

Ref. No.	Page No. / Para. No. / Policy No.	Name	Comment	Response
R/S/1		Wiltshire Council Strategic Planning	<p>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and other EU obligations:</p> <p>Wiltshire Council has undertaken a HRA screening opinion, and this concluded that your draft neighbourhood plan will not result in a likely significant effect on any European site and therefore it is not necessary to subject the plan to an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2019.</p> <p>An SEA screening was carried out by Wiltshire Council in October 2021 and determined that your draft neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and SEA will be required. An SEA should accompany the plan when it is submitted.</p> <p>The HRA decision may need to be reviewed if the draft neighbourhood plan changes significantly following this Regulation 14 consultation, before it is submitted at the Regulation 15 stage.</p> <p>An SEA report has been prepared by you and the comments that follow identify areas that should be addressed following the consultation period. These comments take into consideration the views of specialist officers in the Council and are in addition to the comments made by the Council to the CNP Regulation 14 consultation in 2022.</p>	It is not considered that changes to the Neighbourhood Plan as a result of the Regulation 14 Consultation warrant reviewing the HRA decision.
R/S/2	SEA Scoping Report Paras. 5.9 and 5.15		<p>Reference to a standalone 'Chippenham Landscape Character Assessment' will cause confusion.</p> <p>The correct report to refer to is 'Chippenham Landscape Setting Assessment – Report 2014' prepared by 'The Environment Partnership (TEP) on behalf of Wiltshire Council.</p> <p>This report considered the landscape setting for the town itself along with its smaller outlying rural hinterland settlements and was produced to inform and evidence the site selection process during the preparation of the CSAP. It utilised and referenced the 'Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment-2005' and the 'North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment – 2004.'</p>	This comment was not made by Wiltshire Council when they were consulted on the Scoping Report and commented on it in September 2022. AECOM have advised that they would not update the Scoping Report at this late stage. Instead, they have updated Appendix B of the Environmental Report (Scoping Information) with reference made to the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base in the context of 'important viewpoints' within the Landscape key issues.
R/S/3	SEA Scoping Report Para. 5.18		While reference is made to some outlying Chippenham rural settlements in the text, it is not clear why other rural settlements aren't included i.e. Allington, Kington Langley or Lacock.	This comment was not made by Wiltshire Council when they were consulted on the Scoping Report and commented on it in September 2022. AECOM have advised that they would not update the Scoping Report at this late stage. Instead they have updated Appendix B (Scoping Information) of the Environmental Report with additional rural settlements added to second bullet of Landscape key issues.

R/S/4	SEA Scoping Report Para. 5.19	Reference is made to important viewpoints. What are these 'important viewpoints'? How were they considered/derived to be important? How are they recorded or illustrated? Also, what are the 'Special Qualities' of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Area? Outline or provide a link or reference to these.	This comment was not made by Wiltshire Council when they were consulted on the Scoping Report and commented on it in September 2022. AECOM have advised that they would not update the Scoping Report at this late stage. Instead, they have updated Appendix B (Scoping Information) of the Environmental Report with reference made to the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base in the context of 'important viewpoints' within the Landscape key issues. Regarding viewpoints, AECOM have confirmed that there are a few derived to be important from consultations such as the Charter Road estate Event held in Chippenham Town Hall (8 February 2020 10.00 – 12.30) where residents identified 'sensitive areas to be protected' including views e.g. towards Bremhill, Derry Hill, the White Horse at Cherhill. Comments included: "I like the view of the space and hills between Pewsham and the rest of the estates". These can be found in the Housing Design Topic Paper Appendix 13 which includes provisions for views. Important views on Figure 8.3 and character area maps within the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Annexe 2) reflect 'key positive views' shown on character area maps within the Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal 2007. These views are also referred to in Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC4 - Development in Chippenham Conservation Area. Views to the River Avon are also considered to be important as mentioned in Policy TC2 – River Green Corridor Masterplan. Finally, the 'Chippenham Landscape Setting Assessment – Report 2014' prepared by The Environment Partnership (TEP) on behalf of Wiltshire Council sets out 'key views associated with Chippenham and its countryside setting' in map form. This is reproduced in Figure 3 of the Chippenham Design Guide and should be used to inform the design of new housing development under Policy H2 - Housing Design.
R/S/5	SEA Scoping Report Para. 6.3 Bullet point 5	Reference to Core Policy 59 is made/listed. The full policy title should be referenced i.e., "The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site and its setting."	This comment was not made by Wiltshire Council when they were consulted on the Scoping Report and commented on it in September 2022. AECOM have advised that they would not update the Scoping Report at this late stage but note the comment and advise that any future reference made through the SEA or otherwise will include the full policy title.
R/S/6	SEA Scoping Report Para. 6.19	Under 'Designated Heritage Assets' there is no mention of 'Rowden Conservation Area' (south of the town) which adjoins 'Chippenham Conservation Area'. This would logically follow after Para 6.19 (pg. 42) and subsection retitled 'Conservation Areas' under Heritage Designations	AECOM have advised that they would not update the Scoping Report at this late stage. However, Rowden Conservation Area is identified within Historic Environment key issues, Appendix B (Scoping Information) of the Environmental Report.
R/S/7	SEA Scoping Report Para. 6.2	List the 'Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan' (CAMP) rather than just referring to the CAMP further on in the chapter.	This comment was not made by Wiltshire Council when they were consulted on the Scoping Report and commented on it in September 2022. AECOM have advised that they would not update the Scoping Report at this late stage but note the comment and advise that any future reference made through the SEA or otherwise will include the full policy title.
R/S/8	SEA Scoping Report Para. 6.31	All references to a single Conservation Area should be changed to plural / both.	AECOM have advised that they would not update the Scoping Report at this late stage. However, where relevant, they have updated references within the SEA Environmental Report. However it is recognised that broadly the Plan references by name the Chippenham Conservation Area.
