV ‘solar farm’ on the airfield (a similar level of response to retaining the airfield as operational)
- 34% for ground-source heat pumps
- anaerobic digesters and biomass lagged behind at around 25% support.

Policy SEP1: Renewable energy

1. Localised Renewable Energy Generation

Proposals for individual and community scale energy from solar photovoltaic panels, or other forms of renewable generation, will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- i) the proposed installation does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents;
- ii) the proposed installation does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance;
- iii) or a significant impact on the visual landscape;
- iv) the scale of installation is appropriate for local needs or is grid-connected in ways that do not infringe conditions (i)-(iii) above;
- v) the installation does not place unacceptable load upon Colerne’s limited access roads.

2. Support will be given to renewable generation developments that:

- i) are led by, or meet the needs of the local community; and
- ii) have regard to the wider benefits of providing energy from renewable sources, and the potential effects on the local environment.

Policy SEP2: Electrical charging points

Context

In 2018, the government welcomed the Business, Energy and Industrial Committee's report "Electric vehicles: driving the transition", stating that it "shares the Committee's view that electric vehicles represent exciting opportunities for the UK as a tool to address greenhouse gas emissions, reduce air pollution, and as a new economic opportunity".

This was followed up in July 2019 when the Department for Transport Office of Low Emission Vehicles launched a consultation on "proposing that new-build homes are fitted with an electric car charging point".

Guiding evidence

The Community Consultations raised the subject of electric vehicle charging points within a set of aspirations for future energy provision and use. This vision included operating an electric shuttle bus to Batheaston powered by locally-generated energy. An increase in electric vehicle numbers, including e-bikes, was anticipated and concern for providing adequate charging facilities was expressed.

Policy SEP2: Electrical charging points

- All new houses where dedicated parking is provided must have an appropriately located charging point. Where general parking areas are included in housing developments, there should be an appropriate ratio of charging points available for general use.
- Planning applications for non-residential developments are encouraged to provide electric charging points for staff and / or other users.
- Significant extensions (40% or more increase in floor area) must have made a diligent application for grant funding to assist the installation of an on-site charging point where feasible.
- All existing public buildings with vehicular access and public parking areas are encouraged to install electric car charging areas.

Policy SEP3: Dark skies and street lighting

Context

The NPPF 2019 makes it clear that planning policies and decisions should take into account the need to 'limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.' (para. 180). The night skies over Wiltshire have been recognised for their astronomical clarity, and parts of our Parish enjoy dark skies.

Whilst it is recognised that minor domestic light fittings are not subject to planning controls, the main aim of this policy is to minimise the impact of artificial light in situations for which planning permission is needed. The benefits to be gained from proposed lighting should be balanced against the impacts of obtrusive light on wildlife and the importance of conserving energy.

The parish is currently provided with a variety of old and new street lights, some of which are turned off in the early hours of the morning. The aim is to introduce low-energy (LED) street lighting and, at the same time, to eliminate

all non-essential light wherever it is safely possible and to standardise the lighting furniture throughout the village. Reducing the adverse impact of light pollution will include seeking to decrease high levels of light spread from security installations.

Guiding evidence

The Community Consultations raised the following general concerns about the problem of light pollution from existing street lights:

- Additional lighting needed for new development should be fully up-to-date in design and use and not simply copy the existing provision.
- Some street lighting could be powered by solar panels and be autonomous.

Policy SEP3: Dark skies and street lighting

Development proposals must demonstrate that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken, and must ensure that the measured and observed sky quality in the surrounding area is not negatively affected. Proposals for artificial lighting will be supported where:

- they would not give rise to an unacceptable level of illumination into the sky, open countryside, or in the village;
- it can be demonstrated that additional lighting on site will have no detrimental impact on visual and residential amenity, the historic environment or local ecology;
- any adverse impact of lighting proposals in all new development, including light spill and energy use, is minimised through design or technological solutions or by controlling the hours of use;
- there is a need for lighting due to safety in low lit or dark public areas;
- Where possible, street lights shall be switched off during the deepest hours of the night, leaving only those necessary on safety grounds, e.g. at road junctions.;
- Any development proposals that will lead to a significant increase in light pollution will be opposed.

Theme F: Community well-being policies

Colerne's community facilities and amenities make a significant contribution to the well-being of the inhabitants of the parish. They provide a focus for community life and social interaction and are important for the long-term sustainability of the community. They also provide local employment, reduce the need to travel and offer an important social service, particularly for those who do not have access to a car. Their importance has been evidenced by our experience in the coronavirus crisis. However, the loss and threatened closure of facilities and services is a common feature of village life everywhere as local residents increasingly travel to larger facilities elsewhere. The aim of this Plan is to protect existing local facilities and services, while encouraging the provision of new facilities and services as part of new development.

Policy CWBP1: Protection and enhancement of community facilities

Context

New developments will be expected to contribute towards enhancing existing facilities and, where appropriate, providing new facilities, whether adjacent to the development or elsewhere in the parish.

There is a need to maintain local services, especially the shops, to support the environment of homeworkers and also older members of the community with reducing mobility and increasing dependency. Improved facilities within the community can result in a reduced need for travel outside of the area for all. An inventory of existing social, sports and community facilities is given in the **Community Facilities Report**.

Guiding evidence

The Community Consultations affirmed that the local sense of community is created by life outside of work and business, significantly through clubs, societies and other places for social meeting. With these facilities concentrated in the central village, community cohesion is primarily felt by the village dwellers; people living in outlying areas can feel less connected.

Policy CWBP1: Protection and enhancement of community facilities

Current community facilities serving the whole parish include:

- Allotments [CWBP3]
- Anglican church and Evangelical chapel
- Children's play areas [CWBP4]
- Football and Rugby Clubs and Recreation Ground
- GP Surgeries
- Hotel and Spa
- Old School Play Group and nursery/childcare
- Parish Rooms and Community Café
- Post Office, hairdressers and stores
- Primary School
- Two public houses and two clubs
- Sports Hall and swimming pool (MoD owned, open for civilian club use)
- Village Hall and Scouts HQ

1. Proposals that would result in the loss of an existing community facility will not be supported unless one or more of the following factors apply:
 - a. There is no longer a demonstrable need or demand for the community facility concerned
 - b. The existing community facility can be demonstrated no longer to be economically viable
 - c. The proposal makes alternative provision for a facility still needed that would otherwise be lost, in an appropriate and convenient location elsewhere in the Plan area, and the proposed alternative provision complies with other policies in this Plan.
 - d. It can be shown that all options for continuing community use have been exhausted.
2. Developments will be supported where they can demonstrate an enhancement of a community facility, including enhanced access and links to the community.

