



# Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan 2023–2038

Submission Version  
June 2023



**CHIPPENHAM**  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD**  
**PLAN**

Chippenham Town Council



Front cover: Bird's eye view looking north up Chippenham High Street

## Executive Summary

Our Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development and growth of Chippenham town in the period up to 2038. It contains a vision, objectives, and planning policies which seek to ensure that future development within the town is sustainable during this period.

Our Plan has been developed by a Steering Group made up of Town Councillors and local community representatives, working under the guidance and funding of Chippenham Town Council.

We have set out a vision for the future of the town, which seeks to capitalise on its history, accessible location, and its beautiful surrounding countryside, whilst also maintaining it as an attractive and vibrant, riverside market town in which to live, work and for people to visit.

Ours is a green Plan, which seeks to positively address, through the planning system, the climate emergencies that have been declared by Wiltshire Council and the Town Council, and the ecological emergency that has been declared by the Town Council. Sustainability and climate change is at the core of our Plan - a golden thread running through all of our planning policies.

We have identified seven topic areas where we feel our planning policies can make the most difference to the development and use of land: sustainability and climate change, green and blue infrastructure, housing, town centre, transport, community infrastructure and the local economy.

Within these topic areas our planning policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development proposals: protect and enhance local green spaces, trees, woodlands, hedgerows, the River Avon, and the special historic character of the town centre; are designed to be net zero carbon and of sustainable construction; are built to deliver biodiversity net gains; incorporate a mix of housing types that are of high quality design; regenerate key town centre sites through effective masterplanning; prioritise active travel and public transport infrastructure; incorporate new community infrastructure; and include provision for start-up businesses on employment sites.

Our Plan has been created by and for the Chippenham community and could not have been realised without the diligence and hard work of our local community volunteers, particularly those who joined our Neighbourhood Plan Topic Groups. The community views and comments received via public surveys, workshops and consultations form part of the evidence base that supports and shapes the Plan.

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*Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan  
Steering Group*

## Preface

Welcome to our Submission Draft of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011, as a means of giving local communities statutory power to shape the places in which they live. Chippenham's Neighbourhood Plan sets out local planning policies that will be used in determining future planning applications within our parish boundaries. Once adopted or 'made' its policies will be part of the development plan for the area, alongside those strategic policies in the current Wiltshire Local Plan and Wiltshire Local Plan Review, and any future national planning policies.

Chippenham Town Council, who sponsor the Plan, began the process in 2017, establishing a Working Party to oversee the formation of a Steering Group, which began work in earnest in 2019. Early public engagement, involving 'roadshows' and a questionnaire survey, helped define the 'vision' and the principal areas for the Plan to address. Topic groups, comprising councillors and members of the public, brought additional expertise and local knowledge in gathering evidence and developing the Plan's policies.

The Pre-Submission Plan was published for consultation in 2022 and provided an opportunity to modify policies and add value to the Plan. Further public consultation and independent examination will follow, with the final stage in the process being decided by a referendum.

We hope this Plan, which the Chippenham community has helped create, will meet with your approval.

Thank you.

Clr. Nick Murry  
Chair, Chippenham Neighbourhood  
Plan Steering Group

## Overview Information

This is the Submission Version of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan and has been prepared by the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Related information and the Plan evidence base can be found on the website:

[chippenhamneighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://chippenhamneighbourhoodplan.org.uk)

Questions and further information can also be directed to:

[neighbourhoodplanning@chippenham.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodplanning@chippenham.gov.uk)

Tel: 01249 446699

Our Plan is colour coded.  
Please see colour key below.



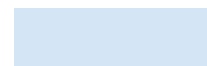
Planning Policy



Key Definitions



Additional  
Information



Chippenham  
Identity



Green and Blue  
Infrastructure



Housing



Town Centre



Transport



Community  
Infrastructure



Economy

## Acknowledgements

Our thanks to all those who have contributed valuable time and knowledge to shape the content of this Neighbourhood Plan, in particular our Steering Group, chaired throughout by Dr Nick Murry FIEMA, and our various Topic Groups, without whom this would not have been possible.

Particular thanks to Andy Conroy MRTPI, Head of Planning at Chippenham Town Council and lead officer for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Thanks also to Dr Andrea Pellegram MRTPI, Planning Consultant, for her professional advice and assistance.

We are also grateful to the various organisations and their staff that have supported the Plan's preparation, including:

Ice House Design for graphic design, website development, formatting of Plan documents, and branding.

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Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning Officers Victoria Burvill, Carolyn Gibson, Tim McCombe and Louise Tilsed for their assistance and advice.

Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) who provided advice and administered our Future Energy Landscape workshops.

Locality who administered grant funding;

Aecom for producing the Chippenham Housing Needs Assessment and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Ellie Ewing on behalf of Community First Wiltshire for undertaking our Community Surveys and Regulation 14 survey.

Wild Landscapes, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Ltd. for the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - River Avon South West of Town Bridge.

Three Dragons and McBains for producing the Viability Assessment. McBains also for advising on our net zero carbon and sustainable construction policies.

### Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Members:

Cllr. Dr Nick Murry (Chair), Cllr. John Scragg (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Declan Baseley, Cllr. Clare Cape, Cllr. Robert Giles, Cllr. Ross Henning, Jack Konynenburg, David Mott, Steve Perry, Cllr. Matthew Short & Dunstan Westbury

### Former Steering Group Members:

Liz Field, Barry Grimes, Ruth Lloyd, Michael Merry, Mary Norton, David Powell, Cllr. Chris Ruck, Sophie Thomas, Sandie Webb & Fiona Williams

A full list of Topic Groups Members can be found in Appendix 2

Photograph credits: Photographs taken by Steering Group Members, Topic Group Members and by/for Chippenham Town Council, except the following taken by: Hardens Mead residents - p. 30; Wiltshire College - p. 39; Sophy Fearnley-Whittingstall - p. 42 & 43 (right); Department of Transport (LTN 1/20) - p. 111 & 112.

Thank you to the Little Photo Company, Daniel Jae Webb, Tom Arthur and Ice House Design for photographs taken for the Town Council.

Reproduction of figures: Fig. 5.1 - Energy Assessment Guidance, Greater London Authority, April 2020; Fig. 11.1 - Circular Economy, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

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# 1. Legal and Planning Framework

## The Role of Neighbourhood Plans

1.1 Neighbourhood plans were introduced by the [Localism Act 2011](#) and enacted in the [Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012](#). They are prepared by parish or town councils for a designated area - in this case, [Chippenham Town Council](#) prepared this neighbourhood plan for Chippenham. Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area and support sustainable development.

1.2 Once the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' i.e., it has been adopted, it becomes part of the development plan for Chippenham. All planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations (matters that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application) indicate otherwise.

1.3 The development plan for Chippenham, prepared by Wiltshire Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), is currently the Wiltshire Local Plan, which covers the period up to 2026. The Wiltshire Local Plan comprises the following documents: Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), Chippenham Site Allocations Plan (2017), Saved Policies from the North Wiltshire Local Plan (2011) and Minerals and Waste Plans. These documents set out strategic policies that are applicable across Chippenham. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with strategic policies set out in the Local Plan.<sup>1</sup>

1.4 The Wiltshire Local Plan is currently being reviewed. Policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will also have to be reviewed in due course to remain in conformity with any new or revised strategic policies set out in the Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which will cover the period up to 2038.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' - NPPF, 2021

1.5 Neighbourhood plans must meet certain 'basic conditions' as set out in the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as amended\)](#) and other legal requirements before they can come into force. These are tested through an independent examination before the neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum.<sup>2</sup>

1.6 Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan that covers their area.<sup>3</sup> Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies of the Wiltshire adopted planning policies or undermine Wiltshire Council's strategic planning policies such as housing allocations.<sup>4</sup> The preparation of planning policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan, where they are in conflict unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.

<sup>2</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#), MHCLG, 2021, para. 37

<sup>3</sup> [Ibid. footnote 18](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Ibid. para. 29](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Ibid. para. 31](#)



- 1.7 There are several stages in the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. As the draft Plan progresses, the policies and proposals will be tested to ensure that they are suitable as a planning tool when finally adopted.
- 1.8 A draft ('Pre-Submission') Plan was published for public consultation (the 'Regulation 14 Consultation') in February 2022. This stage was repeated in February 2023 with the addition of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (see below). The Town Council have reviewed the comments received from the local community and other interested parties, including Wiltshire Council, and have made changes, which form the basis of this Submission Version of the Plan. They have also updated Annexes 1-4 and the evidence base (Appendices) which accompany this Plan where appropriate.
- 1.9 Wiltshire Council will undertake a second public consultation (the 'Regulation 16 Consultation') on this Submission Version of the Plan. The Plan will then be finalised, with the help of the LPA and submitted to an Examiner to consider whether it is compliant with the Wiltshire policies and whether it meets its 'basic conditions.' The LPA will then make any necessary changes suggested by the Examiner and the Neighbourhood Plan will be put out for a referendum.
- 1.10 At the referendum, the Chippenham community can decide whether it wishes to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan. If there is a majority result, the plan will be 'made,' and it will be used to determine planning decisions immediately.
- 1.11 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) assesses the environmental implications of a proposed policy or plan in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004. It allows for the potential effects of policy proposals to be assessed and makes recommendations for how the potential for harmful effects may be avoided or successfully mitigated.
- 1.12 Wiltshire Council confirmed in its screening opinion of April 2022 that a SEA was required for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Council appointed expert independent consultants, AECOM, to undertake the SEA. The SEA predicts the likelihood for positive environmental effects for most of the topic themes arising from Plan implementation. A copy of the SEA report is published alongside this Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## Document Structure

1.13 The Neighbourhood Plan is the main document but each of its policies is accompanied by evidence set out in Appendices (such as the results of the Community Survey, consideration of the Wiltshire policies and other information collected by the Steering Group who have overseen the Plan preparation). In the interest of brevity, the Plan only summarises the evidence, and the background papers in the Appendices should be consulted to understand the detailed justification for each policy.

1.14 Applicants and others who are stakeholders in the planning process are advised to consider the detailed analysis in the Appendices.