R/S/9	SEA Scoping Report Para. 6.32 Bullet point 2	Suggest wording change as follows to reflect Chippenham has 2 Conservation Areas. "Help to protect and enhance the significance of 'Chippenham' and 'Rowden' Conservation Areas and their settings and maintain their integrity"	AECOM have advised that they would not update the Scoping Report at this late stage. However, they have updated the SEA Framework in Appendix B (Scoping Information) of the Environmental Report to refer to Rowden Conservation Area as well.
R/S/10	SEA Environmental Report Para. 9.85	In the recommendations section it states that it is considered 'that there is the potential for draft CNP Policy G11 to exceed national requirement...if it were to support new development where it delivered in excess of 10% net gain'. This recommendation is welcomed and would not change the conclusion of the HRA undertaken in February 2022.	Para. 2 of Policy G11 amended to reflect recommendation from AECOM in SEA Environmental Report that proposals in excess of 10% BNG should be supported.

R/S/11	SEA Environmental Report Para. 3.3		The Scoping Report uses a 16km zone of influence (Zoi) around the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC in paragraph 3.3. It is not clear what the origin of the 16km Zoi is and what the rationale is for using it as Wiltshire Council does not apply a 16km Zoi around the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.	AECOM have advised that the Scoping Report mistakes Zoi with Consultation Zone, as per the Planning Guidance for Wiltshire: Bat Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). 16km reflects approximate distance from the furthest extent of the consultation zone to the Neighbourhood Area. It is noted that the language is arguably misleading and therefore will not be used again. The Scoping Report does nonetheless identify the protected species site locations present within the Neighbourhood Area. In terms of the Environmental Report, important habitats and sites are identified in the Biodiversity key
R/S/12	SEA Environmental Report Chapter 6		The text refers to non designated heritage assets but these are not shown on a map or table to enable further analysis of the data.	AECOM have advised that a footnote has been included to the Wiltshire & Swindon HER where interactive mapping can be used to analyse the data if required. This is also referenced in the Scoping Report.
R/S/13	SEA Environmental Report Paras. 9.43-9.47		Pleased to see that that the rich archaeological heritage of Chippenham is referenced in Section 3, the built heritage of the town is referenced in Section 8 when discussing development in Chippenham Conservation area and that Chippenham is acknowledged as a historic riverside market town in Section 4.2. of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. However, there should be specific mention of an objective or policy to protect and enhance the historic environment which is characterised in sections 9.43 to 9.57 of the Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).	AECOM have advised that a new paragraph (9.59) has been included to reference the Neighbourhood Plan objective and link to assets discussed in paras. 9.43-9.47.
R/S/14		Environment Agency	We have no further comments at this stage but would signpost our responses provided in September 2022.	Noted
R/S/15		Coal Authority	The Coal Authority is only a statutory consultee for coalfield Local Authorities. As Wiltshire Council lies outside the coalfield, the Planning team at the Coal Authority has no specific comments to make.	Noted
R/S/16		National Highways	Having reviewed the draft plan and associated documents we have no specific comments on the plan's proposed policies, which in themselves are unlikely to result in a scale of development which will adversely impact the SRN. However, in general terms we are obviously supportive of those policies which seek to increase the self-sufficiency of the town and improve sustainable transport facilities to encourage the take up of alternative travel modes to the private car. It is noted that the plan does not allocate sites for development or identify housing number requirements as these will be determined through Wiltshire Council's Local Plan Review. As you will be aware, M4 Junction 17 experiences congestion during peak periods and improvements have been identified as necessary to accommodate planned growth. Any large scale development coming forward in Chippenham will need to be supported by an appropriate assessment of traffic impacts which should consider the operation of the SRN in line with national planning practice guidance and DfT Circular 01/2022. Where proposals would result in a severe congestion or unacceptable safety impact, mitigation will be required in line with current policy. In the meantime, we are continuing to work with Wiltshire Council in the preparation of their transport evidence base for the Wiltshire Local Plan Review and in the development of improvement proposals at junction 17.	Support noted
R/S/17		Corsham Town Council	Resolved: To highlight the Corsham Batscape Strategy to the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Especially Page 31 (Phase 2 Batscape Maps – NE Section) which clearly shows strategic flyways going through the Chippenham NP area. These should be protected and enhanced or at least mitigated for should the areas be developed.	The Steering Group considers that Policy G13 already provides a sufficient level of protection for the Strategic Green Corridors of the River Avon and Railway Line, identified as 'strategic flyways' in the Corsham Batscape Strategy. However, in order to maintain low light levels in and adjacent to Green Corridors which are important for bats new criterion v) added to Policy G13 to ensure no future light pollution: <i>'Avoiding the installation of new lighting where possible. Where it is deemed necessary to install new lighting it should comply with the Institute of Lighting Professionals minimum standards for Environmental Zone E2.'</i> New paragraph added after 6.43 to explain the benefits for wildlife of having low light levels in green corridors, including importance of Strategic Green Corridors as dark corridors for bats. New paragraphs added after 6.14 and 6.40 to refer to the strategic flyways and bat
R/S/18		KBC Developments	Our clients object to the chapter included within Neighbourhood Plan headed "Green Buffers". They believe that this chapter should be removed from the Neighbourhood Plan for the reasons set out below. If the plan is not modified to remove this chapter from the submission draft (and policy G15 contained within it) then our client's will be making representations to Wiltshire Council and if necessary at the examination stage, both as to the lawfulness of the approach set out within the Green Buffers chapter and the justification for its inclusion within a neighbourhood plan.	Policy G15 has been substantially modified to address the comments made by developers and stakeholders on the shortcomings of the policy as originally written. The changes are explained in more detail in the response to R/S/19.