Policy CWBP2: Promoting additional community facilities

Context

This policy is concerned with the provision of additional community facilities involving changes to the built environment that require planning approval. Proposals for additional community facilities at any location in the parish will be supported if the applicants can demonstrate the benefits of such facilities, have village support, and that their development will not generate negative neighbour impacts.

Guiding evidence

The Community Consultations developed a diverse 'wish list' that included the creation of a library space, a sports complex containing a gym and swimming pool, a cricket pitch and the reinstatement of the tennis court at the Recreation Ground, and an enhanced network of footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways across the parish.

The Community Survey (Qs. 24, 25, 26 – free response) confirmed the desire of residents to enhance the range of community facilities and amenities in the parish, recognising their value to the life of the parish. The need to maintain and extend the play areas in the parish for children was highlighted and the need for better facilities for teenagers.

Policy CWBP2: Promoting additional community facilities

Proposals for new or enhanced community facilities will be supported where development:

- meets the Neighbourhood Plan Design design criteria
- meets a demonstrable need and or demand
- will not result in unacceptable impacts on local residential amenity and is of a scale appropriate to the locality
- is conveniently accessible for residents of the parish to walk or cycle.

Policy CWBP3: Allotments provision

Context

There is currently one field of approximately 5 acres allocated for allotments within the parish. It is managed by the Parish Council, which rents the land at a peppercorn rent from a farmer who has moved away from the parish. Occupancy of the plots is almost total; and there is a waiting-list. They are well-maintained and frequently attended. Some of the plots are rented by people who live in North Colerne or Thickwood, neither of which has local allotment provision.

There is an increasing interest nationally in 'growing your own', motivated by concerns for producing organic vegetables and fruit, decreasing 'food miles' and general climate change mitigation. However, the current availability of allotment space is not capable of meeting any increase in demand.

Guiding evidence

The **Allotment Report** gives details of allotment provision in the parish. 63 of 516 respondents to the Community Survey (Q.17) stated that they tend an allotment; there are approximately 51 plots all currently in use.

Policy CWBP3: Allotments provision

Existing allotments should be retained unless equivalent or improved provision is delivered as near as possible to the site where allotments are lost. The provision of new allotments will be supported



Policy CWBP4: Children’s play areas

Context

Designated play areas for children provide safe, enclosed and readily supervised areas for recreation and as social gathering places for young children and their parents. However, some of the play areas within the parish are not within easy (or safe) walking distance from the houses of those who would use them so there is a need for extra provision.

There are currently seven public areas within the parish designated as play areas, one each in Northwood, Southwood and Thickwood, and four in Colerne Village.

The provision within Colerne Village includes a large

recreation ground, which is owned and maintained by the Parish Council. It includes a skateboard area, young (2–11 years) children’s play area, car park, basketball court and multi-use games area, outdoor fitness machines, football pitches with pavilion, and a boules court. People living in the village can access the recreation ground easily on foot; people living in Thickwood are 1.3 miles distant and those in Northwood are 1.7 miles away.

Guiding Evidence

The **Play Spaces Report** gives details of playground provision in the parish. 44% of respondents to the Community Survey (Q.17) stated that they use the Recreation Ground, and 35% stated that they (i.e. accompanying younger children) use the play areas.

Policy CWBP4: Children’s play areas

Developments of 10 or more dwellings must provide children’s play areas within the scheme or contribute to the existing play areas (including improvements to access).



Policy CWBP5 Principles of infrastructure phasing and priorities

Infrastructure financed through the Community Infrastructure Levy should be informed by local priorities and by the additional requirements imposed by the new development. These include:

- Social infrastructure: e.g. recreational and sports facilities, meeting places for local residents. [See the **Community Facilities Report**]
- Physical infrastructure: e.g. cycle/ pedestrian ways, public transport links, green spaces, stone wall repair/rebuilding around boundaries.
- Green infrastructure: e.g. Hedge and tree planting, wildlife corridors.
- Support for community energy projects.



Policy CWBP5: Principals of infrastructure phasing and priorities

1. All new housing and employment proposals will be expected to contribute towards local infrastructure in proportion to their scale and in accordance with national and Wiltshire Core Strategy policies.
2. Housing developers must consider, assess and address their infrastructure requirements, and plan any related programmes of work so as to ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of the community.

Policy PAP1: Pre-application Procedures

Context

Delivering high standards of locally relevant developments and locally distinctive design can best be achieved by thorough, and especially early, discussions between applicants and the local community. Engagement with the local community is particularly valuable when preparing the evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Design Statement and BEP Policies.

As stated in para. 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework, “early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties”. This approach is supported nationally by representatives of public, private, voluntary and community organisations, as well as being addressed in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and featuring strongly in Living with Beauty the report of the government’s Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. (It is already a legal requirement in the Welsh planning system.)

Policy PAP1: Pre-application procedures

In order to ensure positive and structured pre-application engagement, potential applicants submitting development proposals are expected to follow the **Colerne Pre-Application Community Involvement Protocol**, as included in this Neighbourhood Plan, and as adopted by Colerne Parish Council in February 2020.

Section 6 Review of non-allocated potential development sites

i. Supported Sites (non-allocated)

The Allocated Sites (Section 5 BEP4 above) will address some or all of the Plan's Short-Term Housing Need, but not the overall Plan Period Housing Need. There are two potential options for this in the longer term Plan period. When capable of allocation, these options could be addressed and adopted in a mid-term Plan review, but they are not yet in that position.

The first option is to move forward two specific sites identified during the Plan preparation that for various reasons, could not be allocated at this stage. This option is addressed here.

The second option, the wider re-development of MoD Colerne, is addressed in the Concept Statement Section 7, but must await further decisions on the release for development of the MoD site.