Evidence in Support of Neighbourhood Plan Policies
Appendix 1 - Pre-Vision Survey Results
Appendix 2 - Topic Group Proformas
Appendix 3 - Chippenham Future Energy Landscape Report
Appendix 4 - Biodiversity Topic Paper
Appendix 5 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: Land at Monkton Park
Appendix 6 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: River Avon South West of Town Bridge
Appendix 7 - Community Survey Results
Appendix 8 - Local Green Spaces Topic Paper
Appendix 9 - Local Green Spaces Maps
Appendix 10 - Green Corridors Topic Paper
Appendix 11 - Chippenham Housing Needs Assessment
Appendix 12 - Housing Mix Topic Paper
Appendix 13 - Housing Design Topic Paper
Appendix 14 - Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site Topic Paper
Appendix 15 - River-Green Corridor Masterplan Topic Paper
Appendix 16 - Buildings of Local Merit Topic Paper
Appendix 17 - Shopfronts Design Guide Topic Paper
Appendix 18 - Access for the Disabled People and Those with Reduced Mobility & Waymarking Signage on the Footpath Network Topic Paper
Appendix 19 - Community Infrastructure Topic Paper
Appendix 20 - Community Infrastructure Survey
Appendix 21 - Community Groups and Organisations Survey
Appendix 22 - High Priority Improvements to the Cycle Network
Appendix 23 - Pedestrian Access to Public Transport

1.15 The Neighbourhood Plan has four accompanying Annexes which provides more detailed guidance on particular aspects. These are:

- Annexe 1 - Chippenham Design Guide
- Annexe 2 - Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- Annexe 3 - Shopfronts Design Guide
- Annexe 4 - Tree Planting Guide

### Neighbourhood Plan Period

1.16 The Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2023 to 2038.

### Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.17 The area covered by this Neighbourhood Plan is the parish of Chippenham, as shown in Figure 1.1.

1.18 Wiltshire Council originally designated the Chippenham Neighbourhood Area on 17 August 2018.<sup>6</sup>

1.19 A subsequent Community Governance Review, and extension of Chippenham Parish boundary to the north-east and south occurred in April 2021. To ensure continued alignment of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Area with the new Chippenham Parish, the extended Chippenham Neighbourhood Area was designated on 2 August 2021.



Policies within the Neighbourhood Plan use the following recognised thresholds for different types of development:

Minor development - 1-9 dwellings or less than 1000sqm new floorspace

Major development - 10+ dwellings or 1000sqm+ new floorspace

Large-scale major development - 200+ dwellings or 10,000sqm+ new floorspace

<sup>6</sup> [Notification of the Designation of Chippenham Neighbourhood Area under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as amended\)](#)

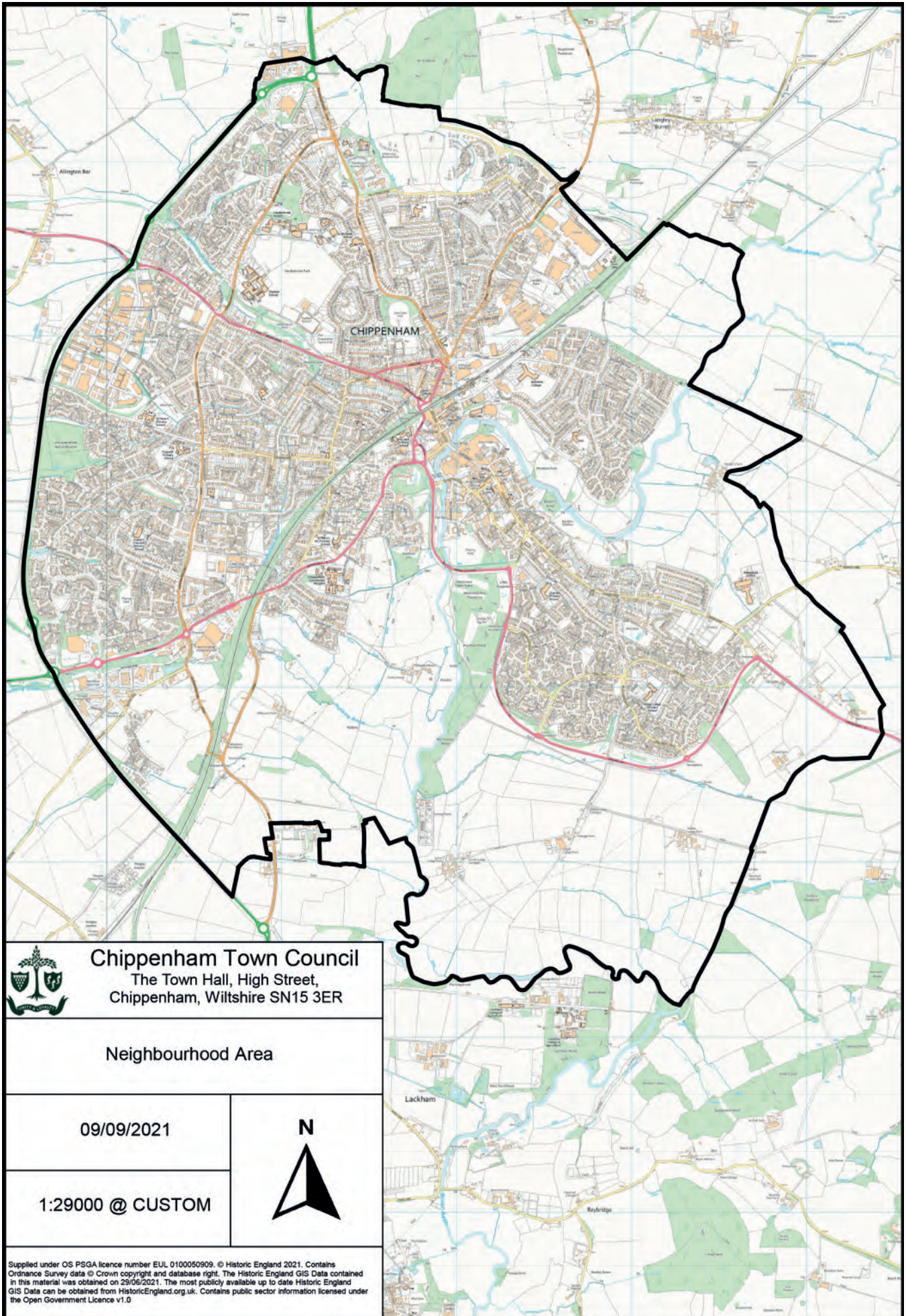


Fig 1.1: Designated Neighbourhood Area for Chippenham

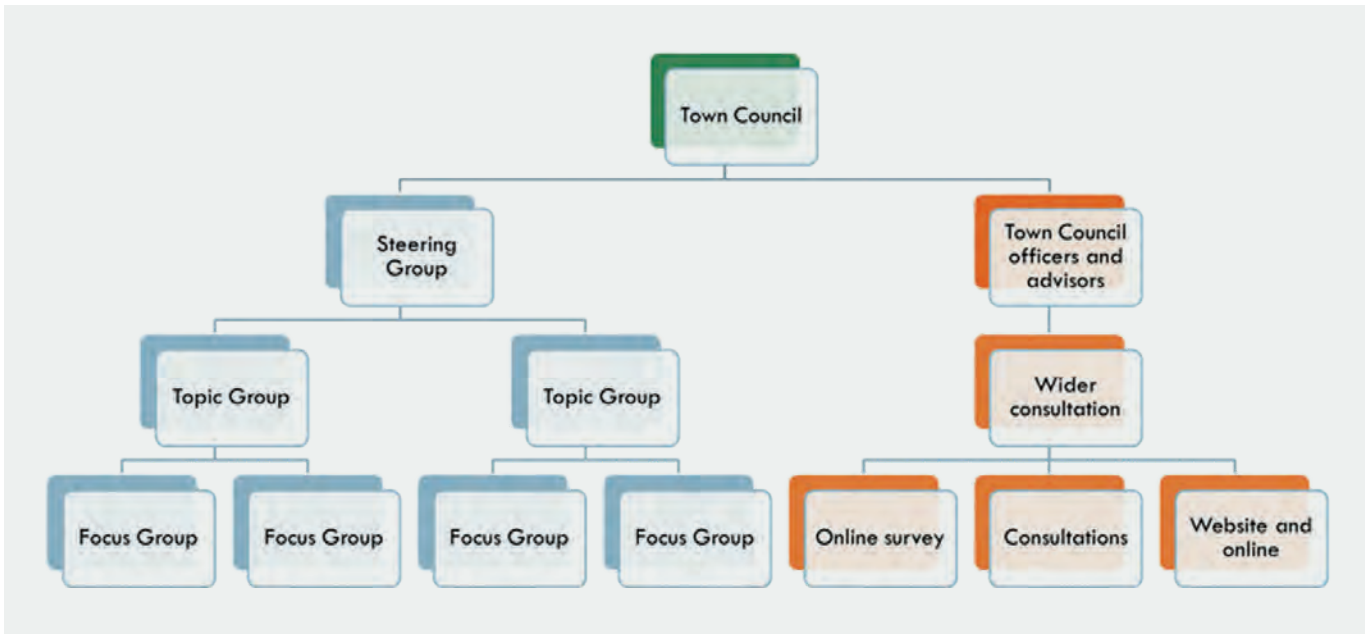
## 2. Preparing the Plan

- 2.1 Chippenham Parish is a very large area for a single neighbourhood plan to cover in terms of its population which is over 36,000. Undertaking effective consultation therefore presented a significant challenge.
- 2.2 Chippenham Town Council needed to carefully approach the matter of creating a neighbourhood plan that had community consultation as its foundation. It took almost a year for the Town Council to get from the position where it determined that it wished to pursue a neighbourhood plan to holding the first meeting of the Steering Group.
- 2.3 In order to manage the complexity of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council commissioned an experienced neighbourhood planning and town planning consultant to advise on the overall process. The Consultant assisted in establishing a specially formed Working Party of Town Councillors to secure additional support and to determine how best to establish the Steering Group.
- 2.4 In May 2018, the Town Council recruited a full time Town Planner to oversee the day to day running of the Plan's progress. One of the first tasks was to get the [Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan website](#) up and running so that the Plan process was fully transparent.
- 2.5 In July 2018, the Working Party planned and delivered a 'Soft Launch' event of the Neighbourhood Plan. At this event, which was attended by over 100 community representatives, the announcement was made that a neighbourhood plan was being prepared and that the Town Council was looking for committed community members to sit on the Steering Group alongside Town Councillors. The people who attended were invited to register their interest in joining the Steering Group or otherwise support the plan. At the end of the session, application packs were handed out and put onto the Town Council's website.



*Neighbourhood Plan Soft Launch Event at Town Hall, September 2018*

- 2.6 Also at the Soft Launch, a presentation was given to illustrate the many steps needed to complete a neighbourhood plan and to explain how the plan would fit into the overall Development Plan.
- 2.7 The basic structure of the Steering Group was provided as part of the presentation and this structure is still in place, as illustrated in Figure 2.1. The Terms of Reference for the Steering Group, which were designed by the Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, set out a parallel approach for the Steering Group to work alongside Town Council officers. The Town Council would have overall responsibility for the Plan as the accountable authority. In this way, it was possible to formally bring unelected community members into the formal elected Council structure. By October 2018, the Steering Group was selected by the Town Council Working Party, and the draft Terms of Reference were prepared.



