



# Public Document Pack

## Melksham Town Council

Town Hall, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6ES

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Town Clerk and RFO Linda Roberts BA(Hons) PGCAP, FHEA,  
FLSCC

To: Councillor G Ellis (Chair)  
Councillor G Cooke (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor P Aves  
Councillor S Crundell  
Councillor C Goodhind  
Councillor J Oatley  
Councillor S Rabey

18 April 2023

Dear Councillors

In accordance with the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, Sch 12, paras 10 (2)(b) you are invited to attend the **Extraordinary Economic Development and Planning Committee** meeting of Melksham Town Council. The meeting will be held at the Town Hall on **Monday 24th April 2023** commencing at **6.00pm**

A period of public participation will take place in accordance with Standing Order 3(e) prior to the formal opening of the meeting. The Press and Public are welcome to attend this meeting in person, alternatively the public and press may join the meeting via Zoom.

In accordance with the Council's commitment to being open and transparent; all Town Council meetings are recorded and broadcast live. The right to do so was established under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L A Roberts BA(Hons), PGCAP, FHEA, FSLCC  
Town Clerk and RFO

**Melksham Town Council**  
**Economic Development and Planning Committee**  
**Monday 24 April 2023**  
**At 7.00 pm at the Town Hall**

**Public Participation** – To receive questions from members of the public.

*In the exercise of Council functions. Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and the need to conserve biodiversity. The Council also has a duty to tackle discrimination, provide equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations in the course of developing policies and delivery services under the public sector Equality Duty and Equality 2010.*

**Virtual Meeting Access:**

Please follow the joining instructions below for the virtual Zoom meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83669876198?pwd=WlAvY1ZsYVNyUIM3VktgajFhOHhtdz09>

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**Meeting ID:** 836 6987 6198      **Passcode:** 481965

**Participants will be directly let in the meeting by clicking on the above link. There is no waiting room**

**AGENDA**

**1. Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

To receive any Declarations of Interest in respect of items on this agenda as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

*Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registrable interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared on the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.*

**2.1 Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QS (Pages 1 - 18)**

[PL/2023/01949](#)

Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QS

**3. Confidential Session**

Members are requested to discuss the following in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

In view of the sensitive nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.

**4. Housing Site Allocations (Pages 19 - 46)**

Table of Housing Task Group Scenarios and Reasonable Alternatives Table - attached.

Please note at the date of publication of the agenda the list is not finalised and subject to a final review by the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Task Group. Any changes will be to the reasonable alternatives from the Amber list. Reasonable alternatives have to be agreed by AECOM to satisfy the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The site allocations (preferred sites for development) as they are listed in the document are unlikely to change.

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## **Response of Melksham Without Parish Council to the Public Consultation being run by Gleeson/Origin 3 on Land at Blackmore Farm**

[www.landatblackmorefarm.co.uk](http://www.landatblackmorefarm.co.uk)

**Following Full Council meeting held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April and Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Melksham Without Parish Council **STRONGLY OBJECT** to proposals for 650 dwellings on this site for the following reasons:

- The proposals do not answer the strategic needs of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan area and in fact distinctly hinder any future strategic plans for Melksham in terms of master planning.
- The development is in the open countryside, outside the Settlement Boundary of Melksham & Bowerhill, isolated and therefore unsustainable.
- The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan was made on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and therefore meets the NPPF “Paragraph 14” criteria in the light of the current lack of 5-year land supply demonstrated by Wiltshire Council.
- The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are currently undertaking a Call for Sites (during April and May 2022) for the purposes of allocation in the emerging review of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and this site has not been submitted as part of that process.
- The proposals are not part of any housing allocation in the current Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. The proposals do not adhere to policies within the Plan, particularly policies 1, 6, 8, 11 and 18 with regard to sustainable design and construction, housing in defined settlements, infrastructure phasing and priorities, sustainable transport & active travel and local distinctive, high-quality design, respectively.
- There is a lack of connectivity with the surrounding area and lack of connection to Eastern Way.
- Highway safety concerns with two entrances/exits close together proposed on Sandridge Road, at the bottom of a steep hill and on a bend, with several accidents having taken place along this stretch of road over the years.
- The proposal for a single form entry primary school does not meet the Wiltshire Council criteria of two form entry school provision.