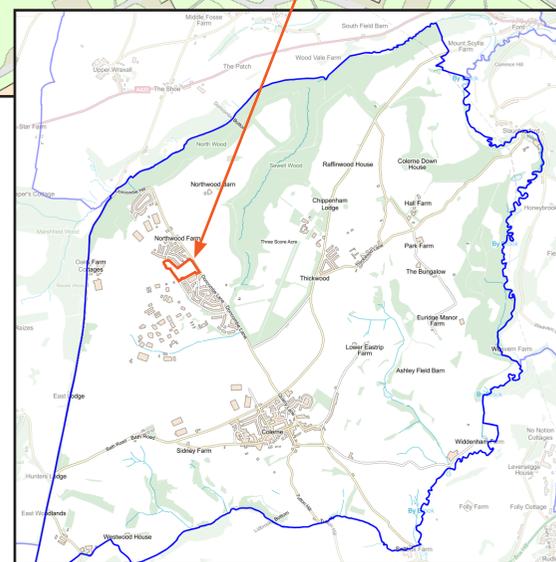
1. The Drill Ground (known locally as "the Parade Ground") between Southwood and Northwood

Overall site area: c 3.5 ha.

The development of this large site, along with the two allocated earlier, could provide capacity for all conceivable local needs for the period to 2036, and possibly including future exogenous demands from Local Plan Review. Also, as discussed earlier, development of this area could effect desirable social integration across the Pinewood-Redwood estates. It should be designed to incorporate social facilities (green spaces, play-areas, arboriculture/natural environment, even a sports complex).

Although currently owned by the MoD the site is outside the security fence of the military site, is already publicly accessible, and is brownfield. The site cannot presently be allocated because of practical restrictions regarding infrastructure and supply which are currently serviced from within the MoD secure site, and because of the MoD's current policy not to consider the site separately from the whole Azimghur Barracks site. If these limitations could be addressed, this site would be immediately allocatable and would form an attractive development proposition for the purposes of this Plan.

Only the eastern part would be developed for housing – around 2 hectares. The area in the western part would be used for community facilities – green spaces, play areas, arboricultural/natural environment, sports facilities. This development would also create opportunity for an off-road pedestrian and cycle path helping to link the several housing areas of North Colerne to Colerne village.



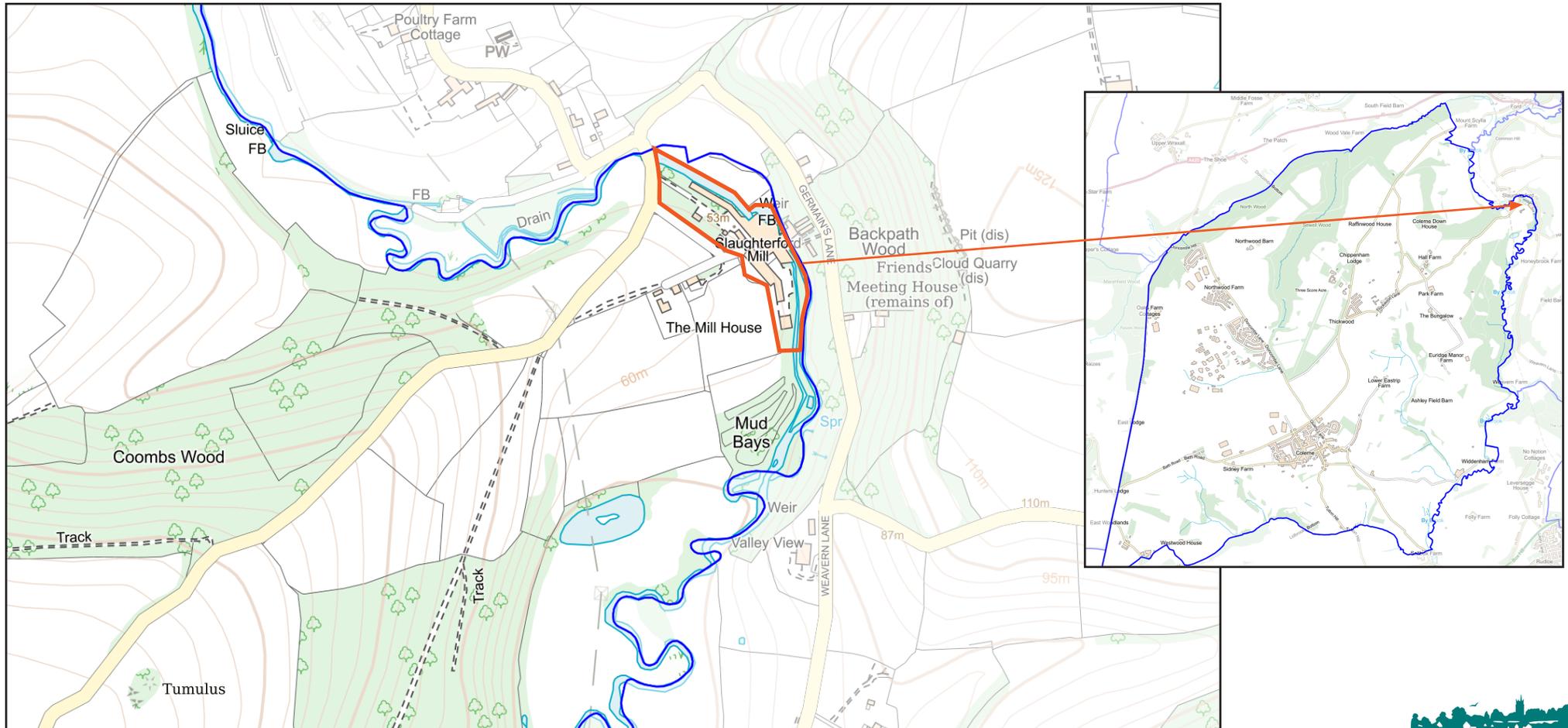
2. Slaughterford Mill

Overall site area: 1.8ha.

This site, submitted in the Call for Sites, is available. Although administratively within the parish of Colerne, it is socially part of the hamlet of Slaughterford and the parish of Biddestone. The current owners' present vision and intentions are supportable in principle, but with reference to the following criteria:

- New units to consist of a mix of residential, live-work, and small commercial units, plus surrounding amenity landscaping.
- Overall development volume (number of additional units) to be limited in accordance with the extremely restricted vehicular access through the hamlet of Slaughterford.