R/S/19	<p>Purpose of Neighbourhood Plans</p> <p>Neighbourhood plans by their nature are meant to address local issues within the neighbourhood plan area. They should not seek to deal with strategic policies but be in conformity with them (one of the basic conditions). Strategic policies are clearly matters for Wiltshire Council as a local planning authority and it seems quite clear that the Green Buffers chapter goes beyond the scope of what is appropriate to incorporate within a neighbourhood plan. In support of the contention that the Green Buffer policies are strategic policies we would make the following points as part of our client's objections to this chapter:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal is to identify potentially large areas of open countryside as Green Buffers in order to secure separation between settlements and avoid coalescence. 2. The Neighbourhood Plan is unable to designate any land let alone that of the scale required in order to establish Green Buffers. 3. The plan acknowledges that it cannot set policies beyond the neighbourhood plan boundary where such buffers would need be established. 4. Any policy relating to Green Buffers would have district wide implications in terms of the separation of settlements, not implications that are specific to Chippenham 5. Policy G15 itself makes it quite clear that it applies to strategic allocations which are to be made by Wiltshire Council as local planning authority. 6. As strategic planning authority Wiltshire Council will have to determine the criteria for developing strategic allocated sites, and this role should not be constrained by the Neighbourhood Plan as to how such criteria is to be set for land allocated within Chippenham. 7. It would be wholly inappropriate to place constraints on allocations through a neighbourhood plan that have not yet been formulated and to adopt such approach would create inconsistencies between allocations within Chippenham and allocations elsewhere within the administrative area of Wiltshire Council. 	<p>The Steering Group discussed at length the options for amending or deleting Policy G15 to address these comments. They agreed to substantially reframe the policy to remove reference to any strategic requirements and the 'Green buffer principles for Chippenham'.</p> <p>Policy G15 as now amended is a more focused non-strategic policy which relates to a single Green Buffer, two fields within the Neighbourhood Area, which have previously been allocated as part of the wider Rawlings Green Country Park in the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan (CSAP).</p> <p>The Steering Group considered it was important to designate this as a Green Buffer in order to reinforce Policies CH2 and CH3 of the CSAP and prevent coalescence of Chippenham with Langley Burrell, Tytherton Lucas and the hamlet of Peckingell. The purpose of Policy G15, to prevent coalescence between Chippenham and its surrounding villages, has a much narrower definition than the strategic purposes of allocation of part of this land for a country park in the CSAP (a multifunctional purposes), or designation as a Green Corridor (the primary purpose being to allow for movement of wildlife and humans) under Policy G13.</p> <p>The designation of the land as a Green Buffer under Policy G15 is no different to designation of green buffers in other made neighbourhood plans e.g. Corsham Neighbourhood Plan, Cressing Neighbourhood Plan and many others.</p>
R/S/20	<p>Role of Green Buffers</p> <p>In so far as the Neighbourhood Plan seeks create Green Buffers in order to prevent coalescence of settlements and to protect the individual character of settlements, which is a district wide consideration. It is therefore the role of Wiltshire Council to consider whether to adopt a policy seeking to separate settlements whether described as Green Buffers, areas of separation, green wedges etc. Moreover, they would have to be supported and justified by an evidence base in order to create such designations. Consideration would have to be given to the role these Green Buffers, not only in terms of separation but justifying their wider function and how will they operate in practice in terms of development management functions. For example, are they intended to take on a similar or the same status as Green Belt?</p> <p>It is not appropriate to simply adopt Green Buffers as a solution solely within Chippenham in order to separate Chippenham from the surrounding settlements. It is certainly not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to seek to require either Wiltshire Council or indeed other neighbourhood plan areas to look to designate land in order to prevent further development surrounding Chippenham that may encroach into such areas. It is noted that the Chippenham Without Neighbourhood Plan which has reached regulation 16 stage has no policies within it that support the provision of Green Buffers despite it adjoining the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>It is clear that the policy is wholly inappropriate for a neighbourhood plan by reference to the fact that it cannot be delivered in land use terms within the limits of the neighbour plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises this and acknowledges that this is little more than an aspiration for others to adopt through other neighbourhood plans but it is equally inappropriate for those plans to promote Green Buffers. This approach is expressly resisted in paragraph : 004 Reference ID: 41-004-20190509 of the NPPG. They should not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan itself which requires clarity and certainty given its status in the determination of planning applications.</p> <p>In so far as the CNP cannot designate land within its boundaries for this purpose then the proposal for Green Buffers within this chapter is wholly inappropriate and serves no purpose. If it is not a land use policy then it should not be included in the plan.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that there were issues with Policy G15 as originally written. However, the substantial amendments that have been made to this policy now render it a non-strategic land use policy which involves designating a small site that is wholly located within the Neighbourhood Area. Therefore it now accords with Reference ID: 41-004-20190509 of the NPPG and is similar to other such designations in made Neighbourhood Plans e.g. Corsham Neighbourhood Plan, Cressing Neighbourhood Plan etc.</p> <p>It is appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to promote the designation of Green Buffers in surrounding neighbourhood plans in its supporting text, rather than its policy.</p>

R/S/21		<p>Policy GD15 The policy itself has no purpose in a neighbourhood plan. The policy itself expressly refers to strategic allocations and thereby recognises the strategic nature of the proposals set out in the policy. The Neighbourhood Plan is meant to support the delivery of strategic policies not pre-judge and restrict the formulation of strategic allocations that may come forward as part of the Local Plan.</p> <p>As stated, strategic allocations are matters for Wiltshire Council as local planning authority. They will determine what allocations to make and what criteria to set against each allocation. That will have to have regard to the specific circumstances of each site and what is appropriate in relation to that site.</p> <p>It is wholly inappropriate for this policy to seek to prejudice individual sites that have not even come forward as proposed allocations and set limitations on their development and how they are to be constrained by reference to these so called Green Buffers. Furthermore, to adopt this policy would mean that only strategic allocations in around Chippenham would be subject to this constraint policy whereas other strategic allocations made through the local plan will not be subject to similar constraints. Wiltshire Council could not justify adopting an inconsistent approach to the treatment of strategic sites allocated through the local plan.</p> <p>The wording of the policy effectively seeks to prevent further development of allocated sites beyond established boundaries. Reference is made to safeguarding their roles for biodiversity, flood management, recreation or connectivity. Until a strategic site is identified and allocated, one cannot determine whether land within that strategic site, intended as a Green Buffer, would serve any of those purposes. If they do not, then questions arise as to the basis the Green Buffer policy could be applied to those allocations.</p> <p>Furthermore, it may be that allocations will not have any impact on the area of separation between settlements and cannot on that basis justify the incorporation of green buffers within the development proposals themselves.</p>	Please refer to Response Refs. R/S/19 and R/S/20.