*Figure 2.1: Steering Group Structure and its Relationship to the Town Council*

- 2.8 The Steering Group first met in November 2018 and is chaired by a Town Councillor. It comprises six Town Councillors and six members of the public.
- 2.9 The Steering Group's first task was to agree a consultation strategy so that the Neighbourhood Plan would be firmly based on what the community wanted. A draft Communications and Engagement Strategy was agreed in January 2019 and a Pre-Vision consultation was launched in April 2019.
- 2.10 The Pre-Vision consultation was the Steering Group's first contact with the Chippenham community. It was based on a survey that asked a wide range of open questions about what local people liked, did not like, and what they valued about the town. The Steering Group went armed with surveys and electronic tablets to talk to local people in supermarkets, at the train station, and on the street asking them about Chippenham, and also asking them to complete the online survey. Paper copies of the survey were made available for people who did not wish to go online.



*Street stall in Emery Gate Shopping Centre run as part of Pre-Vision Consultation, March 2019*





*Members of the community hold an Economy Topic Group meeting, 2019*

- 2.15 The Topic Groups were managed through a comprehensive Project Plan that was discussed at every Steering Group meeting, and because of this, most of the Topic Groups were able to provide draft Evidence Proformas by Summer 2020. These are found in Appendix 2 of the Plan. Each of these were then considered by the Planning Officer and the Planning Consultant, and refined and brought in line with Development Plan policies and the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#).
- 2.16 The Steering Group agreed all the proposed modifications and sometimes added their own modifications until finally, draft chapters of the Plan could be produced. These formed the basis of the Pre-Submission Version of the Plan.
- 2.17 The 'Regulation 14 Consultation' was originally carried out during February-April 2022 via an online questionnaire (paper copies of the questionnaire were also made available). It attracted over 400 individual responses from members of the local community, plus local stakeholders, landowners, statutory consultees and Wiltshire Council.
- 2.18 The comments received from the Regulation 14 Consultation were reviewed and responded to by the Steering Group. These can be viewed in the Consultation Statement that accompanies this Submission Version of the Plan. The Steering Group spent almost a year reviewing and amending the Plan as a result of comments received. The process has resulted in an improved Plan.
- 2.19 A screening opinion was sought from the LPA in April 2021 as to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Plan was required. An opinion was received from the LPA in April 2022, at the end of the Regulation 14 Consultation. This required a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Plan to be undertaken.
- 2.20 The SEA, undertaken by Aecom, concluded that the Pre-Submission Plan would likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to community wellbeing and minor positive effects in relation to air quality, biodiversity, climate change, land, soil and water resources, landscape and transport. The SEA concluded that the Plan would likely lead to neutral effects in relation to the historic environment, with the potential for amending Policy TC1 to deliver minor positive effects in the long term.
- 2.21 In the interests of transparency and best practice, and to allow the SEA to be viewed by the public, the Steering Group decided to repeat the Regulation 14 Consultation with the Pre-Submission Plan and SEA. The repeat Regulation 14 Consultation ran from February-April 2023.
- 2.22 An independent Viability Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan was carried out in April/May 2023 by Three Dragons and McBains. This demonstrated that the Plan's policies would not lead to most types of development being unviable.



## 3. The Local Context

### Location

- 3.1 Chippenham is a market town located in the northern part of the county of Wiltshire. It is one of the largest towns in Wiltshire and acts as an important service centre for surrounding towns and villages.
- 3.2 Approximately two thirds of the Neighbourhood Area, or Parish of Chippenham, comprises of the town itself. The remaining third, located in the south and east of the Parish, comprises of farmland.
- 3.3 The town has excellent transport links, being located just 4.5 miles south of the M4 motorway, and on the main London to the South West railway route (Great Western Railway Line).
- 3.4 It is located on the Great West Way, a new 125 mile touring route stretching between London and Bristol, which follows the route of the A4 - one of the first Great Roads commissioned by the Kings of England. The A4 connects the town along an east-west axis to Calne (approximately 6 miles to the east) and to Bath (approximately 12.5 miles to the west). The A350, which runs around the western edge of the town, connects it along a north-south axis to the M4 motorway (three miles to the north) and Melksham (approximately 6 miles to the south).
- 3.5 Chippenham is located within a rural setting surrounded by farmland, agriculture being a key sector of the local economy. The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located approximately 3.5 miles to the west of the town, and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located approximately 8 miles to the east of the town. The River Avon (the Bristol Avon) dissects the town centre.



*The rural setting of Chippenham allows for easy access on foot to beautiful surrounding countryside, Avon Valley to east of town*

- 3.6 The location of the Chippenham means it performs an important housing and commercial role in Wiltshire, Swindon, Bath and Bristol area, and is identified as a Principle Settlement in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

## History

- 3.7 The town was established on a crossing of the River Avon and some form of settlement is believed to have existed there since before Roman times. Archaeological finds indicate a Saxon date in the 7th Century for the first urban settlers of Chippenham. In 853 Ethelswith, sister of King Alfred, was married in Chippenham. The Royal holding in Chippenham refers to a church in 1042, and in the Domesday tax survey of 1086 to a substantial urban centre. At this time there was a population of about 650.
- 3.8 As a parliamentary borough, Chippenham was represented from 1295. The right to hold fairs existed from 1320. Edward II granted four fairs and two markets to the Lord of the Manor Edmund Gascelyn. The medieval timber framed Yelde Hall is situated in the Market Place and dates from circa 1450.



*The medieval Yelde Hall is the oldest building in Chippenham*

- 3.9 By 1604 there were 129 burgesses' houses mainly fronted onto the High Street and Market Place with gardens at the rear. Some of these burgage plots are still preserved in property boundaries.

- 3.10 The existing woollen industry grew in the 16th Century, making good use of the river for fulling mills and the island (which existed at that time) for drying the cloth on racks or tenter frames. The burgesses used their new-found wealth from the wool industry in the late 18th Century to improve their houses along the High Street, Market Place and St Mary Street, using local stone and Bath Stone. This led to Chippenham being called 'Little Bath.'
- 3.11 Trade in the town was further advanced with the building of a canal spur off the Wilts and Berks canal in 1798. Further stimulus to the town's trade occurred with the construction of the Great Western Railway from London to Bristol, which reached the town in 1841. Many new industries arrived in the town and created a need for new housing north of the railway line. As the new industries of iron founding for the railways, wagon makers, brewing, farm machinery and butter churns grew, the cloth industry entered its final decline.
- 3.12 By the mid-19th Century, the railway was used by the Nestlé factory and other local producers to export dairy and agricultural products. The area to the north of the railway station prospered as railway engineering works, with Westinghouse Brake and Signal Co Ltd being the main employer in Chippenham up until the mid-20th Century. The successor to Westinghouse Signals remains in Chippenham in the form of Siemens Rail Automation while the brakes business is part of Knorr-Bremse Rail Systems which is now located in Bowerhill, Melksham.

## Population & Housing

- 3.13 Chippenham at one time had the largest one day cattle market in England, and Friday market days were busy with cattle trucks from all over England and Wales descending on the town. The market was located in the Market Place until 1910. It then moved to an area next to the Neeld Hall until 1954, when it moved to its final location in Cocklebury Road. It closed in 2005 and the site was redeveloped for housing.
- 3.14 After the Second World War, Chippenham expanded further, with a major period of housing growth in the late 1980s/1990s when new estates were built at Cepen Park and Pewsham. The town centre also underwent major redevelopments in the 2000s, with the construction of Emery Gate Shopping Centre, followed by Borough Parade.
- 3.15 The population of Chippenham Parish in 2021 was 36,548.<sup>7</sup>
- 3.16 The 2021 Census data reveals that Chippenham closely matches the age profile of the national average. It has a slightly lower percentage of people over 65 when compared with county figures (18% versus 21.9% in Wiltshire).<sup>8</sup>
- 3.17 The vast majority of households in Chippenham are owner-occupiers (67.3%). This is followed by the private rented sector (16.8%) and the social rented sector (14.7%).<sup>9</sup>
- 3.18 Chippenham has large proportions of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes (28.8%, 31.9% and 24.5% respectively) with a slightly lower proportion of detached properties and a slightly higher proportion of terraced properties than the county. There is a greater proportion of purpose built flats in Chippenham (11.9%) compared to 8.9% in the wider county.<sup>10</sup>
- 3.19 The housing stock in Chippenham predominantly comprises medium to large dwellings, with almost all properties consisting of 3 or more rooms. The most common size of dwelling in Chippenham, and Wiltshire, is 3 bedroom properties, followed by 4 or more bedroom properties. Wiltshire has a slightly greater proportion of 4 or more bedroom homes than Chippenham.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Census 2021, UK Office for National Statistics

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



*Alliance Pharmaceuticals occupies the historic former Nestlé factory building in the town centre*

## Economy

- 3.20 Chippenham originally grew around Wiltshire's historic agricultural employment base, with its market and the growth of agriculturally based support industries. This continues to be a key employment sector in the town and its hinterland. The railway, since its arrival in 1841, has also provided major employment for the town.
- 3.21 As the economy evolved in the 20th Century, commerce continued to thrive in the town and several employment sites emerged on the outer edges of the town. The largest of these is Bumpers Farm Industrial Estate, which predominantly accommodates small and medium sized enterprises. Other employment sites exist at Methuen Park and Parsonage Way Industrial Estate. Employment uses also exist at Langley Park - in the area formerly occupied by Westinghouse. Most recently, warehousing and logistics industries have established on employment land at Junction 17 of the M4, located approximately 3 miles north of Chippenham.
- 3.22 Chippenham is located both within the A350 Growth Zone and the Swindon-M4 Growth Zone as identified by the [Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership \(SWLEP\)](#).<sup>12</sup>
- 3.23 The Wiltshire Employment Land Review noted that total jobs in Chippenham were up slightly in the period 2009-2018 and that there is a high concentration of public administration and defence jobs in the town. There is virtually full occupancy of sites/premises, and businesses report a shortage of availability.<sup>13</sup>
- 3.24 Due to significant levels of out-commuting to Bath, Bristol, Swindon, and even London, and a shortfall of suitable land for employment growth, the economy in Chippenham has reached a critical point. However, because of its excellent transport links - along the M4 and Great Western Railway Line corridors - the town remains attractive to the market. It is important that it continues to attract new businesses if it is to have a successful and sustainable future economy.
- 3.25 Notable employers have chosen to locate within the town, with expertise ranging from the traditional manufacturing and engineering base (companies such as Siemens and Wavin) to the service sector. As the latter has grown, the high quality of skilled labour available has encouraged companies such as Wincanton, Capita, Alliance Pharmaceuticals and Good Energy to grow their operational bases within the town.<sup>14</sup>
- 3.26 The rapidly growing and vibrant range of diverse businesses located within Chippenham, combined with its strategic location, makes for a vibrant future. Wiltshire also has a tradition of successful smaller business and Chippenham is ideally placed to support such enterprises. Dyson is a perfect example of a business originally founded in the town that has now emerged as a world leading company.<sup>15</sup> Alliance Pharmaceuticals, with its head office in the town centre, has gone from being a start-up to a multi-national pharmaceutical company in the space of 20 years.