- Parts of the site are within Flood Zone 3, which development plans must address, and before this site could be allocated or taken forward evidence would be required to show that any parts proposed for development pass the Sequential Test and, if necessary, the Exception Test for flooding.
- Development plans should show how the site's industrial heritage has been professionally assessed and will be protected and featured.
- An assessment of potential impacts on bats, following the latest best practice guidelines and in line with the recommendations of the Habitat Assessment (see NEP1), would have to be submitted with any application associated with this site, and these conditions may be difficult to satisfy.
- In view of its location, any development proposal must be acceptable to Biddestone Parish Council.



ii. Other assessed sites

A number of other sites were assessed but rejected, full details of which are set out in the **Colerne Housing Sites Assessment** and the **Housing and Sites Report**. Particular consideration was given in plan preparation to development sites proposed or identified that were contiguous with the settlement boundary of Colerne village. These assessments may be seen in the Colerne Housing Sites Assessment.

Two special cases are reviewed here:

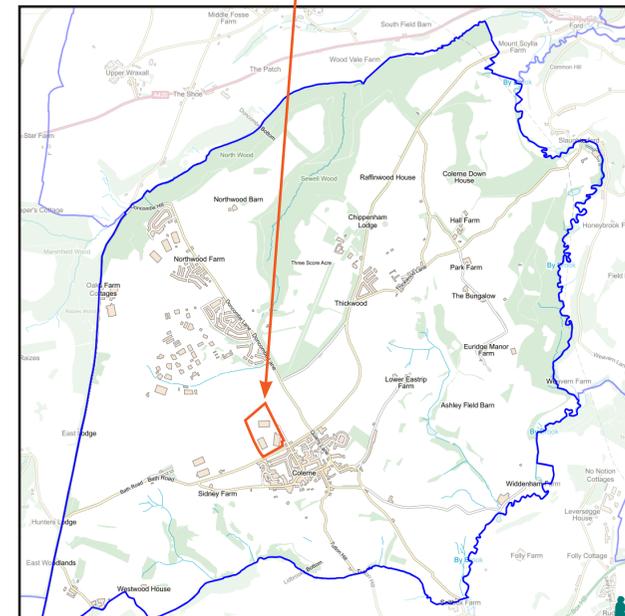
1. Development in the green corridor of land bordering the north of the C151

The green corridor to the north of the C151 has been introduced in Section 4 i.a, where a map is also given. Being adjacent to the village perimeter although outside the settlement boundary, this may seem potentially suitable development land, but as explained in Section 4 i.a., new development, especially of housing, in the greenfield areas north of the C151 would be damaging to the general character of the village and its landscape setting.

At present this area contains (as well as significant greenfield) an area of recreational use and two sites used for employment-related activities housed in ex-MoD hangars.

The hangar site to the east, known locally as the “Three Hangars” site, is a 7.5 ha. brownfield light-industry site. It has been the subject of multiple withdrawn planning applications in recent years. It is subject to restrictions imposed by the adjacent MoD site, which are likely to remain. It was contended in response to previous applications that intensive residential redevelopment of this site would overwhelm and destroy the character of the old village by an over-sized addition, and that its development could set up a ‘domino’ effect, damaging the preservation of the green corridor as a whole.

That judgement remains essentially correct, but if the airfield were to remain in continued use, then this site including hangars may be of ongoing value, including for heritage/museum use to record the significant military importance of Colerne airfield in the 20th century. Many of the MoD buildings have a positive, historic relationship with the village and have historically been embraced to good purpose. Consistent with airfield safeguarding, it is possible that buildings in the south of the ‘Three Hangars’ site could be re-developable to support sustainable employment opportunities or community buildings, such as social/sport/self-employment hub, without damaging the overall green corridor. This concept would be consistent with the general ideas for community development set out elsewhere in the Plan but it is not worked up or adopted at this stage.



2. Field on the western perimeter of the village

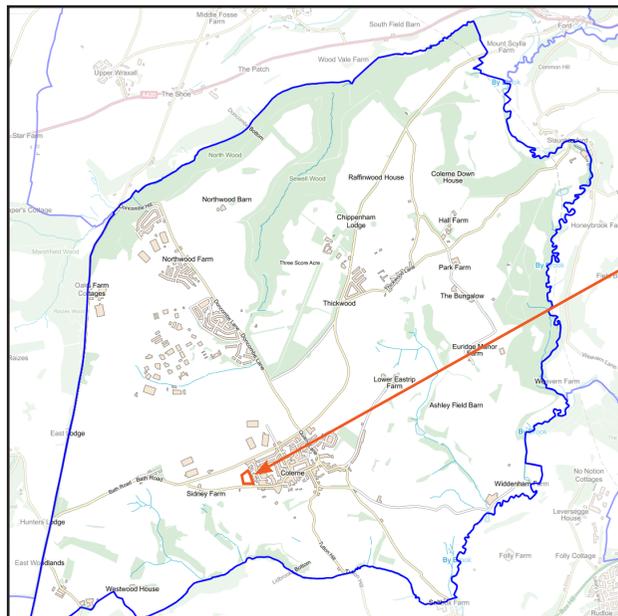
There is a field immediately adjacent to the western end of the village, which in principle would seem to form a natural and unbroken continuation to the village if developed. This is known as 'Payne's Field' and is bordered by Bath Road and Cleaves Avenue.

The site was put forward during the SHELAA process and in the Call for Sites. It is therefore available and deliverable. Although this could apparently enable small-scale development in line with village aspirations and meet the Plan Period Housing Need, it cannot be supported at this time because it rests within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. Review of the Bristol and Bath sectors of this Green Belt was completed in 2018, and Wiltshire Council has no current plans to review the sectors within its jurisdiction.

More importantly, as the limited development possibilities defined within Green Belt regulations include sports use, this Plan notes that Colerne Parish Council has favoured this land as an extension to its current (adjacent) recreation ground, so as to provide needed additional sporting facilities. If such a proposal were to be advanced it would be supportable.

The site is in the Cotswolds AONB. There are no historic monuments or archaeological records for this site or nearby.

NB: The map is taken from the SHELAA. It erroneously includes the small triangle of land between Cleaves Avenue and Green Lane, which does not form part of the site.