R/S/22		<p>Local Green Space The limited scope for neighbourhood planning to deal with areas of local green space is highlighted clearly in paragraphs 101-103 to the NPPF. This deals with designation of local green space which are, by their nature, local areas of existing green space which have some special purpose or function within the community. The criteria for designating such local green space is clearly set out in the NPPF. It is important that their role and the justification for their designation is understood given the potential for them to be treated in a similar way to safeguarding Green Belt.</p> <p>It is further clear from the advice within the NPPF that neighbourhood plans are not to designate large swathes of green space as is now suggested in the Green Buffers chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>The designation of local green spaces through neighbourhood plans and the quite specific limitations on them, demonstrates clearly the limits to which such plans can go in safeguarding green space and this does not extend to designating large swathes of countryside as buffers between settlements to prevent coalescence.</p>	There appears to be a misunderstanding of the role of the Green Buffers policy in the Neighbourhood Plan, which is to prevent coalescence between Chippenham and surrounding settlements, versus the Plan's Local Green Spaces Policy (G12) which designates green space within the town for their special purpose or function within the community. NPPF criteria relating to Local Green Spaces has not, and cannot, be applied to the Green Buffers Policy.
R/S/23		<p>Conclusion In summary the chapter relating to Green Buffers has no place in the Neighbourhood Plan or any other such plan. It is clear from both the narrative and the wording of the policy that this is a strategic policy which is properly to be addressed by the strategic planning authority, Wiltshire Council. Its application has wide implications throughout the district and must be considered in a district context. It would be wholly inappropriate to adopt these policies specific to Chippenham and not elsewhere. The chapter and policy goes beyond the remit of neighbourhood planning.</p> <p>The policy itself achieves nothing in so far as it cannot amount to a land use policy in relation to the neighbourhood plan area. It merely constitutes an aspiration for others to deliver land use policies in a manner contrary to the advice in the NPPG. The policy itself seeks to control strategic allocations which have not yet even been identified. Only having been identified can the particular characteristics and constraints of the site be assessed and the criteria applicable to the development of such sites be determined. Such allocations may not have any impacts to be addressed via a Green Buffer policy and if they do that will be addressed via the strategic authority at the time. It is also inappropriate to set constraints on developments which are completely unknown at this point in time and which would not be mirrored in terms of strategic allocations coming forward elsewhere within Wiltshire outside of Chippenham.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan should be amended by deleting all reference to Green Buffers and policy G15.</p>	Policy G15 has been substantially amended and is now a non-strategic, land use policy entirely commensurate for a neighbourhood plan to produce. To delete all reference to Green Buffers and Policy G15 would ignore the wishes of neighbouring parishes and public support to deal with the issue of coalescence of surrounding settlements with Chippenham.

R/S/24	Waddeton Park	<p>Our representations submitted to the Regulation 14 consultation in April 2022 covered a number of our previous concerns over the draft Neighbourhood Plan, and specifically how it currently contains some fundamental flaws which need addressing before work on the draft Neighbourhood Plan commence. These concerns remain.</p> <p>However, in accordance with the scope of the consultation set out on the Neighbourhood Plan website, these representations respond only to the scope of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).</p> <p>It is hoped that these representations are of assistance to the Steering Group in preparing the next stages of the draft Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Noted. Please see the Steering Group's responses to these concerns in Appendix P of the Consultation Statement.</p>
R/S/25		<p><u>Strategic Environmental Assessment</u></p> <p>It is clear that the Steering Group have appointed Aecom to prepare a SEA to support the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, and that two separate SEA's are available as part of this consultation (versions published in August 2022 and February 2023). Our comments primarily focus on the most recent SEA, dated February 2023.</p> <p>Firstly, our main observation is that the SEA covers and assesses the main policies of the draft Neighbourhood Plan and has therefore been prepared retrospectively rather than used as a tool to inform and guide the strategy and draft policies. It is clear that the SEA does not explore and assess reasonable alternatives to the small level of growth proposed as part of the draft Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>For example, the only proposed site allocation is the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site, and whilst the SEA explores alternative scenarios for this particular site, it does not explore alternative options for development by looking at alternative spatial strategies and site allocations.</p>	<p>A screening opinion was sought from the LPA one year before the Plan was published for Regulation 14 Consultation. It was clear from the feedback received during this period from the LPA and statutory consultees that there were some concerns regarding the impact of the draft Plan on the historic environment. As such Policies TC1 and TC2 of the Plan were revised before the Regulation 14 Consultation. Therefore the SEA process was used to inform and guide the Plan.</p> <p>At the outset of the Plan preparation it was decided, in agreement with the LPA, that the Neighbourhood Plan would not allocate housing sites, and that this would be best left to the Emerging Wiltshire Local Plan given the strategic nature of housing requirements in Chippenham. Even if the SEA had been produced at an earlier stage in the process it would not have explored or assessed reasonable alternatives to housing growth, since the Neighbourhood Plan never intended to allocate housing sites or produce housing need policies. The scope of the SEA was agreed with the LPA and statutory consultees.</p> <p>It is the opinion of the Steering Group that Policy TC1, which provides a parameters plan for possible future redevelopment of the site, is a design based policy, not a site allocation and therefore not alternative options for development were required to be assessed as part of the SEA.</p> <p>The SEA has been produced to determine whether the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, and it confirms that the Plan's policies do not have any significant negative environmental effects.</p>