<sup>12</sup> [Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan](#), Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP), 2016, p. 19

<sup>13</sup> Wiltshire Employment Land Review, Hardisty Jones Associates, 2018, p. 16

<sup>14</sup> [Chippenham Chamber of Commerce](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Ibid.](#)

3.27 Wiltshire College & University Centre has one of its five campuses located in the centre of Chippenham, close to the railway station, and a second campus nearby at Lackham, specialising in land based and agricultural studies. The College's provision spans 14–16 School Links Programme, 16–18 year olds, Higher Education to HND and degree level, apprenticeships, adult part time/professional courses and bespoke courses for industry<sup>16</sup> with notable recent development of activity in the construction, motor vehicle and motor sport sectors.

## Community Infrastructure

3.28 The town has two cultural institutions located within the town centre - Chippenham Museum, and the Neeld Community & Arts Centre. The Reel Cinema is located just outside of the town centre. There are a number of churches located within the town. The town attracts a significant number of visitors to its annual Folk Festival.

3.29 The town has three secondary schools: Hardenhuish School, Sheldon School and Abbeyfield School. There are ten primary schools in the town, and two special schools.

3.30 Chippenham is well served with sports clubs and leisure facilities including the Olympiad Centre, Stanley Park Sports Ground, Chippenham Sports Club, Chippenham Town Bowls Club, and Chippenham Town Football Club.

3.31 Chippenham Community Hospital is located within the town on Bath Road.

## Transport Infrastructure

3.32 Chippenham is located adjacent to the A350 primary route corridor which provides north-south links in west Wiltshire to the M4 in the north and A36 in the south. Other main routes include the A4 linking to the west towards Bath and east towards Calne and Marlborough, and the A420 linking to Bristol in the west and Swindon in the east.<sup>17</sup>

3.33 The above routes are serviced by bus routes with regular 20 minute services to Bath and Swindon with others providing links to other surrounding towns and many neighbouring villages. Chippenham also benefits from a bus station.<sup>18</sup>

3.34 Chippenham Railway Station, well connected to the town centre, is served by the Great Western Mainline providing direct rail links to Bath, Bristol in the west and Swindon, Reading and London to the east.<sup>19</sup>

3.35 There is a network of cycle and walking routes in the town, extending out into the surrounding countryside. The Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 403 passes through the town, linking Chippenham to Marlborough and the Kennet & Avon Canal.

3.36 Current transport infrastructure constraints include: peak hour delays particularly on the A350, A4 and the A420; congestion within the town centre at the Bridge Centre gyratory and Park Lane/New Road/Marshfield Road one-way system; the volume of vehicles and HGVs on the A350<sup>20</sup>; and the often poorly connected and poorly managed cycle and walking network.

3.37 Opportunities to decarbonise the transport network in Chippenham include the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, encouraging and investing in public transport modes, and investing in improving the cycle and walking networks to encourage active travel as an alternative to the use of the private car.

<sup>16</sup> [Strategic Plan 2019-2020](#), Wiltshire College and University Centre, p. 5

<sup>17</sup> Planning for Chippenham, Wiltshire Local Plan Review, Regulation draft, January 2021, p. 22

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## Natural Environment

3.38 The geology of north-west Wiltshire, in which Chippenham is located, is predominantly limestone and clay, along with a seam of cornbrash<sup>21</sup>, a combination that is distinctly different from the chalk downland and plains to the south of the county. This makes for a peaceful and rural landscape with subtle variations in character relating to the varied geology, topography and water courses, allowing a mix of permanent pasture and arable farmland.

3.39 Traditional buildings of local limestone are an outstanding feature of the local area. In the vicinity of Chippenham historic parkland and estates are marked by stone estate walls, grand entrances and parkland trees and avenues.

3.40 The River Avon rises in the Jurassic limestones of the Cotswolds, with its source in nearby Badminton Park. It runs through the town centre, effectively dividing the town into two halves. The River, and the agricultural farmland setting around Chippenham, are the two most important physical features that have created the town's character and environment.

3.41 Monkton Park, which runs alongside the section of River through the town centre, is the largest open space within the town boundary, and has a semi-rural character. Away from the historic core of the town centre, Chippenham benefits from a variety of green spaces of different types and sizes within its residential areas, some of which link together to form longer green corridors. John Coles Park is a popular formal Victorian park in the town and has been awarded Green Flag status.

3.42 Ancient woodland exists within Chippenham at Mortimore's Wood (the only designated protected ecological site in the town), Vincients Wood and just outside the Parish boundary at Birds Marsh Wood. Extensive new tree planting has been carried out in recent years at Westmead.



*The River Avon is a key asset that imparts a semi-rural character to the town, Monkton Park*



*Ancient woodland exists within the town boundary, Vincients Wood*

3.43 Other recognised sites of wildlife value within the town include the River Avon, Baydons Meadow and Middle Lodge Wood.

3.44 The other notable tributaries of the River Avon which run through the Parish are Hardenhuish Brook, Pudding Brook, Ladyfield Brook and Cocklemore Brook. The Wilts and Berks Canal, a long term restoration project, runs along part of the south east boundary of the Parish.

## Future Direction

- 3.45 Chippenham is defined as a ‘principal settlement’ within Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy - as a ‘strategically important centre and primary focus for development’. Core Policy 1 goes on to explain that principal settlements ‘will provide significant levels of jobs and homes, together with supporting community facilities and infrastructure, meeting their economic potential in the most sustainable way to support better self-containment’
- 3.46 ‘Brownfield’ land in the town is limited in terms of current availability and therefore it is likely that any future growth will occur on less sustainable ‘greenfield’ land or farmland in the Parish and surrounding it.
- 3.47 Growth on ‘greenfield’ land would need to be balanced against the potential loss of rural landscapes and green infrastructure, employment in the agricultural sector, and land for sustainable food production, particularly where high quality agricultural land is involved.<sup>22</sup> Sustainable food production, where food is grown and consumed locally, is becoming increasingly recognised for its low carbon credentials and reduces the reliance on, and associated risks of, costly food imports in a scenario where global food scarcity is likely to increase in the future.
- 3.48 The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that if Chippenham continues to grow, this growth needs to be appropriate in scale; of high quality design; be environmentally sustainable; planned so as to mitigate the causes and be adapted to the impacts of climate change; and take account of emerging trends as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.49 The growth agenda, and the town’s positive locational advantages along the M4 and Great Western Railway Line corridors, needs to be balanced against concerns expressed by the local community about the rapid expansion of the historic market town and the level of net out-commuting.
- 3.50 These concerns are based on past and current experience of large scale volume house building which has not always delivered the necessary sustainable transport and community infrastructure to go with it - including jobs, schools and community facilities. Some housing estates are poorly connected to the town centre and its facilities, including those located on the western edges of the town. The town cannot afford to become a dormitory settlement.
- 3.51 The Neighbourhood Plan supports surrounding villages in their desire not to be amalgamated within an expanded Chippenham, which would result in the loss of their setting, identity and amenity.
- 3.52 The Chippenham of the future will capitalise on its history, location and beautiful surrounding countryside to maintain itself as an attractive and vibrant, riverside market town in which to live, work and for people to visit.

<sup>21</sup> Cornbrash is an old English agricultural name applied in Wiltshire to a variety of loose rubble or brash which forms a good soil for growing corn

<sup>22</sup> Usually considered to be Agricultural Land Classification Grades 1, 2 and 3a, known as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. There are areas of BMV within Chippenham Parish (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>)

## 4. Creating Vision & Objectives

4.1 The Pre-Vision Survey conducted by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in April 2019 was the Steering Group's first contact with the Chippenham community and proved to be hugely beneficial in being able to prepare a 'Vision' and set of accompanying objectives for the Plan with the confidence that it reflected the wishes of the community.

4.2 The overall Vision for Chippenham, or its identity as a town, is:

### CHIPPENHAM IDENTITY

Chippenham will capitalise on its rich history, good transport links and beautiful surrounding countryside to maintain itself as an attractive and vibrant, riverside market town in which to live, work and for people to visit. Its future growth will be appropriate in scale, of high quality design, be environmentally sustainable and planned so as to mitigate the causes, and be adapted to the impacts of, climate change.

#### Objectives:

1. Promote and enhance the special character of Chippenham as a historic, riverside, market town by ensuring that all new development is sustainable and of the highest quality design.
2. Ensure the town's access to the surrounding countryside is maintained and enhanced.
3. Establish green buffers to protect the town's identity by preventing coalescence with surrounding settlements.
4. Promote net zero carbon development and ensure that future development is resilient with respect to climate change.
5. Recognise the important role farms in the Parish can continue to play in their interaction with the town and the shaping of its future, whilst supporting their transition to an agro-ecological model.

4.3 The key theme of sustainability and climate change mitigation was considered to be integral to the Chippenham Identity.

4.4 Six topic areas became apparent from the Pre-Vision Survey results, with a golden thread of sustainability and climate change mitigation running through all topic areas. A Vision and set of objectives were then prepared for each topic area:



## GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Chippenham will deliver environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate and the community through the provision of green and blue infrastructure. Existing infrastructure in the town, such as parks, green spaces and watercourses, will be protected and enhanced. A network of inter-linked green and blue spaces across the town will be developed, which connect through into the surrounding countryside and help to support the transition of farmland to an agro-ecological model.

### Objectives:

1. Protect, enhance and extend the 'River-Green Corridor' as a focal point for the town, establishing green links to it from existing parks/green spaces, and connecting surrounding new development to it via green and blue infrastructure.
2. Identify a network of green and blue spaces that link together to allow people and fauna to travel freely between the town and surrounding countryside.
3. Protect and enhance important green spaces, by formally designating them as Local Green Spaces.
4. Establish a regime for new and replacement tree planting where development is proposed.
5. Protect and enhance biodiversity.
6. Ensure that green space for public recreational use is incorporated into new housing development, and linked to existing and proposed green corridors where possible.

## HOUSING

Chippenham will manage housing growth so as to meet the needs of its existing and future population, whilst ensuring that the necessary physical and community infrastructure to support such growth is delivered at an early stage. It will maintain a separate and distinctive identity by avoiding coalescence with neighbouring settlements. Housing development will be net zero carbon, of high quality design, and of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures to support a sustainable community.

### Objectives:

1. Ensure that housing growth is sustainable and supported only where key infrastructure is delivered at an early stage -including social, transport and green and blue infrastructure.
2. Ensure that new housing development contains the right type and mix of housing, including affordable and market housing to meet the identified needs of the whole community.
3. Secure a high quality of design for new housing development and encourage self-build, use of local materials and innovative housing design.
4. Ensure that all new housing development is net zero carbon by incorporating energy efficiency measures, water efficiency measures, renewable energy generation and sustainable transport connectivity.