Section 7 A Concept Statement for the MoD Estate

1. Why a Concept Statement?

Though release for development of the MoD site within Colerne Parish is not likely to take place until late in the Neighbourhood Plan period, it is important to take its potential development into account in this Plan because its scale and form will influence all aspects of the current Plan and any subsequent review Plans.

To ensure that disposal is congruent with the Neighbourhood Plan, and that this Plan acknowledges the potential community impact of future development of the site, the Steering Group decided to prepare a Concept Statement (CS) to ensure that the community's views can contribute to masterplanning processes from the outset, and that there is an established basis for the community to contribute meaningfully to masterplanning when it gets under way.

2. Planning background

The disposal of Wiltshire's MoD sites is governed by the existing Wiltshire Core Policy CP37:

"The re-use of any significant redundant MoD sites will be determined through masterplans, developed with the local planning authority in conjunction with the local community, in order to ensure the holistic planning of a site or sites in a locality, rather than piecemeal development. Significant sites are those that would be classed as major development. The preparation of the masterplan should normally occur in advance of site disposal by the MoD. Due to the rural nature of many MoD sites consideration should also be given to the location of sites in terms of:

- accessibility (and) the suitability for conversion and retention of existing buildings;
- infrastructure capacity including impacts on transportation routes;
- retaining areas of biodiversity, appropriate green space and landscaping measures;
- consolidation of the buildings on a site and reversion of land to open countryside."

Additionally relevant are: Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity; Core Policy 51 - Landscape issues; Core Policy 52 – Green Infrastructure.

The Corsham Community Area Strategy states –

"In accordance with Core Policy 37 (Military Establishments). All major development sites coming forward in the wider Corsham area must clearly demonstrate that the proposal will be well integrated into the existing settlements and enhance the character of the area. A masterplan should be prepared for each site in conjunction with the Community Plan and associated guidance."

The Cotswolds AONB housing and development policies specifically state that –

"Developments of disused airfields should have a development brief, brief or masterplan incorporating and based on a full contextual appraisal, minimise impact on open character of the High Wold dip slope, promote the use of existing buildings for commercial use consistent with AONB, and not include ill-considered siting of or major new buildings. In some circumstances the replacement of existing buildings with better designed new buildings may be appropriate."

Against the background of the Policies described above, and those in this Neighbourhood Plan, notably CPA 1 on community engagement, it is essential that the community, via the Parish Council, is engaged at all stages in development of proposals, before and during masterplan preparation and in relation to subsequent applications.

3. The site

Colerne Airfield (134ha) consists of three runways and access taxiways, one large (4,000m²) World War II hangar, control tower and a small, brick fire station.

Although identified for disposal by 2025, a review by the MoD currently underway may well lead to the Airfield remaining in MoD ownership. Because there is little scope for development of any kind to the south of the Satellite Ground Station due to its safeguarding requirement, and because reversion to agricultural use seems economically unlikely, the presumed value in the airfield site may lie in its continued use as an airfield or (if distribution difficulties can be overcome) solar power generation.

The community survey referred to earlier provided positive support in principle for all three of the outcomes mentioned above.

The survey noted that plans for continuation as an airfield should be subject to detailed consultation with the Parish Council so that factors such as frequency of movement, noise, size of aircraft, etc. could be kept within acceptable bounds. Retention as an airfield could be delivered through a private initiative, some kind of public/private partnership or, as is currently the case, as a military installation.

The future of the airfield per se is a developing situation and this Concept Statement will need to be reviewed as further decisions emerge. For now, however, the assumption is that the airfield will remain and will continue to operate as an airfield. It will, therefore, continue to need air-traffic safeguarding and this may affect the type and location of development in parts of the Azimghur Barracks (AzB) site.

Azimghur Barracks (AzB) (118ha) (118ha) consists of a large number of mostly World War II brick built and generally unmodernised buildings in a low density randomly distributed pattern. Around half the stock is allocated to military single-person accommodation and mess facilities, the remainder being mostly technical and office space. The Barracks site includes some sports and recreation facilities shared with the local, non-military community. There are also a further five World War II hangars on the Barracks site.

Roads across the AzB site are a mixture of narrow roads with just enough space for 2 cars to pass and former aircraft manoeuvring surfaces which are expansive and mostly unbounded. A limited number have footpaths, and lighting is restricted to a few areas and is of a poor standard. The layout of the roads is functional and adequate for the current military use but is unlikely to be adequate or applicable to most potential changes of use.

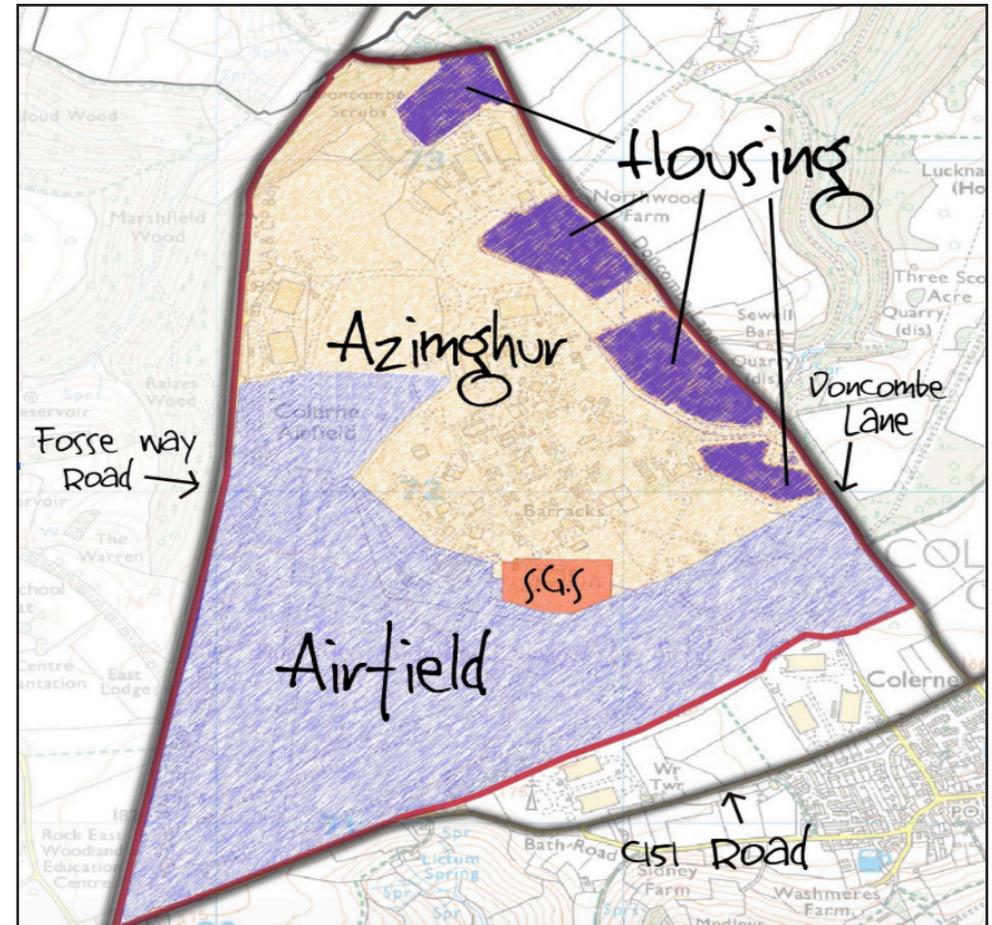
Some of the infrastructure constraints which apply to Colerne parish as a whole are relevant to ideas about re-development of the AzB Site. Any significant increase in the number of houses or businesses above current levels will likely require major upgrades in sewage waste disposal, water, gas and electrical supplies, unless self-sustaining. The MoD site is situated at the end of distribution networks and is known to be close to overstressing infrastructure capacity in a number of areas.