**Whilst the parish council strongly object to the proposals, the parish council ask that the following be included in any future planning application:**

- Adherence to policies of the current Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and those of the emerging review of the Plan.
- The route in the 2<sup>nd</sup> non-statutory consultation for the proposed A350 Melksham detailed a roundabout junction on Sandridge Road. Therefore, with 'T' junctions proposed on to Sandridge Road, they would impede traffic flow and cause traffic chaos. A suggestion is made that roundabouts should be installed instead, in order to ease traffic flow; if the planning application were to progress further.
- The Parish Council enter into discussions to be the nominated party for any proposed LEAPs (Local Equipped Area of Play)/Play area.
- Equipment installed for teenagers.
- Provision of fenced in allotments with water, car park, security measures.
- Circular pedestrian routes around the site.
- The provision of benches and bins where there are circular pedestrian routes and public open space and the regular emptying of bins to be reflected in any future maintenance contribution.
- Connectivity with existing housing development.
- There are practical art contributions, with the Parish Council being involved in public art discussions
- Speed limit within the site is 20mph and self-enforcing.
- The development is tenant blind.
- If adjacent to existing dwellings the design is such that the layout is garden to existing garden.
- The road layout is such that there are no dead ends in order that residents and refuse lorries do not need to reverse out of roads.
- Contribution to educational and medical facilities within the Melksham area.
- There is visible delineation between pavement and roads. Shared spaces which are easily identifiable.

- Tree planting is not adjacent to property boundaries, in order they do not cause issues later on with growing over the boundary to resident's properties or causing shade on gardens.
- Large contribution towards the enhancement of public transport for at least the first 5 years.
- Contribution towards bus shelters which are tall enough and with a power supply to enable real time information to be installed. To give good shelter from the weather to users including sides to the shelters, with a bench seat rather than a perch seat.
- More land be set aside to enable a functional community hub.
- Provision of Local Centre, similar to nearby Verbena Court, with the provision of electric car charging points (in line with Policy 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan).
- Large contribution towards community facilities, noting a precedent has been set with £500,000 coming forward for village hall/community centres by both developers for the 450 dwellings East of Melksham and the 150 dwellings on Semington Road (Bowood View) for village halls/community centres; to be increased from this precedent in line with the rate of inflation.
- Contribution towards green initiatives i.e., provision of charging points, local green energy production and battery storage for the community hub.
- Improvements to existing Rights of Way in the area, which are understood to have been submitted by Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way Team as part of their response to the proposals.
- The parish council ask in addition to those improvements for the provision of pedestrian access to Praters Lane from Sandridge Road around Lopes Close, by providing a route under the overhead power lines on the proposed development site.
- Right of Way MELW30 becomes a bridleway to connect up bridleways at MELW40 & 41, particularly as there are many stables in this area.
- Ecological measures such as bird and bat boxes, bee bricks, reptile refugia and hibernacula with all these enhancements (types, numbers, position etc) marked on plans and drawings.