R/S/26	<p>In addition, there is no reference within the SEA to a proposed housing requirement (which is also absent from the draft Neighbourhood Plan) and assessment of alternative site allocations. This concern was raised as part of our comments on the Regulation 14 consultation, principally that the absence of a housing requirement based on up to date housing need evidence and the inclusion of a single site allocation to meet the need for housing locally, currently estimated by Wiltshire Council to be over 9,000 homes up to 2036, is a fundamental flaw of the Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting evidence base.</p> <p>The Chippenham Housing Needs Assessment (HNA, May 2020), prepared by Aecom, confirms that there is a need for some 2,643 affordable homes over the period to 2036, but we note there is no reference or assessment of this contained within the SEA.</p> <p>We therefore continue to have significant concerns that if the Steering Group proceed with the draft Neighbourhood Plan and supporting evidence base in its current form this will result in a plan for a settlement area of over 35,000 people, for a 13-year period (2023-2036), which only includes a single allocation, at a time when Wiltshire Council's own Local Plan Review identifies the housing requirement for Chippenham up to 2036 as over 9,000 dwellings.</p> <p>Similarly, the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the SEA lack any assessment of potential site options for development and therefore lacks individual appraisals / assessments of those alternative sites.</p> <p>One such site which we consider should be assessed and included within the SEA and Neighbourhood Plan is the land at Saltersford Lane, Chippenham for which there is a pending outline planning application being considered by Wiltshire Council (ref: PL/2022/06612). The outline planning application comprises residential development of up to 70 dwellings with associated access, landscaping and open space.</p> <p>Importantly, whilst a decision is yet to be issued, there are no remaining technical matters to resolve given that the site is generally free from constraint, with the majority of consultees supportive of the proposals.</p> <p>In our view this is a suitable and obvious site which should be assessed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan and should have been included in an assessment of alternatives in the SEA. The site is capable of contributing towards local housing need and has already scored well as part of Wiltshire Council's site assessment work informing the Local Plan Review, so it would be prudent for the Neighbourhood Plan to take a consistent approach.</p>	<p>There is no requirement by the NPPF or PPG that a neighbourhood plan identify a housing requirement or allocate housing sites, and many neighbourhood plans do not. Paragraph 104 of PPG on Neighbourhood Planning explicitly states:</p> <p><i>"The scope of neighbourhood plans is up to the neighbourhood planning body. Where strategic policies set out a housing requirement figure for a designated neighbourhood area, the neighbourhood planning body does not have to make specific provision for housing, or seek to allocate sites to accommodate the requirement (which may have already been done through the strategic policies or through non-strategic policies produced by the local planning authority)."</i></p> <p>The reason for the Steering Group deciding not to allocate housing sites in the Neighbourhood Plan is that any future housing likely to be delivered in Chippenham under the Reviewed Wiltshire Local Plan will be of a large scale strategic nature - as envisaged in the Regulation 18 Emerging Local Plan. Such housing is likely to be on greenfield land and extend beyond the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>With no site allocations or housing need policies it would be entirely inappropriate for an SEA to assess any potential site options for development. The purpose of an SEA is clear - to determine whether a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects or not. The SEA confirms that the Neighbourhood Plan has no significant negative effects.</p> <p>In reference to the planning application on land at Saltersford Lane, this is development on an unallocated windfall site and the LPA is best placed to judge the strategic issue of whether there is a need for additional housing beyond what is already allocated in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. There is a high probability that a decision will be forthcoming on this planning application before this Neighbourhood Plan is made, so it would render any site allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan a completely pointless exercise in terms of time and cost.</p>
R/S/27	<p>Cumulatively, the above issues result in major flaws with both the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting SEA.</p> <p>In order for a Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to a referendum, the Examiner must consider whether it meets a set of 'basic conditions', including that of being in general conformity with the relevant Development Plan (criterion 'e'). This is echoed in the online Planning Practice Guidance. We therefore continue to have significant concerns over the draft NP and supporting SEA and consider that it currently contains some fundamental flaws which need addressing before work on the draft Neighbourhood Plan commences.</p> <p>Finally, in relation to the conclusions set out in the SEA, we are concerned over the negative position set out in paragraph 9.79 which states "the draft CNP does not allocate any sites for housing development; and is therefore unlikely to have any significant negative effects on SEA topics".</p> <p>We are surprised to see such a negative conclusion and there appears to be no explanation as to why the delivery of additional housing would necessarily lead to 'significant negative effects'. This is quite clearly a broad assumption included without any reference or support. In our view, given the significant housing need (including local affordable housing need confirmed by Aecom's 2020 Report) the delivery of housing to address the need should be considered a significant benefit and the starting point should therefore be to assume a 'positive effect' if planning for additional housing.</p> <p>This is a good example of the failure of the SEA to properly assess the important matters which go to the heart of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, namely housing need and the need to plan more positively and proactively for future growth.</p>	<p>The Steering Group disagree that there are major flaws with both the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the SEA and are satisfied that the Plan as amended meets the 'basic conditions', being in conformity with the Development Plan.</p> <p>With reference to Paragraph 9.79 of the SEA, it does not take a negative position towards housing development. It simply states that by not allocating any sites for housing development there will be no significant negative effects on SEA topics. This whole focus of the SEA is to ascertain whether there would be any significant negative environmental effects arising as a result of the Plan and if so to mitigate these.</p>