The AzB site has a newly installed gas fired centralised heating system with recently upgraded underground pipework. This provides domestic hot water and hot water heating to almost all the buildings in regular use including office areas in the hangars. This may be expanded and adapted to suit potential future use [SEP1].

The Satellite Ground Station (SGS) consists of 4.4ha and is a fenced enclave located in the centre of the MoD site. It is not earmarked for disposal. It has boundaries with the airfield and with AzB. Access to the site is through AzB along the camp roads from the Main Gate on Doncombe Lane and it is presumed this access will be secured in any future arrangements. The site itself will need safeguarding for the foreseeable future and may well require revised security arrangements.

Finally, and as covered earlier, the housing along Doncombe Lane to the north and east of Azimghur Barracks should be noted. This was mostly MoD built. Part is now in private hands, and the remainder is owned by Annington Homes and is leased back as Service Families Accommodation to the MoD.

There will almost certainly be ground contaminants across much of the site, particularly in the vicinity of the hangars and workshop areas as well as the post-war aircraft burial sites. Contamination assessments will be required, which should also address issues of potential groundwater contamination and protection in line with Environment Agency guidance. Parts of the site are designated by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Wiltshire Council as a County Wildlife Area.



4. History/Legacy

The MoD site at Colerne dates back to World War II when in 1939 it was developed out of a number of adjacent farms as a fighter airfield for defence of the south-western approaches. Located on the southern edge of the Cotswolds, RAF Colerne, as it was then known, required considerable levelling and ground works. The centre of the airfield is particularly exposed and is the highest point for some distance around, at 600ft above sea level, with most buildings nestling in undulating ground to the north and east of the runways.

It is bordered to the northwest by a Roman road (the Fosse Way), to the south by the C151 and to the east by an occasionally single-track road, Doncombe Lane. The village by-pass section of the C151 was constructed during the 1960s to the south of the old Chippenham-Bath road, and parts of the airfield which lay between the line of the old road and the C151 have since been sold by the MoD. The old road now provides a rear access to the airfield control tower and to former MoD hangars and associated land now in private ownership.

The RAF continued to operate from RAF Colerne until 1976 and although flying continued thereafter in the form of gliding and parachuting, the site was used for the most part by the Army for the training of Junior Leaders. In 1993 the RAF returned to fly at what then became Colerne Airfield, and Number 21 Signals Regiment took up residence in the old RAF buildings and surrounding grounds which were renamed Azimghur Barracks. The Satellite Ground Station was constructed later in the decade as part of the military Skynet system.

Much of Colerne parish's history since the 1930s has been influenced by the existence of the MoD site and the interaction between military personnel and villagers. There is a strong bond which began with the RAF and continues to this day with the Signals Regiment. For many in the parish, military and civilian life is entwined and seen as mutually beneficial.

The Community Survey found that, by a slight margin, the highest percentage favoured reversion of the airfield to agriculture, but because of the poor quality of the land now and the likely high restoration costs, this is regarded as unlikely to be economically viable. Retention of the airfield for aviation use was seen by 44% of responders as supportable, closely followed by use for solar power generation.

This Plan adopts the assumption that the airfield will not be subject to built development but may be retained for light aviation (which may be the optimum solution for the MoD) or if feasible for solar power generation. In the Community Survey, 82% felt that, in any future usage of the airfield, a place should be found to celebrate the military connection through some form of heritage centre. There are a number of World War II artefacts around the airfield which would support this, such as revetments and bomb and ammunition loading bays.

In terms of heritage, there are no listed buildings on any part of the site. There are around 30 Monuments noted in the Historic Environment Record (including some bunkers and pillboxes) and 2 Events. Clearly the most significant monument, currently buried following an excavation in 1854, is the site of a Roman Villa adjacent to the Satellite Ground Station. This will need careful attention if any developments are planned nearby.

5. Site access

Road access to the parish is highly constrained as described elsewhere in this Plan. (See **Desktop Study of Road Access to North Colerne** by Wiltshire Council, December 2019, of road capacities in the vicinity of AzB.)

The access to AzB is primarily through the Main Gate on Doncombe Lane with HGVs having to approach the site from the C151 via Bannerdown Hill (from Batheaston). Even this route is single track with passing places at a number of locations and there is little scope for significant improvement. At the eastern end of the C151 at Ford there is a weight-restricted bridge and a restricted single lane exit between listed buildings onto the A420. All other routes north and south of the MoD site cross steep-sided valleys and are mostly single track with passing places and a 7.5T limit. Occasional HGV access to parts of the site can be obtained via a gate off the Fosse Way in the northwest corner of the airfield.

Little information is available on overall road capacity approaching Colerne, although an earlier application for 130 houses on the "Three Hangar" site abutting the southeast corner of the airfield was recommended for refusal by Highways officers because of road capacity concerns. Wiltshire Highways commissioned a school safety road assessment which also raised concerns about road capacity and traffic issues.