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**Notes from meeting with Gleeson & Origin 3 regarding potential housing  
development at Blackmore Farm on 24 March 2022 at 10.00am  
Via Zoom**

**Present:**

**Melksham Without:**

Councillor Richard Wood (Chair of Planning)  
Councillor David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council)  
Councillor Alan Baines (Vice Chair Planning)  
Councillor Mark Harris  
Teresa Strange, Clerk  
Lorraine McRandle, Parish Officer

**Melksham Town Council:**

Councillor Graham Ellis (for part of meeting)  
Patsy Clover, Acting Deputy Town Clerk

Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder

Jonathan Orton	Managing Director, Origin 3
Clare Danks	Associate Urban Design, Origin 3
Stephanie Massie	Principal Planner, Origin3
Zoe Knott	Planning Manager, Gleeson Land
Imogen Nicholson	Principal Consultant, i-transport

Councillor Richard Wood reminded everyone the meeting was being held with representatives of the Parish Council's Planning Committee and not the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, in order to listen to proposals by Gleeson. Gleeson were looking to develop a site East of Melksham at Blackmore Farm and in line with developer meeting protocol in the adopted Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, a representative from the Town Council had also been invited with Councillor Graham Ellis in attendance, along with an officer from the Town Council, Patsy Clover.

The meeting was reminded that the Parish Council had met with the developers previously in April 2019 to discuss proposals for the site.

Jonathan asked if a written response would be received by the Council on proposals for the site.

The Clerk clarified whilst a written response on the views of the Council would not be made, the notes from the meeting would be presented to the Planning Committee for their information.

Jonathan explained Gleeson were a land promotion company and were assisting in promoting the site through the planning process. During the last three years technical consultants had been appointed to look at the site and what constraints and opportunities there were with regard to a future residential land use for the site. It was hoped to submit plans shortly with a public consultation event taking place in due course.

Jonathan explained Gleeson had a wider land area interest down to Eight Acre Plantation (SHEELA Site No 3552), however at present were only promoting a smaller section of the site (30 hectares), as they did not wish to prejudice the outcome of potential bypass proposals. They would also be

liaising with Highways to make sure any proposals could be accommodated. An outline plan would be submitted to establish the principle of a mainly residential scheme on the site shortly.

Jonathan explained Gleeson had made a response to the Local Plan Review and 'Call for sites' and had read both Councils' responses to the Local Plan which were both comprehensive and insightful, particularly thoughts on the emerging plan. In the Local Plan there was a requirement for new homes in Melksham just shy of 4,000, with a lot already delivered to date, with a residual requirement for the plan period of 2,500.

Wiltshire Council's current housing land supply figure published in December 2020 indicated the current land supply for the County was under 5 years, however, whilst it was acknowledged this information was out of date, he was not aware of new data available.

Jonathan explained that in their opinion there was an emerging policy which continued to identify Melksham as a key settlement for growth in both housing and employment going forward. Therefore, he believed the emerging policy was justification in talking to the parish council about this site and along with a lack of 5-year land supply, they were indicators the timing was appropriate to advance plans for the site to outline planning stage.

Jonathan noted as part of the Local Plan Review, a Site Selection Report was published in 2021, which included Gleeson's site, as well as the wider area adjacent to the site. Whilst it was appreciated Wiltshire Council were still in the process of selecting sites to go forward in the Local Plan, he felt the site was an appropriate site to go forward, given the lack of constraints and ability for the site to connect to the wider Melksham area. There was an opportunity to bring forward a well-planned and sustainable settlement to address the housing needs identified for Melksham.

Jonathan explained he was aware of work done with AECOM as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process regarding the SHELAA sites and the comments in their report and those made in response to the Local Plan by both Councils regarding the site.

Jonathan explained conversations had been held with Catesby who were promoting the site to the South of the site and there was a willingness to engage to talk about what was happening on their boundary to ensure sensible connections, rather than working in isolation.

Clare explained a Pre-App proposal was submitted to Wiltshire Council in May 2021 and responses had been received back on proposals and a suite of technical advice had already been obtained.

Proposals for the site included:

- 650 homes
- Primary School to be sited in the middle of the site.
- Community Hub
- Two access points off of Sandridge Common
- Site structured around retaining the existing tree boundaries.
- Open space area in middle of site to include play area and an area for teenager play/formal recreation.
- Open space will include opportunity to extend accessibility with GI from Eastern side of Melksham and improve connectivity onto PROWs.