R/S/28			<p>Conclusion Having reviewed the SEA published as part of the Repeat Regulation 14 consultation, we continue to have significant concerns over the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting evidence based. Our main comments on the supporting SEA are set out above.</p> <p>The SEA for example includes no reference to a proposed housing requirement or alternative options for site allocations. The absence of a housing requirement based on up to date evidence and the inclusion of a single allocation for mixed use development (including housing), for a town the size of Chippenham, is not an appropriate basis in which to allow a 13-year plan to proceed.</p> <p>As a result of the fundamental flaws, we consider that the draft Neighbourhood Plan should be put on hold until further information is published by Wiltshire Council on the planned housing requirement for Chippenham and proposed housing allocations. Only by waiting for this information from Wiltshire Council can the Steering Group ensure that the draft Neighbourhood Plan is aligned with the strategic policies of the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan and that future growth is properly planned for, ensuring that local housing need is addressed.</p> <p>Waddeton Park Ltd is happy to work with the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to resolve the issues with the plan and advance the preparation of sound policies in accordance with the basic conditions set out above.</p>	<p>The Steering Group are clear that the Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating sites for housing, and neither is it required to do so. The Steering Group do not agree that there are fundamental flaws with the Neighbourhood Plan as amended or the SEA.</p> <p>There have already been delays in the production of the Emerging Wiltshire Local Plan and the Town Council have already invested too much time and money simply to put their Neighbourhood Plan on hold and wait indefinitely until a new Wiltshire Local Plan is adopted, which could still be two years away.</p>
R/S/29	Policy TCS	McCarthy Stone	<p>Policy TCS – Buildings of Local Merit - identifies, amongst other sites, at point b) the ‘former Chippenham District County Technical and Secondary School, Cocklebury Road’ (‘the Technical School building’) as an important non designated heritage asset and requires that: ‘The effect of a proposal on the significance of a Building of local merit will be taken into account to avoid or minimise conflict between the building’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal’.</p> <p>The identification of the former Technical School building as a non-designated heritage asset within the draft Neighbourhood Plan is evidenced within Appendix 16 to the regulation 14 draft Neighbourhood Plan entitled ‘Buildings of Local Merit Topic Paper’. This Topic Paper at page 12 provides a brief description of the Technical School building and its historic interest. However, Appendix 16 fails to consider the planning history of the building and the wider regeneration objectives of the area.</p> <p>Para 31 of the NPPF requires that: ‘The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals’.</p> <p>Para 37 of NPPF identifies that ‘Neighbourhood plans must meet certain ‘basic conditions’ and other legal requirements before they can come into force’. In order to meet the basic conditions a plan must have ‘regard to national policies’ amongst other elements.</p>	<p>Although not explicitly referred to, the starting point for the Town Centre Topic Group in proposing to designate a Building of Local Merit was to check that the building did not have an extant planning permission for its demolition. Where there was no extant planning permission for demolition of the building, the criteria suggested by Historic England was applied to assess the building’s suitability, as set out in Appendix 16.</p>
R/S/30			<p>A key area of evidence and material consideration when determining whether the building should be identified as a non-designated heritage asset within the Neighbourhood Plan is the planning history of the building. A number of planning permission’s have historically been approved for the demolition of the building.in 2008, 2013 and 2017 as detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17/05828/FUL - Demolition of Existing Buildings and the Erection of a 140 Unit Extra Care Facility, storey recessed), Three Units for Uses within A1/A2/A3, 97 Car Parking Spaces Split Across the Basement (85 no. spaces) and Ground Floor Level (12 no. spaces) and Associated Access and Landscaping – Granted. • 13/06704/FUL - Demolition of Existing College Campus Buildings and Erection of New College Building with Landscaping and Associated Works- Granted • N/08/02130/FUL - Demolition Of Existing Buildings And Erection of a New College Building Of Circa 12,000sq m Gross Internal Floor Area With Landscaping And Associated Works – Granted • N/08/02131/CAC - Demolition Of Existing Buildings In Conservation Area Following Redevelopment For New College Campus – Granted <p>The 2017 planning permission granted to demolish the Technical School building included a condition (‘condition 22’) requiring, prior to any demolition, for a full building survey to be undertaken. Condition 22 required the survey to include an analysis and photographic record of the building and ‘any artefacts of historic value to be made available for preservation by local history and civic societies’. This was to secure the proper recording of the undesignated heritage asset. The discharge of condition 22 has occurred with confirmation being received on 15th April 2019 (ref: 19/00230/DOC). Neither of the planning permissions granted in 2013 or 2017 respected the historic footprint of the Technical School building.</p>	<p>Whilst it is acknowledged that there have been previous planning permissions for demolition of the former Technical School building, these consents have lapsed and there are no extant consents for demolition of the building currently in place.</p> <p>On the contrary, and perhaps most importantly, planning permission was recently refused in 2023 on the site under PL/2022/03760 for the ‘<i>Erection of Retirement Apartments (Category II Type) with Communal Facilities and Car Parking & Erection of Assisted Living Accommodation (Class C2) with Communal Facilities And Car Parking</i>’. This proposal included the demolition of the former Technical School building. One of the reasons for refusal cited was the loss of this historic building:</p> <p><i>‘On this highly prominent site in the Chippenham Conservation Area, and by reason of the layout, built form, building line, elevational design, materials, street-scape of the proposed building, as well as the resulting loss of the historic school building on the site, the proposals are considered to harm to the character and local identity of the Conservation Area and do not protect, conserve or enhance the historic environment. The public benefits associated with the development do not outweigh that harm and the development is contrary to the requirements of core policies CP58 and CP57(iv) to the Wiltshire Core Strategy and section 16 to the NPPF.’</i></p>

R/S/31		<p>The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group should also note the importance that the Local Planning Authority have attached to the regeneration of the central area of Chippenham, of which the Technical School building sits. This has been a priority for some time as detailed in para 5.53 and Core Policy 9 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 2015). The Wiltshire Core Strategy made a commitment to prepare a Chippenham Central Area masterplan. Although only a draft was only ever published in 2014, the masterplan identified at page 33 that 'Wiltshire College is currently benefitting from part refurbishment, part redevelopment to enhance the educational offer on the existing site. This should release developable area to cross subsidise reinvestment'. This consolidation has occurred leaving the Technical School building site vacant, with the receipt of the sale having cross subsidised the regeneration of Wiltshire College.