6. Timing of development

The Secretary of State for Defence announced in 2019 that the airfield would be disposed of by 2025 and the AzB site by 2031. There have been no announcements about the future of the SGS and it is presumed that it will remain, and will continue to need HGV access and safeguarding for the foreseeable future. It is difficult to take the announced disposal dates with any degree of certainty as the MoD's plans are still subject to change. MoD investment into the AzB site is currently little more than essential maintenance and therefore disposal by the announced date of 2031 would still be a reasonable planning assumption and that is used as the basis of this CS.

Of the off-site former Service Families Accommodation (married quarters) to the north and east of the barracks, the majority (some 215 homes) are now owned by Annington Homes and leased back to the military. The remainder, at Pinewood (92 homes) and part of Southwood (71 homes) are privately owned. The future of this arrangement is to a large extent independent of the MoD Colerne site as most of the residents work on other MoD units. In developing this CS it is assumed this arrangement will continue.

7. Community Vision for the AzB site

The MoD site consists of an area of attractive landscape and a considerable expanse of brownfield land. Development potential might range from a major housing site at one end of the spectrum to a return to agriculture at the other. The former would be inappropriate in view of the severe local transport constraints, its rural setting in the AONB, and the strong preference of the people of Colerne to preserve the rural community in which they live. The latter is unlikely because of the probability of pre-existing land pollution and the uneconomic costs of restoring it to its former use.

The Community Survey made clear that built re-development of the large open spaces of the MoD sites (AzB) was not the preferred option compared with its use as a natural space, for agriculture, or for parkland or recreational activity. This Plan recognises that such an approach may not be preferred by site owner(s).

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's '**Vision' workshop (March 2019)** acknowledged that built-development would be probable but that it must be envisaged at a level and rate that is sustainable, does not outstrip the capacity of site and local infrastructure and utilities, and does not lead to diminished quality of life for those living in and around the parish [BEP1].

It is a community aspiration that any new developments should be small. This may seem hard to reconcile with the sheer size of AzB. Yet there are development principles that could link value-delivery for the site owner with community aspirations. For example the principles found in the Town and Country Planning Association's publication 'Understanding Garden Villages: An Introductory Guide', some or all of which may prove influential:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and inclusion of housing types [BEP3] including affordable.
- A range of local jobs [EBP1-2,CP2] within easy commuting distance.
- Imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities and including opportunities to grow food [CWBP3].
- Enhancing the natural environment [NEP1-4], providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and using zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate-change resilience [SEP1-2].
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems [CP1], with walking, cycling [CP2] and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

- The provision of "village green" and "market square" type open spaces.

Turning these sorts of high-level ideas into practical strategies requires some "out-of-the-box" or "blue-sky" thinking to begin with.

► Promoting "blue-sky" thinking

The SG's Vision workshop, based on the results of the Community Survey and Consultations, considered what criteria or principles might be envisioned for completed redevelopment of the MoD site 20 years hence. The remainder of the CS presents some of the 'blue-sky' thinking that the Workshop generated.

These ideas are not meant as detailed proposals but to indicate the kind of forward-looking development principles that a successful Masterplan should embody, for only in this way will the MoD requirement to realise value be reconciled with the community objectives that run throughout the Neighbourhood Plan. Such reconciliation is however entirely feasible given a readiness to think "outside the box".

As an initial step the SG Workshop offers some scenarios which could be particularly relevant to the site's history and to the challenges of today's climate emergency, and would demonstrate imaginative options. As illustrations, these could include one or more of the following:

- The planting of a significant area of woodland to contribute to offsetting today's very real climate crisis
- A military rehabilitation centre (possibly for PTSD sufferers or war casualty victims) in a parkland setting, with some adjacent housing for staff
- An area set aside for a green burial ground
- A wildlife park, wildflower area, a nature trail and a lake to encourage bio-diversity, with walking and cycle routes for the people of the Parish.
- The provision of a heritage and education centre open to the public and charting the history of Colerne airfield
- Celebration and interpretation of the site of the Roman Villa
- Laboratory and science park for local universities
- Solar energy/PV farm (see SEP1 above and the **Report by the Renewable Energy Sub-Group**)
- Design and test facilities for new forms of transportation
- Use of some of the existing accommodation and messing facilities for youth training and outward-bound type programmes. Including potential lease-back to HM Forces

None of these ideas is inherently infeasible and they demonstrate the wide range of functions and uses which could have collective viability in such a site.

► A scenario to form an integrated North Colerne

The Workshop noted that development at the AzB site could include resolution of a particular long-standing community problem, namely the physical separation of residential North Colerne from Colerne village (Section 4 i d). North Colerne consists of some 400 dwellings, almost the same as Colerne Village, and has some local facilities, albeit located within AzB. These are principally available for MoD employees and will be withdrawn as AzB closes down.

North Colerne is located across four distinct settlement areas forming a strip along the eastern side of the site, from north to south: Pinewood, Northwood, Southwood and Redwood. Only Redwood is currently within the AzB site itself, the remainder being outside the perimeter. However, much of the connecting land is within the AzB site and all four areas must be considered together with the residual AzB areas if there is to be a coherent plan. An integrated planning approach to North Colerne could see these areas properly interconnected and, by replicating facilities that will be lost as AzB draws down, North Colerne should acquire Settlement status.

Also possible would be the demolition of the easternmost AzB hangars to allow Pinewood to properly join with the remainder of North Colerne. A North Colerne village centre could be designed into a “garden village” concept - mixed residential with green spaces; commercial, social, and community amenities (allotments, meeting spaces, play areas), as well as a wilderness space for wildlife/biodiversity.

Such an approach is supported by the Community Survey which indicated that the integration of the North Colerne residential area would be acceptable if it accorded with infrastructure constraints, if mixed in character, and if employment led. A North Colerne Settlement Boundary could wrap in business use of the AzB site.

► Business development considerations

Businesses envisaged therein should be such as to not rely on heavy transport and to operate within current traffic levels and road infrastructure constraints [EBP2].