- Open space underneath pylons with an opportunity to enhance biodiversity.
- Housing site set around retained assets.
- SUDs basin, wetland water retention areas on Southern part of site.

They initially had plans for their full land interest, however, with the understanding of a potential bypass they felt it was appropriate to look at a smaller site area so as not to cause a conflict. Therefore, since meeting the Parish Council in 2019 the plans have been refined.

Constraints for the site include:

- Existing overhead powerlines to the top right of the site.
- Blackmore House is listed; therefore, a Heritage Assessment has been done.
- Existing neighbours and impact on amenity.
- Existing hedgerow and trees (some large oaks). Various surveys have been undertaken. It was noted some trees were failing, but have biological value.
- Site includes two Public Rights of Way.
- A tributary of Clackers Brook with no fluvial flooding, but does have a surface water gathering zone which the EA have identified.

The proposals highlighted two potential alignments of a possible A350 bypass adjacent to the site. With the second alignment looked at just before Christmas which has been published by Wiltshire Council.

With regard to transport/highways, Imogen explained the two site access points off of Sandridge Common to the site. Connectivity with regards to the Public Rights of Way with other existing developments. The need for consideration to be given to a potential bypass and the impact this would have on the development. Also looking at providing bus services for the site.

Councillor Glover asked if the buses would be able to negotiate through the site, which Imogen agreed would be looked at.

Councillor Baines explained with regard to bus routing, a bus operator would want to go through a site rather than in and back out and questioned why there was no connection with the roundabout on Eastern Way, which is part of an existing bus route.

Imogen explained the land to connect the site to Eastern Way was under different ownership, therefore, it was not possible to provide a connection to the site from here.

Jonathan explained the parcels of land to the West of this site were being promoted independently and had been involved in the 'call for sites' process by Wiltshire Council for future housing sites. However, they would ensure connectivity from the site to these sites, if they were to be developed in the future.

Councillor Wood sought clarification on why two entrances were proposed a short distance from each other on Sandridge Common.

Imogen explained both junctions would be 'T' junctions, with adequate visibility splays, it was anticipated the distance between the two junctions would not cause any safety concerns.

Councillor Wood noted junction B on the plans did not serve many dwellings.

Imogen explained whilst it did not serve many dwellings, a second access road had been provided for emergency vehicles, in case there were any issues with junctions being obstructed for any reason.

Councillor Glover sought clarification on whether the proposed primary school would have adequate parking provision, particularly as children from other areas may want to go to this school.

Imogen explained the school would be one form entry with circa 210 pupils, it was anticipated 202 pupils would be generated from the site and therefore, they would largely fill the school, with only a small number of children coming from elsewhere. It was anticipated most would walk or cycle to the school given its proximity to residential dwellings. A traffic impact study would be undertaken as part of the application.

Councillor Glover commented that most schools tended to be built after housing had been occupied and therefore children from the development would more than likely attend a different school.

Jonathan explained the scheme had been in gestation for three years and looked at in detail. The timeline for the scheme was as follows:

12 April 2022	Planned leaflet drop to more than 560 properties within the vicinity
14 April 2022	Advert in Melksham News
26 April 2022	Public consultation event at the Assembly Hall. A web page will also be available for people to submit comments, which will form part of the planning application.
Summer 2022	Submission of planning application

The meeting was opened up for questions.

Patsy sought clarification on the size of the land available for the proposed primary school and whether there was scope in the future for the school to be expanded and also sought clarification on the size of the land set aside for the community hub.

Zoe explained 1.8 hectares of land was available for the primary school, which allowed for two form entry.

With regard to the community hub, Councillor Wood sought clarification on what was meant by a community hub.

Clare explained the land was set aside for a community i.e., village hall type facility. There was no identified provision for a shop. However, with regard to land use, the application would include a broad land use mix for the site, which could include a shop, if one was interested in the site. It was clarified 0.2 hectares was available for mixed use.