## TOWN CENTRE

Chippenham will revive its town centre, serving as a centre for community activity, sub-regional public services, and retaining a mix of national traders and attracting independent traders whose presence will embed its market town character. The town centre will be a vibrant meeting place for the community to shop, interact and enjoy their leisure time, and a visitor destination in its own right. The distinctive identity of the town centre, which has been shaped by its varied and special historic architecture, and by the River Avon, will be at the core of its regeneration.

### Objectives:

1. Develop the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site as an extension of the town centre, for mixed-use development.
2. Preserve and enhance the special historic character of the town centre by ensuring that new development, including advertising and shopfronts, is sympathetically and sensitively designed, and enhances the significance of heritage assets.
3. Identify sites within the town centre which could be developed/enhanced to increase the attractiveness of the public realm.
4. Identify sites or buildings that could be developed or used for community or leisure purposes.
5. Make the town centre a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
6. Enhance the River Avon frontage as a place-shaping feature for the regeneration of the town centre.

## TRANSPORT

Chippenham will be a town where people can move around easily on foot, bicycle, motorcycle or public transport as an alternative to travelling by car. It will avoid unnecessary commercial traffic crossing through the town centre, and parking will make a positive contribution to good traffic management.

Air pollution and carbon emissions will be minimised. There will be a network of well-connected walking and cycling routes across the town, and through into the surrounding countryside, with more people choosing active travel and public transport as a means of getting around.

### Objectives:

1. Improve current walking and cycling networks and infrastructure throughout the town and into the surrounding countryside.
2. Incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure into new development and in public places.
3. Promote sustainable transport by improving infrastructure and making modal shift easier in favour of public transport, walking and cycling.
4. Reduce vehicular traffic in town.

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Chippenham will have a strong sense of community that is diverse and inclusive. It will provide a range of sport, recreation and leisure opportunities, and amenities for the whole community, including specific facilities for young people. This will be complemented by a diverse programme of events, festivals and activities that take place within the town and its green spaces.

### Objectives:

1. Protect or enhance existing facilities, or create new top class facilities, for sporting and recreational opportunities.
2. Encourage the community to come together by providing a range of indoor and outdoor meeting places and event spaces.
3. Resist the loss of existing community uses and buildings.
4. Promote a strong sense of community that is diverse and inclusive.
5. Protect or enhance existing facilities, or create new facilities, for young people.

## ECONOMY

Chippenham will support its existing businesses, recognising the importance of the agricultural and engineering industries in the Parish. It will encourage new businesses to relocate, or start up, within and around the town so that it becomes much more self-sufficient and less of a commuter town. Its commercial areas will be attractive to a range of businesses, so that employment opportunities will enable people to live and work locally. Future development will be employment-led, with high quality jobs on offer from businesses that are oriented towards future and circular economies.

### Objectives:

1. Promote and encourage new businesses to locate within and around the town and provide diversified employment opportunities for the local population, including provision for business incubator units and start-ups.
2. Ensure local employment sites are connected to the town via sustainable transport modes.
3. Ensure support and infrastructure is available for small businesses and those which utilise the circular economy.
4. Support the agricultural sector as a provider of local employment and training opportunities, and to meet the increasing needs for provision of local farm produce.

## 5. Sustainability & Climate Change

### Introduction

5.1 The purpose of the planning system is to help shape the development of places in a sustainable way (economically, socially and environmentally). It is required to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. The NPPF explains that it should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.<sup>23</sup>



*Flooding of the River Avon in Chippenham is likely to become more severe in the future if climate change continues or accelerates*

5.2 Planning for a future within a changing climate requires greater emphasis to be applied to place making and the achievement of sustainable communities. The NPPF states that 'Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures.'<sup>24</sup>

5.4 In January 2021, Wiltshire Council opened consultation on the Local Plan Review. This included a supporting document '[Addressing Climate Change and Biodiversity Net Gain through the Local Plan - Raising the Ambition](#)' which sets out the Local Planning Authority's proposed approach to low carbon development.

5.3 The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) latest report calls for a limit of 1.5 degrees of warming to prevent the worst effects of climate change. In 2019 Wiltshire Council declared a Climate Emergency and resolved to seek to make the county carbon neutral by 2030. It is reviewing its approach to carbon neutral/net zero carbon development in the review of the Local Plan. In 2019 Chippenham Town Council also declared a Climate Emergency.

5.5 The challenges of climate change demand urgent action on carbon emissions and the Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to significantly reduce Chippenham's carbon footprint and make a significant local contribution to the adaptation and mitigation of future climate change. Notwithstanding the policies set out in this chapter, the cross-cutting theme of sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation has been considered in the formulation of all Neighbourhood Plan policies - being integral to the Chippenham Identity Vision.

<sup>23</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#), MHCLG, 2021, para. 152

<sup>24</sup> [Ibid.](#) para. 153



*The IPCC recommends a limit of 1.5 degrees of warming to prevent the worst effects of climate change*

5.6 The UK Government has set, through the [Climate Change Act](#), a requirement for the UK to reduce carbon emission levels to net zero by 2050. This translates to a 68% reduction by 2030 and a 78% reduction by 2035 (on a 1990 baseline).<sup>25</sup> Reaching net zero emissions requires an annual rate of emissions reduction (15 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, 3% of 2018 emissions) that is 50% higher than under the UK's previous 2050 target and 30% higher than achieved on average since 1990. This illustrates the step change in action required to cut emissions in every sector.

5.7 Figure 5.1 shows how an Energy Hierarchy can be used to reduce carbon emissions from new development by sustainable use of energy.

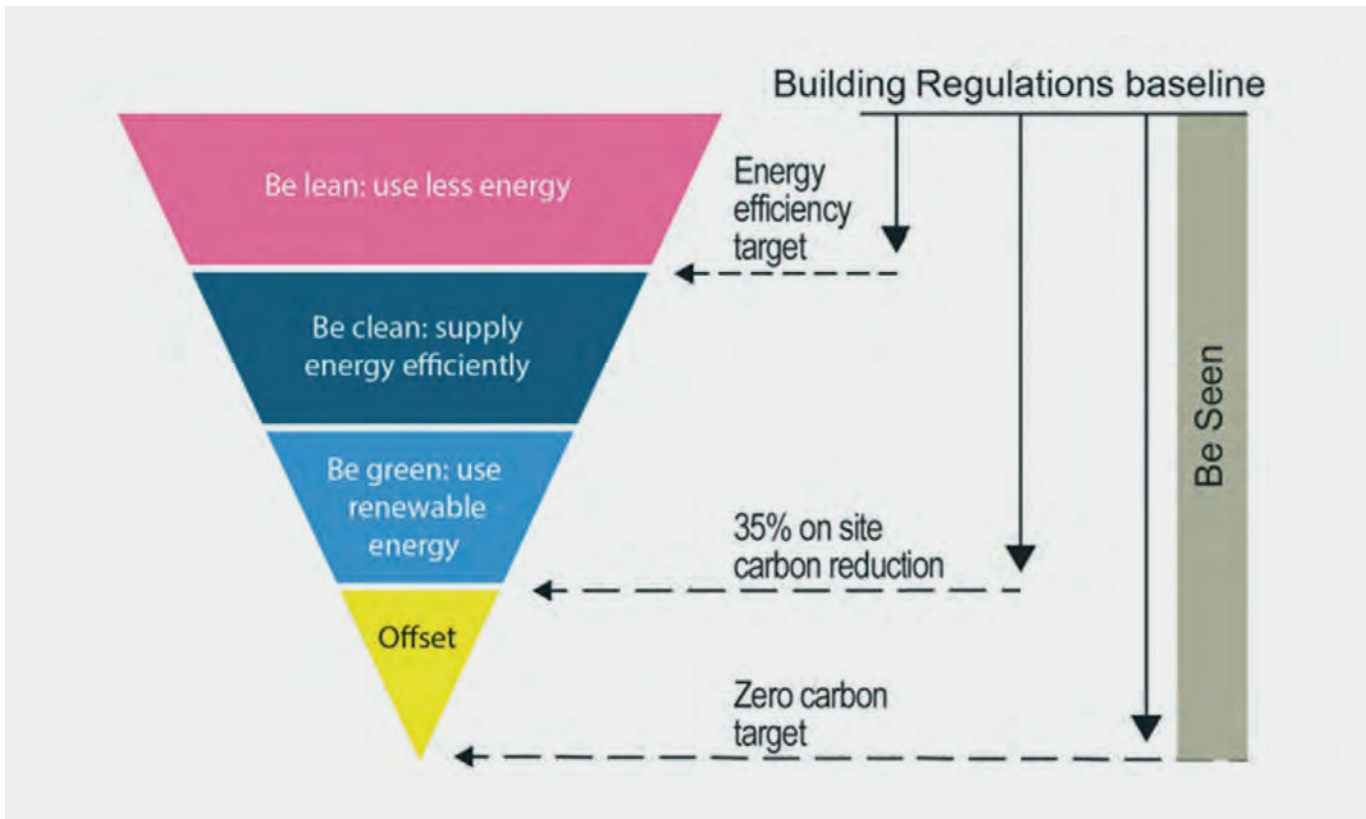
#### NET ZERO EMISSIONS:

'Net zero emissions are achieved when anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals over a specified period. Where multiple greenhouse gases are involved, the quantification of net zero emissions depends on the climate metric chosen to compare emissions of different gases (such as global warming potential, global temperature change potential, and others, as well as the chosen time horizon.'  
- IPCC, 2018<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Sixth Carbon Budget, Climate Change Committee, 2020

<sup>26</sup> [Global Warming of 1.5oC - Special Report](#), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2018

Figure 5.1: The Energy Hierarchy



5.8 As can be seen above, the Energy Hierarchy has the following steps:

- Be Lean** - use less energy by minimising energy demand through energy efficiency measures such as fabric performance and passive design. Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC2 ensures new buildings are constructed using sustainable construction techniques and materials.
- Be Clean** - supply energy efficiently and exploit local energy resources such as secondary heat and district energy networks where available. Preference must be given to technologies with greater efficiencies and fuels with lower carbon emissions to achieve the highest total lifecycle carbon emission savings. Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC1 sets out how net zero carbon development should be achieved to accord with this aspect.
- Be Green** - maximise the use of renewable energy sources. Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC3 supports standalone renewable energy developments in the town.

## Net Zero Carbon Development

**Chippenham Identity Objective 4:** Promote net zero carbon development and ensure that future development is resilient with respect to climate change.

**Housing Objective 4:** Ensure that all new housing development is net zero carbon by incorporating energy efficiency measures, water efficiency measures, renewable energy generation and sustainable transport connectivity.