</p> <p>In addition, The Steering Group should also note that Wiltshire Council's Local Plan review consultation document 'Planning for Chippenham', 2021 Para 26, page 5 discusses 'improving the resilience of the town centre' and identifies that the future Local Plan should continue 'to make improvements to Chippenham Railway Station and Cocklebury Road area to attract inward investment to this area'. This objective should not be hindered by the inclusion of the Technical School building in the Neighbourhood Plan as a 'Building of Local Merit' when the principle of demolition has clearly been accepted by the Local Planning Authority.</p>	<p>The Steering Group consider that the retention and re-use of the former Technical School building, recognised as a non designated heritage asset by the LPA and others, would help to realise the place shaping requirements of any regeneration of this part of Chippenham in accordance with Core Policy 9. Nowhere in the Chippenham Central Area Masterplan, the Wiltshire Core Strategy or the Emerging Wiltshire Plan does it suggest demolition of this building as a means of regenerating this area.</p> <p>The proposed Building of Local Merit designation does not preclude demolition of the building. However, it ensures that greater weight is attached to the historic significance of the building, in reaching any planning decision. The principle of demolition may have been accepted by the LPA in the past, but that does not hold true of the future, bearing in mind changes to national planning policy and the LPA's recent refusal of Planning Application PL/2022/03760.</p>
R/S/32		<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>The evidence document at Appendix 16 page 12 should be amended to reflect the evidence detailed above and the Technical School building should correspondingly be deleted from policy TC5 point b) to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan meets the basic conditions and has regard to para 31 of NPPF in relation to proportionate and relevant evidence. 2. As there has been no recent material change in planning circumstances, the plan and supporting evidence properly considers the planning history of the site, including the discharge of condition that 'has secured the proper recording of the undesignated heritage asset' and notes that the Local Planning Authority have previously accepted that the Technical School building can be demolished. 3. The Neighbourhood Plan is in line with the Strategic policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Local Plan Review. 	<p>The Steering Group do not agree that the former Technical School building should be deleted as a Building of Local Merit from Policy TC5. The Plan meets the basic conditions and a proportionate, evidence based approach was used to determine the building's inclusion on the list of Buildings of Local Merit. There are no extant planning permissions for the building's demolition and the recent refusal of Planning Application PL/2022/03760, citing the loss of the historic building, are material considerations which indicate that the building should be recognised as a Building of Local Merit. The building is recognised as a non-designated heritage asset by the LPA, is a positive feature in the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area, and there is public support for its retention (please refer to comments received from the public in Appendix Q of the Consultation Statement and significant public objection to the demolition of the building under PL/2022/03760).</p>
R/S/33	Natural England	<p>Natural England does not have any specific comments on the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
R/S/34	Historic England	<p>The focus of our interest continues to be on policies TC1 – TC3 and the need for these to substantiate their specific spatial parameters with evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the development proposed can be delivered without causing harm to heritage assets.</p> <p>We note that the Plan itself has not changed since the February 2022 Pre-Submission version which formed the basis of the previous Regulation 14 consultation. The only additional information available now is the SEA Environmental Report and Scoping Report respectively, both of which have been prepared since the February 2022 Draft Plan.</p> <p>The SEA Environmental Report draws upon the Draft Plan (inter alia) to inform its reasoning as to the effects and efficacy of its policies. However, the opportunity appears not to have been taken to use the findings of the SEA exercise to review and reaffirm the Plan in terms of its suitability relative to the potential for impact upon the town's significant historic environment which the SEA Report might identify.</p> <p>We note too that Wiltshire Council's decision that a full SEA was required was predicated on the concern expressed by its conservation officers over policies TC1 – TC3.</p> <p>We would therefore like to reiterate the advice in our previous Regulation 14 response and recommend that this expertise, to whom we are happy to defer, is used to reassure the Council on the submission of the Plan on the suitability of these policies relative to relevant heritage asset considerations.</p>	<p>The SEA has been used to review and reaffirm the Plan of its suitability relative to the potential for impact upon the town's significant historic environment. It concludes that there would be 'neutral effects' in relation to the historic environment SEA theme. It explains that this is given that supporting evidence (namely Topic Papers) provided by the Council, alongside policy requirements, seek to ensure Policy TC1 does not adversely impact upon the existing built form.</p> <p>The wording of Policy TC1, in terms of building heights in Zones 1 and 2, has been amended to reflect the outcome of the preferred approach of the SEA assessment of reasonable alternatives.</p>

R/S/35	Policy C11	NHS Property Services	<p>Policy C11 - enabling the NHS to be able to promptly evolve its estate</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Policy C11 states that proposals that would result in the loss of existing community infrastructure will be expected to meet the tests in Core Policy 49 and take local considerations into account.</p> <p>NHSPS supports the provision of sufficient, quality community facilities, but objects to specific wording within this policy. We would request that policy wording amendments are made to support the principle that where the NHS can demonstrate a health facility will be changed as part of NHS estate reorganisation programmes, this will be sufficient for the local planning authority to accept that a facility is neither needed nor viable for its current use, and therefore that the principle of alternative uses for NHS land and property will be fully supported.</p> <p>Amended Wording</p> <p>An additional paragraph should be added to clarify that:</p> <p><i>Should a health site be declared surplus to requirements as part of a wider estate reorganisation programme to ensure the continued delivery of public services and related infrastructure, such as those being undertaken by the NHS then the loss or change of use of existing health facilities will be acceptable. Evidence of such a programme will be accepted as a clear demonstration that the facility under consideration is neither viable nor needed and that adequate facilities are or will be made available to meet the ongoing needs of the local population.</i></p> <p>This change would directly address the issues outline above; and would ensure that the NHS is able to effectively manage its estate, disposing of unneeded and unsuitable properties where necessary, to enable healthcare needs to be met.</p>	<p>The term 'community infrastructure' was not intended to include healthcare facilities. A new paragraph has been added to the supporting text to clarify that 'community infrastructure' does not include healthcare facilities, which is deemed to be 'essential infrastructure' under Core Policy 3 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.</p>