Patsy noted 0.17 hectares was the size of the site for the community centre south of East of Melksham.

The Clerk asked where it was envisaged secondary school children from the development would go and where residents would also go for GP services.

Zoe explained Wiltshire Council were asking for Section 106 payments towards one secondary school as a hub.

With regard to GP services, would be looking at human health as part of the application, which considers the number of GPs in the area and what is needed. As stated previously, the use of the community hub is flexible, therefore if a need for a GP service is identified, there is an opportunity they can move to this site. However, they were aware that there is a problem in general with GPs wanting to move into rural areas, such as Wiltshire. However, a room could be made available in the community hub for physio etc. At present only a financial contribution towards GP provision for 'off site' was envisaged, unless anything changes.

Councillor Glover sought advice, as previously learnt from experience, if the Parish Council do not ask questions at Pre-App stage, it is often too late to ask for things to be included on a development.

The Clerk stated that at the public consultation stage there would be an opportunity for the Council to make their comments then.

Jonathan explained they would be happy to meet the Parish Council again further in the planning process to talk through proposals if requested.

Zoe agreed to send all consultation documents to the Clerk for information.

Councillor Baines suggested it would be useful to have a list of properties included in the leaflet drop, particularly as some of the residents in the Sandridge area do not get Melksham Independent News and therefore may not be aware of proposals.

The Clerk clarified the notes of the meeting would be available at the next Planning meeting on 11 April for Members' information.

Meeting finished at 11.07am

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Comparison of Local Plan Review Sites vs AECOM Site Assessments for Melksham NHP

LPR Site No.	LPR Description	"Local" Description	SHELAA Site No.	Assessed by AECOM? Site No.	Green/Brown Field?	AECOM capacity	AECOM Verdict	Melksham & Bowerhill OR Rural Communities	Additional Information	Public Response	Comments from JMNP Steering Group
1	Land to the east of Melksham	Snarlton Farm, Blackmore Farm	3552	NO	Greenfield	499		Melksham		Site 3525 - Yes 30% NO 53%	The northern area of this large site with access from the A3102 is considered to a reasonable site to progress for further assessment. The GI corridor of Clackers Brook links into the town and could provide a natural edge to the site. Impact on the landscape and views from Sandridge Hill across the lower lying and flat area of landscape should be taken into account. Important to respond sensitively to the transition between the settlement edge and countryside in this location (ref policy 17 of the submission JMNP). There are also existing trees and hedgerows on this site which development should retain where possible (ref policy 16 of the submission JMNP) and an area of biodiversity value - 8 acre plantation which is an area of deciduous woodland priority habitat. There is also a new local centre located close to the site on the other side of the Eastern Way - links would need to be made across this road to improve connectivity. The area to the south of Clacker's Brook would not be supported (specifically SHELAA site 3123)
			3686	NO							
			3525	30			Significant constraints				
			3123	NO							

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## AECOM SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT 2023

3552	Land at Blackmore Farm	Wiltshire SHELAA	63.52	<b>Excluded from further assessment at Stage 1 Initial Sieving</b>  The site is removed from the settlement boundary. The site may be appropriate to be developed alongside Site 3678, 3683, 3701 and 3525 as a large urban extension of Melksham which connects to the Melksham Bypass. The site contains several deciduous woodland which hare priority habitats. The site also includes the designated heritage asset of Brackmore House. The site is exposed to views across from Sandrige Hill.	<b>Excluded at Stage 1</b>
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# Notes from meeting with Gleeson & Origin 3 regarding potential housing development at Blackmore Farm

Weds 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 at 2pm

at MWPC Meeting Venue, 1 Swift Way, Bowerhill

## Present:

Cllr Richard Wood	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr Alan Baines	Melksham Without Parish Council
Cllr Paul Carter	Melksham Without Parish Council
Teresa Strange, Clerk	Melksham Without Parish Council
Jonathan Orton	Managing Director, Origin 3
Clare Danks	Associate Urban Design, Origin 3
Emily Ramsey	Planner, Origin 3
John Smith	Planning Manager, Gleeson Strategic Land

The individuals introduced themselves.