5.9 An inefficient building costs many times more to heat than an energy efficient one. UK homes are the least energy efficient in Europe. The built environment contributes around 40% of the UK's total carbon footprint. Almost half of this is from energy used in buildings (e.g. plug loads and cooking) and infrastructure (e.g. roads and railways) that has nothing to do with their functional operation.<sup>27</sup> According to the [Climate Change Committee](#) (an independent, statutory body which advises the UK Government on emissions targets) the carbon emissions from this sector need to be reduced significantly faster than they have to date if the UK is to meet its carbon reduction commitments.<sup>28</sup>

5.10 In June 2019, the Government announced that the UK will 'eradicate its net contribution to climate change by 2050' by legislating for net zero emissions.<sup>29</sup> The built environment can deliver some of the most cost effective carbon reductions possible in helping get to this target.

5.11 New houses can be built to zero-carbon standards on a cost-competitive basis in the mass market, but currently only a very small proportion are built to better than the minimum legal requirement for energy efficiency.<sup>30</sup> The Neighbourhood Plan must ensure that at least minimum local standards are achieved in all developments and encourage development to exceed these standards voluntarily.

<sup>27</sup> [UK Green Building Council](#)

<sup>28</sup> [BBC News](#), 2020

<sup>29</sup> [UK becomes first major economy to pass net zero emissions law](#), Gov.UK, 2019

<sup>30</sup> [Why Zero carbon Homes Must Lead the Green Covid 19 Recovery](#), Phys Org, 2020

## National Policy and Legal Context

- 5.12 The Government has to date not set out any clear guidance on planning policies which relate to energy efficiency standards.<sup>31</sup> However, the [Planning and Energy Act 2008](#) (also repeated in Paragraph 12 of Planning Practice Guidance on Climate Change, 2019) explains local planning authorities may in their development plan documents 'include policies imposing reasonable requirements for development in their area to comply with energy efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of building regulations.'<sup>32</sup>
- 5.13 In June 2022 Part L of the Building Regulations was updated to require a 31% reduction in carbon emissions compared to the 2013 standard. These interim changes to Building Regulations are a stepping stone to achieving the Future Homes Standard in 2025, which will ensure that new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes built under the 2013 Building Regulations.
- 5.14 In acknowledgement of the fact that many local planning authorities have already adopted binding net zero carbon policies that compare with, or exceed, the proposed 2025 Future Homes Standard (the Government confirmed in its response to the 2019 consultation on the Future Homes Standard<sup>33</sup> that local authorities will retain powers to set tougher energy efficiency standards for new homes in their area in line with the provisions of the [Planning and Energy Act 2008](#)).

## Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development

- 5.15 The Climate Change Committee recommends that between 2019-2035 buildings emissions need to fall by just under 50% on the way to reaching near-zero by 2050. By 2033 all the UK's buildings should be energy efficient and all boiler replacements should use low-carbon technologies such as heat pumps. Alternatively, they should be part of a zone for district heating, or possibly a hydrogen option. The Committee's pathway to net zero carbon envisages, across all buildings, around 34% of reduction up to 2030 being the result of energy efficiency measures, alongside a growing share from low-carbon heating from 2028.<sup>34</sup>
- 5.16 The [UK Green Building Council \(UKGBC\)](#) has provided two definitions for achieving net zero carbon buildings - one for in-use operational energy (see boxed definition) and one for emissions from the construction process. Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC1 is concerned with the former definition, aiming to ensure that net zero carbon for operational energy is achieved when a building's total annual net CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions equal zero, that is, all carbon impacts are balanced by all carbon credits.



***Energy efficient garden room in Chippenham constructed from Structurally Insulated Panels (SIP), sustainably sourced cedar cladding, solar reflective double glazing, and window frames made from a large proportion of recycled plastic. The building is heated and cooled by an air source heat pump and fitted with solar panels***

<sup>31</sup> The national planning policy and legal context in relation to energy efficiency standards is explained in more detail in the relevant proforma for this topic found in Appendix 2.

<sup>32</sup> [Planning and Energy Act 2008](#), Section 1, Para 1(c). <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/21/section/1>

<sup>33</sup> [The Future Homes Standard: 2019 Consultation on changes to Part L \(conservation of fuel and power\) and Part F \(ventilation\) of the Building Regulations for new dwellings - Summary of responses received and Government response](#), MHCLG, 2021, paras. 2.4, 2.39



**NET ZERO CARBON - OPERATIONAL ENERGY:**

‘When the amount of carbon emissions associated with the building’s operational energy on an annual basis is zero or negative. A net zero carbon building is highly energy efficient and powered from on-site and/or off-site renewable energy sources, with any remaining carbon balance offset.’ - UKGBC, 2019<sup>35</sup>

**REGULATED ENERGY:**

‘Building energy consumption resulting from the specification of a controlled, fixed building services and fittings, including space heating and cooling, hot water, ventilation and lighting.’ - BRE Global, 2016<sup>36</sup>

**UNREGULATED ENERGY:**

‘Building energy consumption resulting from a system or process that is not ‘controlled’, i.e. energy consumption from systems in the building on which the Building Regulations do not impose a requirement. For example, this may include energy consumption from systems integral to the building and its operation, e.g. lifts, escalators, refrigeration systems and ducted fume cupboards; or energy consumption from operational-related equipment e.g. computers, servers, printers, photocopiers, laptops, mobile fume cupboards, cooking, audio-visual equipment and other appliances.’ - BRE Global, 2016<sup>37</sup>

**SPACE HEATING DEMAND:**

‘The amount of heat energy needed within the home to maintain the rooms at the desired temperature.’<sup>38</sup> It usually expressed in kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr.

5.17 Local plans are increasingly incorporating policies which require the submission of data on operational energy efficiency of new buildings to demonstrate net zero carbon development.<sup>39</sup> The Steering Group have reviewed these policies and accompanying evidence papers. In developing Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC1 they adapted and used those aspects of policy/evidence that would best work, and be most appropriate, for Chippenham and the neighbourhood planning context.

5.18 Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC1 has been further refined in consultation with the Local Planning Authority and consultant specialists in this field, McBains. Three Dragons and McBains tested the policy for viability and found it would not cause development to be unviable. The results can be found in the Viability Assessment accompanying the Plan.

<sup>34</sup> Sixth Carbon Budget, Climate Change Committee, 2020

<sup>35</sup> Net Zero Carbon Buildings: A Framework Definition, UK Green Building Council, 2018, p.20-21

<sup>36</sup> Ene 01 - Reduction in Energy Use, BREEAM UK New Construction non-domestic buildings technical manual 2014, Reference: SD5076 - Issue: 5.0, BRE Global, 2016

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> <https://sava.co.uk/the-sava-hub/hub-article/space-heating-demand/>

<sup>39</sup> Bath and North East Somerset Council’s Local Plan Partial Update (2023) includes a pioneering policy (SCR6) to ensure that operational energy use of any proposed development is measured and meets a specified target - setting a limit on the total energy use and demand for space heating. The Policy can be found at: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/policy-and-documents-library/development-plan-core-strategy-placemaking-plan-and-local-plan-partial>. The accompanying Zero Carbon Construction Topic Paper (Aug 2021) sets out a useful summary of evidence for this policy and can be found at <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/lppu-core-documents>. Other relevant adopted or emerging local plan policies include Cornwall Council’s Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (2023) which can be found at <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/adopted-plans/climate-emergency-development-plan-document/> and draft Policy CC/NZ of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan - First Proposals (2021) which can be found at <https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/greater-cambridge-local-plan-first-proposals/explore-theme/climate-change>. BGP 10-Net Zero Buildings, a background paper for the emerging Oxford Local Plan 2040, also provides a useful summary of recent evidence for including a net zero carbon policy and can be found at [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8143/bgp\\_10\\_net\\_zero\\_buildings](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8143/bgp_10_net_zero_buildings)

5.19 Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC1 seeks to achieve net zero carbon emissions for operational energy for all new buildings using regulated energy data, prioritising fabric energy efficiency as far as possible and supporting schemes that go above and beyond energy efficiency standards in current Building Regulations and the Future Homes Standard.

5.20 In accordance with the Energy Hierarchy, for any remaining energy balance, on-site renewable energy should be used to the maximum extent possible to reach net zero emissions. Carbon offsetting is the least preferable method and should be used to remove any remaining balance that cannot be achieved on-site. This 'offset' will be calculated and costed by the developer, and submitted to, and verified by, the Local Planning Authority, through means of a planning obligation.

5.21 An Energy Statement showing estimated modelling of regulated energy consumption of new development will be the mechanism through which the developer will demonstrate net zero carbon at planning application stage. The modelling will be repeated at post-construction stage to account for any differences and submitted to, and verified by, the Local Planning Authority, through means of a planning obligation.

## Policy SCC1 - Net Zero Carbon Development

Major development proposals for all new buildings will include an Energy Statement. This should demonstrate how an annual operational net zero carbon emissions balance will be achieved by modelling each building's estimated regulated energy consumption. Upon completion of the building(s), and prior to first occupation, the modelling will be repeated and data submitted to the Local Planning Authority through a planning obligation, in order to capture any data differences post-construction. A recognised industry calculation method should be used to calculate regulated energy consumption. Numerical figures for both space heating demand and total regulated energy use should be provided in the Energy Statement.

In reaching net zero carbon emissions fabric energy efficiency should be prioritised as far as possible, in accordance with the Energy Hierarchy shown on Figure 5.1.

Where net zero carbon emissions cannot be achieved through reduced demand (energy efficiency), proposals will demonstrate that the remaining energy demand will be supplied from either:

- a) renewable and/or low carbon heat supply, for example connection to a low or zero carbon district heating network where available and/or air or ground source heat pumps;
- b) on-site renewable electricity generation; or
- c) off-site renewable energy sources as part of an allowable solution, such as an approved community energy scheme or carbon offset fund, in agreement with the Local Planning Authority through a planning obligation.

Where a proposal cannot meet the requirements in full, in addition to offsetting, the development must be future-proofed to enable future occupiers to easily retrofit or upgrade buildings and/or infrastructure in the future to enable achievement of net zero carbon development.

New developments should not be connected to the gas grid.

## Sustainable Design and Construction

**Chippenham Identity Objective 4:** Promote net zero carbon development and ensure that future development is resilient with respect to climate change.

**Housing Objective 3:** Secure a high quality of design for new housing development and encourage self-build, use of local materials and innovative housing design.

**Housing Objective 4:** Ensure that all new housing development is net zero carbon by incorporating energy efficiency measures, water efficiency measures, renewable energy generation and sustainable transport connectivity.

5.22 According to the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI)<sup>40</sup> new construction accounts for about 10% of our national emissions and the figure is increasing as other sectors de-carbonise. Taking 2017 as an example, this 10% amounts to 46 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Looking ahead, that figure is about 64% of the UK annual carbon budget in 2050.