Such businesses would support Wiltshire Council’s Local Plan Core Policy 37, which requires any Masterplan to prioritise employment-led options that will take advantage of the open spaces available across the MoD site. At this stage it would seem likely that such businesses should be small high-tech enterprises. A plentiful supply of solar PV generated electricity and associated storage, possibly through production and use of Hydrogen Cells could ensure that environmental impact is minimised. Indeed, all business envisaged should be carbon neutral [BEP6] or provide for carbon offset.

► Connectivity

New and improved cycleways and footpaths around the MoD site [CP2] can connect elements within the new settlement and join them into Colerne village and beyond, for use by parents with buggies, young children and disability transport. Such connections would facilitate the use of electric autonomous driving vehicles which ultimately will serve to connect all parts of the parish and onward to the public transport network at the bottom of Bannerdown Hill. Additional site access may be established towards the northern end of AzB off the Fosse Way.

► Innovative Design

To help overcome infrastructure constraints, new building should be designed as largely “autonomous” and “regenerative” where possible [BEP6], self-sustaining in energy requirements [SEP1], probably assisted by an on-site solar PV installation, ground-source heat, and self-contained waste management. Housing should be delivered at a level which infrastructure can support through a mixture of high-value low-density dwellings, low-cost self-build [BEP3], and community-led housing schemes.

► A range of built-development scenarios

Still springing from the “blue sky thinking” approach, scenarios for built-development of the AzB site could consider:

- Light industrial aviation-related activities in existing hangars with taxiway access to airfield
- Hangars can be reused for indoor recreation (e.g. velo/equine/electric karting/swimming and gymnasium)
- An area dedicated to renewal energy generation – solar or ground source – to service local needs and infrastructure including swimming pool etc.
- Public sports fields and gymnasium
- Re-use of existing hangars for commercial use.
- Re-use of some of the existing buildings with adaptation and extension where appropriate for light industrial/hi-tech use
- If the airfield continues to operate, it could support an array of residential “eco hangar homes” at low density with aircraft “garages” and direct access to the runways

8. Conclusion

A “blue-sky thinking” approach reveals an important principle. It is possible to visualise redevelopment of such a large site in a rural area that can both satisfy community aspirations and unlock development value. This occurs at some midpoint between the two extreme ‘caricature’ possibilities - reversion to country parkland or a 7,000 dwelling new town. The key is mixed development, with small and distinct sub-elements, with innovative design and construction both of buildings and landscape.

Imaginative scoping and design, working within a broad envelope of what is deemed possible could deliver outcomes that are satisfactory to both landowner and community.

The examples of “blue sky thinking” above are not community proposals: they are hypothetical and intended to commence discussion of how distinctive, community-acceptable, mixed-purpose, overall site development might be envisaged at a strategic level. There are many relevant Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan that would support this kind of approach to major site re-development.

There is ample scope for green spaces [NEP3] and renewable energy generation and storage [SEP1]. Some initial reactions to the development of the MoD site included the proposition that the airfield would make an ideal ‘solar farm’. We have referred elsewhere to the possible limitations to this particular proposal, but that would not preclude designing a range of smaller-scale and innovative renewable energy technologies into the longer term plans for either or both of the “airfield” or the “AzB” sub-sites.

If the right balance is achieved it should be possible to attract high technology businesses with low energy and low carbon footprint that can blend into the landscape and leverage the ongoing presence of the airfield if that becomes established. Dwellings should be energy neutral and self contained in terms of waste management. Traffic levels [CP1] will need to be kept broadly within current levels, but new interlinking roads and pathways could provide high levels of connectivity and pedestrian and cycle access [CP2] across and without the site.

Given these opportunities, the Colerne MoD site could be uniquely placed for a visionary development of a self-sufficient community; a mix of housing types, styles, economic profiles, and micro-environments; and a broad spectrum of work and leisure places. An abundance of land but poor infrastructure means that low-density self-sufficient dwellings [BEP3] and businesses [EBP2] are both necessary and feasible. It will, of course, be vital to get the economics right, but we know that the “simple answer” to that – large scale homogenised development – is neither supported by the community nor practical given the infrastructure constraints.

There is here an opportunity to create an exciting, modern place to live and work, with a well-designed sense of “place”, where people have space to develop and facilities to enjoy.



Section 8 Projects

During the development of this Neighbourhood Plan many ideas have emerged for desirable developments which cannot be mandated by the Plan itself but which may valuably be recorded here for further consideration. These ideas can be said to have been identified by Plan processes and have community support.

It is recommended that the Parish Council keep this Project list under review, and seek to identify developable ideas and potential methods of implementation.

Some of these ideas might be simple to implement if resources were available. Potential financial sources might be Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), local benefaction, the Parish Council, grants, local fundraising or crowdfunding.

- additional allotment facilities (e.g. in an integrated North Colerne settlement);
- after the coronavirus experience of 2020, consideration to be given to development of shared work-spaces to anticipate a greater demand for home or near-home working;
- more, and improved, cycleways and pathways, in particular linking the “three settlements”;
- an airfield and aircraft heritage and educational facility on the airfield to describe its historical and military significance to the RAF and the country;
- meeting space for North Colerne surrounded by recreational land;
- a self-sustaining toilet facility at the Recreation Ground;
- a Community Energy scheme;
- the Parish Council to represent to Wiltshire the desirability of switching off street lights during the deepest hours of the night, leaving only those necessary on Highways Act safety grounds, e.g. at road junctions;
- a community vehicle charging station or stations, within North Colerne as a settlement-development feature, but also as feasible in the central village and in Thickwood.
- space and facilities for a Colerne cricket club
- feasibility assessment of, and planning for, a local carbon-neutral community transport scheme, and of a ‘Colerne Car Club’.

Section 9 Plan Management and Review

The Colerne Neighbourhood Development Plan covers the years from 2020 until 2036. The Wiltshire Core Strategy, running until 2026, is currently (June 2020) under review and when its successor Local Plan Review is adopted, its period will run to 2036.

This Neighbourhood Plan is a response to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today, and it is recognised that current challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period.

Colerne Parish Council, as the Neighbourhood Development Plan authority, will be responsible for maintaining, reviewing progress and monitoring delivery, and periodically revisiting the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure continued contemporary relevance. If and as necessary the Parish Council will stand ready to sponsor a review of this Plan to respond to changing circumstances.

Section 10 Appendices and Evidence

▶ *Follow link to an indexed summary of research, consultation and policy-background reports.*