Origin 3 are a planning and urban design consultancy based in Bristol, that offer commercial planning and design advice. They advise investors and developers with property and land acquisitions and disposals throughout the UK

Gleeson have employed Origin 3 to work for them, Gleeson representing the landowner interest.

Origin 3 have been working on this project for about a year, and come to the meeting without any preconceived ideas about the site, they have already met with the Spatial Planning Manager at Wiltshire Council a couple of times on the project and are following the Local Plan review work closely, with regard to the numbers of housing and where they will be assigned.

Their client Gleeson is involved in strategic land development and they work with communities to bring together a planning application. At this stage, they have been advised by Wiltshire Council to engage with parish and town councils and therefore welcome the opportunity to meet with the parish council and introduce themselves and present their site opportunity.

They have already done some background work on the site, but they obviously don't know what the housing numbers will be for the area but they are making an educated guess that the Melksham area will have some new housing based on the large numbers assigned to it in the past. They are not looking to forge ahead without being part of the Plan review, which they are waiting eagerly to hear more on, but to work over the longer-term policy window for this greenfield development.

Gleeson concurred that they work with communities in their approach to planning applications, rather than force developments on communities.

Cllr Wood explained that the Neighbourhood Plan is well advanced and hoping to go out to Regulation 14 in the Spring. The Clerk advised that the Neighbourhood Plan goes up to 2026 and that the Melksham Community Area has already "done" the housing numbers for up to 2026 and in the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations plan that is shortly going to Hearing with the Planning Inspector, there is no housing allocated to the Melksham Community Area as the housing numbers to 2026 are met; with 1,000 dwellings currently in the pipeline being built.

The site allocation call for sites part of the Neighbourhood Plan work was conducted at the end of 2017 and those sites have been independently assessed by AECOM and already gone out to public consultation with an indication of the additional community benefit offered by the developers per site. The site allocation work for the Plan is closed, and will not be re-opened at this late stage of the Plan. It was acknowledged that by time that the Plan is eventually adopted, hopefully by the end of 2019, that a review may be triggered by the advanced stage of Wiltshire Council's Local Plan Review which goes up to 2036.

Therefore, the parish council have suggested that they meet with Origin 3 and Gleeson today, to listen to a presentation about a potential housing site for 2026 to 2036, regardless of any housing number information that may come from Wiltshire Council at the end of April.

Emily Ramsey stated that the Local Plan review was gathering evidence in 2019, going out to consultation in 2020 for adoption Autumn 2021.

The site that is being promoted is Blackmore Farm, to the north east of Melksham and is in singular ownership with one landowner and promotion of site the sole responsibility of Gleeson. It is circa 66 hectares/160 acres.

Cllr Baines outlined one of the initial site constraints, which is the potential eastern bypass which although it does not yet have a designated route would likely to cut through the Blackmore Farm site identified.

Clare Danks ran through the presentation which is a summary of intent and initial plans for the land. There is a long-term interest in looking at the future development of the site, and they have engaged consultants to look at flooding, historic, landscape, transport and ecology themes. The document shows the red line extent of the land available; from the solar farm to the east, to clackers brook in the south and the A3102 in the north, with a small proportion north of the A3102. The document lists some of the main constraints of the land and where it sits in relation

to the town and other planned development, which are useful for their discussions with Wiltshire Council and other stakeholders who do not know the area so well. They have a diagram for scene setting that shows that recent development has not been in the west, but concentrated in the east. They feel that Eastern Way gives a hard edge to current housing and they could use their site to blend the barrier of the road and use the landscape of the site to soften the edge of development and blend it with the landscape using some of the existing natural features such as pockets of trees. It has the ability to make connections, for the site funding to make Clackers Brook to be more of an access, than a barrier, with connections to the Town Centre. It's a large enough site to create a "neighbourhood" at a strategic level.