5.23 Innovative approaches to the construction of low carbon buildings which demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels are numerous. Examples include earth sheltered, rammed earth, or straw bale construction, construction to Passivhaus standards, or conversion to EnerPHit standards.<sup>41</sup> BREEAM, AECB Building Standard and Home Quality Mark are other widely recognised best practice standards which can be used to assess sustainable building construction.<sup>42</sup>

5.24 Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy encourages new development, building conversions, refurbishments and extensions to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand. For sustainable construction it requires new homes (excluding extensions and conversions) to achieve at least Level 4 (in full) of the Code for Sustainable Homes. All non-residential development is required to achieve the relevant BREEAM 'Excellent' standards from 2019.

5.25 Core Policy 41 'encourages' rather than 'requires' new buildings to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand. Its reference to the Code for Sustainable Homes is now obsolete since the Code was abolished by the Government in 2015 and there is currently no replacement until such time as the Future Homes Standard is introduced in 2025.

<sup>40</sup> Climate Emergency Design Guide, London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI), 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency, Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2020, p. 42

<sup>42</sup> Beyond Planning Policy, Passivhaus Trust, AECB Briefing

**BREEAM:**

**BREEAM** is an international scheme that provides independent third party certification of the assessment of the sustainability performance of individual buildings, communities and infrastructure projects. Assessment and certification can take place at a number of stages in the built environment life cycle, from design and construction through to operation and refurbishment.

The main output from a certified BREEAM assessment is the rating. The BREEAM ratings range from Acceptable (In-Use scheme only) to Pass, Good, Very Good, Excellent to Outstanding.

**EMBODIED CARBON:**

The total carbon emissions generated to produce a built asset. This includes emissions caused by extraction, manufacture/ processing, transportation and assembly of every product and element in an asset. In some cases, it may also include the maintenance, replacement, deconstruction, disposal and end-of-life aspects of the materials and systems that make up the asset. - UKGBC, 2017

**PASSIVHAUS:**

**Passivhaus** buildings provide a high level of occupant comfort while using very little energy for heating and cooling. They are built with meticulous attention to detail and rigorous design and construction. Passivhaus buildings achieve a 75% reduction in space heating requirements, compared to standard practice for UK new build.

To achieve the Passivhaus Standard in the UK typically involves: accurate design modelling, very high levels of insulation, extremely high performance windows with insulated frames, airtight building fabric, 'thermal bridge free' construction, and a mechanical ventilation system with highly efficient heat recovery.<sup>44</sup>



*Wiltshire College is the only BREEAM 'Excellent' building in Chippenham*

5.26 With Wiltshire Council and Chippenham Town Council both declaring climate emergencies and a national net zero emissions target being set; Core Policy 41 does not go far enough to meet today's climate change mitigation needs.

5.27 Rather than focusing on different recognised building construction standards/ accreditations (which are useful but not always comparable with each other and can cover aspects unrelated to sustainable construction materials and techniques) Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC2 requires submission of a Sustainability Statement which has a tighter focus on producing sustainable design, construction materials and construction methods on major development schemes. To that end it goes as far as possible towards ensuring the delivery of net zero carbon development in Chippenham through sustainable design and construction.<sup>43</sup> In the context of Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC2, the Sustainability Statement will be expected to cover in full the aspects set out in Figure 5.2.

<sup>43</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for background information and evidence in formulating Policy SCC2

<sup>44</sup> [What is Passivhaus?](#), Passivhaus Trust

Figure 5.2: Aspects to be covered by the Sustainability Statement

	OBJECTIVE TO DEMONSTRATE	AREAS TO BE COVERED	FURTHER EXPLANATION
Sustainable Design	Buildings should be designed to minimise greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with their operational energy consumption. Designs should also aim to make the most efficient use of resources, avoiding non-renewable natural resources, and to maximise positive impact on biodiversity.	Insulation	Heat loss should be prevented by applying high levels of insulation to roof, walls and floors. Heat loss from windows should be reduced through double or triple glazing
		Thermal mass	Internally exposed materials with a high specific heat capacity should be used to absorb solar radiation received during the winter months and to store cool air absorbed during the night in the summer months
		Solar gain	Designs should aim to maximise passive solar gain through consideration of the orientation of glazed windows, doors or rooflights to help heat the building internally
		Natural lighting	Natural lighting should be optimised via exterior glazing (windows, skylights) reducing artificial lighting requirements and saving energy
		Natural ventilation	Natural ventilation costs less to build, operate and maintain than mechanical ventilation
		Water conservation	Water management should be planned to prevent waste, overuse, and exploitation of the resource. Effective water efficiency planning seeks to “do more with less” without sacrificing comfort or performance
		Landscaping	Landscaping should be considered to both support solar gain and help avoid overheating (achieving a balance between the two)
		Renewable energy generation	Renewable energy generation (electricity and heat) should be incorporated and optimised at the design stage, along with thermal and electrical storage, and electric vehicle integration, to allow flexible energy management and mitigate peak demand
Sustainable Construction Materials	Building materials should be selected to minimise embodied GHG emissions and other environmental impacts, whilst optimising the durability of the materials and their contribution to lowering emissions over the lifetime of the building. High embodied carbon materials should be avoided and materials sourced locally where possible.	Embodied GHG emissions from the extraction of raw materials	
		Embodied GHG emissions from the processing and manufacturing of raw materials	
		Embodied GHG emissions from the transportation of raw materials from source to site	
		Environmental impacts of construction materials	This may include degradation of natural habitat, consumption of natural resources, generation of waste materials, and the pollution of land, water and air
		Durability of materials	How long materials will last before having to be replaced
		Locally sourced materials	This would usually mean construction materials that are produced locally within the south west region
		Sustainably sourced materials	Materials which have Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) will measure that material’s environmental impact
Sustainable Construction Methods	Building methods used during the construction phase of the development should minimise GHG emissions and other environmental impacts.	Transport emissions associated with the movement of materials and waste	
		Re-use and refurbishment of buildings on the site to prevent unnecessary demolition	
		Pre-fabrication methods	
		Re-use/recycling of materials on site	
		Construction waste management	

- 5.28 Modular or prefabricated buildings are increasingly being seen as a solution to significantly reducing embodied carbon emissions. Factory-produced homes can produce up to 45% less carbon than traditional methods of residential construction. Units can be completed offsite in a controlled assembly line environment and taken to site in one delivery. It means that modular buildings require fewer carbon-intensive products like concrete and steel, and less transport for on-site workers and material deliveries.<sup>45</sup> In countries such as Sweden around 80% of new houses are prefabricated modular buildings.<sup>46</sup> In the UK and Europe it is expected that approximately 20% of new buildings will be modular by 2030.<sup>47</sup>
- 5.29 There is expectation that the use of carbon in a building's life will shift from approximately 70% operational and 30% embodied, to 35% operational and 65% embodied within the next 5-10 years<sup>48</sup>, which is significantly driven by electricity grid de-carbonisation. This means that emphasis on low-carbon construction becomes increasingly more relevant and investing/focusing on this will have long-term benefits.
- 5.30 If new buildings are constructed of high performing re-purposed or recycled materials, they are intrinsically more sustainable (please refer to Neighbourhood Plan Policy E1 for further details).
- 5.31 A sustainably constructed building may only cost 10% more upfront, but over the lifetime of the building will pay that back many times more through savings in energy costs.<sup>49</sup> Businesses themselves are citing sustainability as critical to their future, with many referring to it as being essential to their long-term survival. HSBC reported that 63% of companies planned to update buildings and equipment - citing operational efficiency, keeping up with competitors, and changing regulations as the three biggest factors behind green investment plans.<sup>50</sup> To attract and retain these businesses, Chippenham needs to construct premises that meets these rapidly changing needs with regards to sustainability, whilst also being necessary to achieve climate goals.

## Policy SCC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Proposals for all new buildings in major development schemes will demonstrate that they are sustainable in terms of a) design, b) construction materials and c) methods of construction, through submission of a Sustainability Statement which covers the criteria set out in Figure 5.2.

The Sustainability Statement should demonstrate how design has been optimised, and emissions and other environmental impacts avoided or minimised. A recognised standard for the assessment of environmental performance of buildings, such as EN 15978:2011, should be used where possible. Applicants are encouraged to submit the Sustainability Statement at pre-application stage (with revisions at the application stage) to ensure measures are incorporated as part of the design process.

All major non-residential developments will additionally be required to meet BREEAM 'Excellent' standards.

<sup>45</sup> <https://about.bnef.com/blog/scale-up-of-solar-and-wind-puts-existing-coal-gas-at-risk/>, BNEF

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.constructioncarbon.com/articles/modular-homes-a-way-for-the-future>, Construction Carbon

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.housingtoday.co.uk/news/modular-construction-emits-45-less-carbon-than-traditional-methods/5117780.article>, Housing Today

<sup>48</sup> [Embodied Carbon: Developing a Client Brief](#), UK Green Building Council, 2017, p.5

<sup>49</sup> [Modern Building Design](#), University of Bath

<sup>50</sup> [Made for the Future Report 2019](#), HSBC, 2019

## Standalone Renewable Energy

**Chippenham Identity Objective 4:** Promote net zero carbon development and ensure that future development is resilient with respect to climate change.

### STANDALONE RENEWABLE ENERGY:

Standalone renewable energy infrastructure refers to renewable energy infrastructure that is not fixed to a building, and includes wind turbines, biomass generators, anaerobic digestion plants and other energy from waste technologies, hydropower turbines, and ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays.



*Standalone renewable energy developments, such as wind turbines, could go some way in helping to meet Chippenham's energy demand*

5.32 The development of standalone renewable energy infrastructure is supported in local and national planning policy, as set out in the strategic [National Policy Statement EN-1 \(2011\)](#) and recognised in Paragraphs 155-158 of the NPPF and Core Policy 42 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

5.33 The Climate Change Committee recommend that electricity generation should be fully decarbonised by 2035, while meeting a 50% increase in annual demand. This will require large-scale deployment of new low carbon generating capacity that is resilient to a changing climate, phasing out unabated gas-fired generation, action on contracting models and on planning and consenting regimes, as well as ensuring networks are ready to accommodate new demands and generation.<sup>51</sup>

5.34 Without the development of new renewable energy infrastructure, at all scales, to decarbonise our energy system, it will not be possible to meet these very challenging but achievable targets. Renewable energy developments provide an opportunity to contribute towards a more sustainable and resilient society and, through community and municipal investment, a more equitable low carbon economy.

5.35 Internationally, we are at the point where renewable energy out-competes fossil fuels on economic grounds alone without the need for subsidy.<sup>52</sup> In fact, solar photovoltaic and onshore wind were found to be the cheapest sources of new-build generation for at least two-thirds of the global population.<sup>53</sup> As we continue to reduce the carbon intensity of our energy system, and as energy generation becomes increasingly distributed with more local renewable energy developments, neighbourhood plans offer the potential to shape how and where these are developed.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Progress in reducing emissions: 2021 Report to Parliament, Climate Change Committee, 2021, p. 122

<sup>52</sup> 'Sustainable Recovery' World Energy Outlook Special Report, International Energy Agency, 2020.