R/S/36			<p>Policy C11 - Health considerations in policy/design</p> <p>Policy C11 should be amended to include requirements that promote health developments.</p> <p>Context</p> <p>There is a well-established connection between planning and health, and the planning system has an important role in creating healthy communities. The planning system is critical not only to the provision of improved health services and infrastructure, enabling health providers to meet changing healthcare needs, but also to addressing the wider determinants of health. The NPPF is clear in stating that "Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places" (Paragraph 92).</p> <p>Identifying and addressing the health requirements of existing and new development is a critical way of ensuring the delivery of healthy, safe, and inclusive communities. On this basis, we would welcome further consideration of healthy design requirements within the Neighbourhood Plan, and would encourage engagement with the NHS on this matter.</p> <p>Specific policy requirements to promote healthy developments should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development proposals to consider local health outcomes • Design schemes to encourage active travel, including through providing safe and attractive walking and cycling routes, and ensuring developments are connected by these routes to local services, employment, leisure, and existing walking and cycling routes. • Provide access to healthy foods, including through access to shops and food growing opportunities (allotments and/or providing sufficient garden space) • Design schemes in a way that encourages social interaction, including through providing front gardens, and informal meeting spaces including street benches and neighbourhood squares and green spaces. • Design schemes to be resilient and adaptable to climate change, including through SUDs, rainwater collection, and efficient design. • Consider the impacts of pollution and microclimates, and design schemes to reduce any potential negative outcomes. • Ensure development embraces and respects the context and heritage of the surrounding area. • Provide the necessary mix of housing types and affordable housing, reflecting local needs. • Provide sufficient and high quality green and blue spaces within developments. 	<p>Many of the policy requirements listed in this comment have been included within the Chippenham Design Guide and other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

R/S/37			<p>Policy CI1 - developer contributions Policy CI1 states that applicants will be expected to fully meet the need for new community infrastructure generated by their schemes so that there is no additional pressure put onto existing community facilities. NHSPS supports the rhetoric of this policy.</p> <p>Context The NHS, Council and other partners must work together to forecast the infrastructure and costs required to support the projected growth and development across the borough. A vital part of this is ensuring the NHS continues to receive a commensurate share of S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) developer contributions to mitigate the impacts of growth and help deliver transformation plans.</p> <p>Paragraph 34 of The NPPF is clear that 'Plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out... infrastructure (such as that needed for... health)'</p> <p>The significant cumulative impacts of residential developments on healthcare requirements in the area should be recognised and, given their strategic importance, health facilities should be put on a level footing with affordable housing and public transport improvements when securing and allocating S106 and CIL funds, in order to enable the delivery of vital NHS projects. It is imperative that planning policies are positively prepared, in recognition of their statutory duty to help finance improved healthcare services and facilities through effective estate management.</p> <p>We request that when setting planning obligation policies, the Town Council seek to address strategic as well as local priorities in planning obligations and engage the NHS in the process as early as possible.</p>	<p>Whilst the Steering Group agree with the premise that healthcare facilities should be put on a level footing with other recognised improvements secured under S106 or CIL funds, the Neighbourhood Plan cannot address 'strategic' priorities in planning obligations as suggested by this comment. The Neighbourhood Plan can only formulate non-strategic policies.</p>
R/P/1	Member of public	<p>ST ANDREWS' CHURCH I would have two main concerns about the total removal of car-parking within the churchyard. The church has an active congregation of more than 100 persons, a number of whom are elderly and very infirm, and only able to attend their church because they can be brought to the door by car. It is not clear whether there is any provision for disabled access to the church and this provision will be required.</p>	<p>Policy TC3, to which this concern relates, has been amended to allow for the retention of an existing vehicular access to the parking area located within the churchyard. The existing car parking within the churchyard is an arrangement on private land and Policy TC3 does not seek to change this existing parking arrangement.</p>	
R/P/2		<p>The second one is that funerals are held here on a regular basis. I trust that suitable provision would be made for the hearse. This also is unclear from the revised plan.</p>	<p>Policy TC3, to which this concern relates, has been amended to allow for the retention of an existing vehicular access to the parking area located within the churchyard.</p>	
R/P/3		<p>FOOTPATHS I agree entirely with the aims of the revised plan, however would have concerns about whether any of this would translate into the required action. A look at the current state of pavements across the town would suggest that it will not. I therefore question whether having these improvements as a 10 year aspiration is appropriate.</p>	<p>It is not clear to which Neighbourhood Plan policy this comment relates. However the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group recognise that they cannot change the current state of pavements (unless this specifically benefits from an upgrade due to developer contributions). However the Neighbourhood Plan can ensure that new high quality and accessible footpaths are provided within, and to link to, new development, which it does through the Chippenham Design Guide, Policy T4, Policy T5 and Policy G13.</p>	
R/P/4		<p>CYCLES I suggest that one other thing that does need to be included is an additional provision for cycle racks so that cycles in for example the town centre and train station can be stored safely. This will be especially important if e-scooters arrive. Recent issues with repeat vandalism/theft of cycles racked at the bottom of the high street and at the station suggest that it will also need to be better policed than at present.</p>	<p>The Steering Group consider the Local Transport Plan is, and remains, the most appropriate place for guidance on cycle provision. Notwithstanding, the Chippenham Design Guide refers to the provision of cycle parking in the 'Domestic Design Principles' and 'Local Centres' sections. Although the policing of cycle stands is not within the remit of the Town Council's jurisdiction, it does have an active CCTV network which covers some of the hotspots referred to.</p>	