The presentation shows two site layouts/scenarios showing one layout of 700 dwellings with 40 houses per hectare density which is a comparable/benchmark density at present. It shows a primary school site in the centre of the development, a 2-form entry school. However, they were flexible for discussions further down the line for a bigger school or funding to be pooled elsewhere as is the wish of the Education Authority. The drawings are just indicative to show the type of numbers involved, but the site is flexible and can be directed by planning policy (Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan) and they would respond accordingly to that. For strategic large sites they have the financial back up to deliver community benefits required, which can be other than primary schools, and they believe delivers more opportunity than the same housing numbers delivered across numerous smaller sites.

The other site layout shows 1,300 dwellings to meet a larger housing need and the appetite for that sort of number to be delivered on one site. The site protects the 8-acre plantation and works in the constraints of the power lines in the north east, with no housing planned there, it would be a corridor. This layout also looks at the site the other side of the A3102 to be used for employment purposes/community centre/health centre; they felt that this could replace the old Forest & Sandridge school community building on that site of the road rather than put into the main site. This is fluid and just for ideas, and will change in time due to the Government guidance. Their plans show where the water courses are and flood restraints, and works with the hedgerows retained and integrated.

Cllr Wood asked about the future ownership of the 8-acre plantation, and the first recourse would be to contact the local wildlife trust and see if they would run it. John Smith felt it was an opportunity to bring the woodland to the people of Melksham by connecting it by a green corridor between them; to continue the line of the green corridor currently on the new 800 houses development. Clare felt that some off-site funding could be used to improve the connectivity of the pedestrian and cycle connectivity of the existing green corridor as they felt it had some constraints.

Cllr Baines felt that the schemes did not relate to the town, and should be linking more to the Sandridge community. In other developments, there have been a requirement for developers to provide a connection from the new development to the existing development abutting it; this scheme does not abut to anything, just another landowner's piece of land. Eastern Way was discussed as a barrier, and that it was designed to be the edge of development, but that future housing numbers may erode

that. Jonathan felt that there is a fixation in the UK of seeing a road as the edge of development. Cllr Wood did feel that there was a Local Centre land development recently built, so although it was cut off from the town, it was not cut off from community facilities, but residents would have to cross the busy Eastern Way.

With regards to a commercial Local Centre Land area in the proposed development, that would need discussions with operators, but was an easier sell when a development has a much larger number of dwellings.

It was noted that Manor Farm on the other side of the road had commercial units, and all agreed that the piece of land north of the A3102 would be a good place for commercial facilities with the developers proposing community facilities such as a community centre or health centre to be sited here too.

Cllr Carter did not want to comment on the site, but did like the amount of detail in the presentation, he thought it was well put together and found favour with the concept.

The Clerk had two observations, that the discussions so far had been about the provision of primary school places and that the secondary school places will at some point dictate the requirement for a second secondary school for the town and perhaps a school to the north east would work rather than trying to find a safe way for hundreds of children to get to a secondary school in the south. Clare confirmed that this was being done on another site that they were currently working on.

The Clerk also raised the concern about the impact of traffic on the single-track New Road and the through route to the A350 and M4 via the medieval single-track bridge at Lacock via a national cycle way and a road used by regularly by horses. This brought the discussion back to the potential bypass.

Cllr Wood confirmed that discussions between Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council for post 2026 were in agreement that any housing to the north east must be in conjunction with a bypass. John said that they had been unable to find out much information about a bypass, and the council informed it would be a centrally funded project with Highways England and the SWLEP (South West Local Enterprise Partnership) working with Wiltshire Council.

*The meeting closed at 2.20pm.*

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