<sup>53</sup> New Energy Outlook 2021 – Executive Summary, BloombergNEF, 2021, p. 6

<sup>54</sup> Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency, Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2020, p. 25

5.36 Whilst neighbourhood plans are limited to policies on smaller-scale renewable energy projects, in the case of renewables, size is important, as larger installations benefit from economies of scale and result in higher levels of renewable energy generation.<sup>55</sup>

5.37 Chippenham and surrounding area has good solar, wind and hydro resources (River Avon), with ground mounted solar offering the largest potential for renewable energy generation at scale, until such time as national planning policy regarding onshore wind changes. There are opportunities to provide standalone renewable energy infrastructure on farmland within the southern part of the Neighbourhood Area. Sites within conservation areas and/or local green spaces are not considered suitable for development of standalone renewable energy infrastructure.

5.38 Paragraph 7 of Planning Practice Guidance for '[Renewable and Low Carbon Energy](#)' sets out several environmental planning considerations that relate to standalone renewable energy developments, including:

- Cumulative impacts, especially the increasing impact that wind turbines and large scale solar farms can have on landscape and local amenity (noise, glint or glare) as the number of turbines and solar arrays in an area increases;
- Impact on local topography;
- Impact on the significance of heritage assets and their setting;
- Protecting local amenity

Planning applications for standalone renewable energy developments should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which separately assesses the impact of the development on landscape character and visual impact, in addition to the above considerations.

5.39 In order to explore the Chippenham community's views on renewable energy development, the [Centre for Sustainable Energy \(CSE\)](#) was engaged to host two community workshops on Future Energy Needs for the town. Full details of the workshops, as documented by CSE, are set out in Appendix 3. Taking into account the pros and cons of different renewable energy types, plus the Chippenham environment, community participants devised a hypothetical energy plan for Chippenham using renewables, which would have provided 24% of Chippenham's annual electricity demand and 7% of Chippenham's annual heat demand.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> In the case of wind turbines, this increase is not always linear, since electrical output increases dramatically with size and height according to 'Wind Energy Grows Up', U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Wind

<sup>56</sup> This was done using CESAR software - a tool designed to help community participants plan how some or all of the local area's energy needs could be provided using energy generation and energy saving developments around four key areas: renewable heat, renewable electricity, renewable heat and electricity and energy saving.





*Post-it note exercise to discover the community's 'personal maps' of Chippenham's environment at the Future Energy Needs Workshops, February 2020*



*Support for solar energy development in Chippenham was an outcome of the Future Energy Needs Workshops. Solar panels are temporary features which can be successfully integrated with livestock and/ or wildflowers to maximise productivity and sustainability of farmland*

5.40 Participants discussed how the hypothetical community energy plan for Chippenham might be translated into neighbourhood planning policy, and considered there to be potential for planning policy to support:

- Onshore wind, solar, and small-scale hydro developments
- Community-owned renewable energy projects
- Renewable and low carbon heating in new developments
- Energy efficiency retrofits to existing housing stock.

5.41 It is recognised that commercial developers have the bulk of the resources and expertise to develop and deliver new renewable energy projects at the scale and speed demanded by the climate emergency.

5.42 It is at the same time acknowledged that local community support is also desirable for standalone renewable energy development. Examples of proposals that are 'led by' local communities could include, but may not be limited to:

- Proposals which are supported or promoted by a local community at the planning or pre-planning stage;
- Proposals which are conceived in partnership with the local community organisation and a developer or another party;
- Community-owned renewable energy projects.

#### COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS:

'Community energy refers to energy projects that are wholly or partially owned and controlled by local communities. The projects can span generation - usually renewable or low carbon - or demand reduction such as energy efficiency. According to Community Energy England, by 2020 there were 424 community energy organisations across the UK, with 319 MW of total installed capacity. Community energy can offer benefits to local communities as well as to wider decarbonisation goals. For example, Community Energy England state that to date, community projects have saved £2.9 million through reduced energy bills.' - Research Briefing, UK Parliament, 2021

5.43 Examples of proposals that ‘meet the needs of’ local communities could include, but may not be limited to:

- Proposals which deliver additional amenities or services that the community considers to be of benefit to the local area e.g. biodiversity enhancements, new footpaths, or electric vehicle charging points (where appropriate);
- Proposals which deliver financial benefits to a local municipal or community organisation that can then be re-invested in future community projects.

5.44 Proposals for renewable energy developments should provide additional social, economic or environmental benefits which are inclusive and accessible to all within the local community, over the lifetime of the project. In the context of Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC3, examples of ‘additional social, economic or environmental benefits’ could include, but may not be limited to:

- The generation of financial surplus which can be shared with or spent by the local community;
- Additional environmental benefits which are identified and desired by the local community in order to achieve a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10%. Such environmental benefits should comply with Core Policies 50 (Biodiversity and geodiversity), 51 (Landscape) and 57 (Design) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and may include enhancements such as improving age diversity of hedgerow trees in retained hedgerows, planting new areas of woodland, creating ponds and open drainage features or providing other new, or improved, areas of habitat creation or improved habitat management.

5.45 Following cessation of energy production/ storage uses on the site (standalone renewable energy infrastructure usually has a life span of around 25 years) the electricity generating/ transfer/storage infrastructure should be removed from the site and the land restored back to agricultural use or agri-environment use/s.

## Policy SCC3 – Standalone Renewable Energy

Proposals for standalone renewable energy developments, including renewable energy storage, will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the wider benefits of providing energy from renewable sources, including contributions to national carbon reduction objectives and targets, outweigh any adverse impacts on the local environment or amenity, including any cumulative adverse impacts from existing or planned renewable energy developments;
- b) additional social, economic or environmental benefits which benefit the local community over the lifetime of the project are provided; and
- c) particularly adverse/harmful landscape and/or visual effects are capable of being successfully mitigated through sensitive site selection, inherent/sensitive design measures and/or appropriate mitigating and enhancing landscaping proposals.

In addition, proposals for ground mounted solar photovoltaic development will be expected to make most effective use of the land around arrays through demonstrating that agricultural use will continue, and/or achieving a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain on site.

Proposals for community energy projects where there is full or partial community ownership involvement will be strongly supported.

## 6. Green and Blue Infrastructure

### Introduction

- 6.1 Green and blue infrastructure (GBI) comprises both green and blue spaces including: wildlife areas and woodlands; road verges and rights of way; parks and gardens; canals, rivers and wetlands; green-grey infrastructure such as green bridges and green walls/roofs; natural flood management and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- 6.2 With the Government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#) focusing on enhancing natural capital, GBI can be considered to consist of natural capital assets, which underpin the provision of ecosystem services, providing benefits to our health, wealth and well-being.
- 6.3 [A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire](#) was adopted by Wiltshire Council in 2022. It is a high-level strategic document that sets out the vision, goals and principles for GBI across Wiltshire until 2030.
- 6.4 GBI contributes to the quality and distinctiveness of Chippenham - a town which is fortunate to have many green spaces and parks of varying size and quality. Amongst other things, green spaces are important to the community because they create opportunities for: active travel, social interaction, sports and recreational activities, habitats for flora and fauna, amenity, physical and mental wellbeing, flood mitigation, urban cooling, and growing local food.

**Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision:** Chippenham will deliver environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate and the community through the provision of green and blue infrastructure. Existing infrastructure in the town, such as parks, green spaces and watercourses will be protected and enhanced. A network of inter-linked green and blue spaces across the town will be developed, which connect through into the surrounding countryside and help to support the transition of farmland to an agro-ecological model.



*Allotments are important green spaces for growing food, recreation, biodiversity and physical/mental wellbeing, Ladyfield Allotment*

#### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

‘A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.’ - NPPF, 2021

- 6.5 Both nationally, and within the Chippenham community, there has been a new-found appreciation and recognition of the value of GBI during the COVID-19 pandemic because it has provided the green and blue spaces in which people have been able to meet, socialise, relax, exercise, and connect with nature on a day-to-day basis.
- 6.6 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and enhance Chippenham's existing green spaces, through Local Green Space designation and identification of green corridors - one of the key corridors being the River Avon, which brings the countryside into the centre of town. It also recognises the importance of green space on its urban fringe, where green buffers can play an additional role in preventing coalescence with neighbouring settlements.
- 6.7 In June 2021 Chippenham Town Council declared an ecological emergency. Ensuring biodiversity net gain in new development, and that trees, hedgerows, woodlands, waterbodies and wildflower areas are retained and increased in Chippenham, are key priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan.



*Play areas in green spaces have become important during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pewsham Park*

## Biodiversity

Green and Blue Infrastructure Objective 5:  
To protect and enhance biodiversity.

### The Big Picture

- 6.8 The Government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#) defines biodiversity as the variety of ecosystems or habitats of species and of the genetic diversity they contain. The Plan recognises that biodiversity has an intrinsic value in its own right, and that it also underpins much of the economic and social value we gain from nature.
- 6.9 The State of the Environment Report for Wiltshire and Swindon confirms that 'higher levels of biodiversity help ecosystems to be more stable, resilient and healthy, as well as improving the quality of our daily lives.'<sup>57</sup> It also explains that 'The more species and abundance of biodiversity we have, the better the health of our natural environment and the quality of ecosystem services.'
- 6.10 It is widely accepted, including by the UK Government, that the decline of nature and wildlife in the UK over the last fifty years must be reversed. The global extinction of species is now at a crisis point and threatens the ecosystem services that support human life in both urban and rural areas.<sup>58</sup> This decline led Chippenham Town Council to declare an ecological emergency in June 2021.
- 6.11 The RSPB State of Nature Report<sup>59</sup> shows that 41% of species populations have decreased in the last fifty years with one of the most significant drivers of this decrease being urbanisation.
- 6.12 Whilst the Neighbourhood Area is predominantly urban and generally lower in biodiversity than the surrounding countryside, it can still contain a range of wildlife, plants and habitats. Developments designed with space for nature can even increase species diversity and abundance.
- 6.13 Urban specialist birds, such as swifts, are a good biodiversity indicator for urban areas, because good quality, long-term data is available, and much is known about their ecology and some of the pressures affecting them. Urban specialist birds have declined in abundance in the UK since 1994.<sup>60</sup>
- 6.14 The principle of protecting and enhancing biodiversity as a result of development is already established in NPPF Paragraphs 179-180 and Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 50. Policy CH3 of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan requires areas for protection and enhancement of nature conservation interest at the Chippenham Riverside Country Parks site.

<sup>57</sup> [State of the Environment Wiltshire and Swindon](#), Link2Nature Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Partnership, 2013, p. 9

<sup>58</sup> The economics of biodiversity: the Dasgupta review, London: HM Treasury, 2021

<sup>59</sup> [State of Nature](#), RSPB, 2019.

<sup>60</sup> The State of the Environment: The Urban Environment, Environment Agency, 2021, p. 10

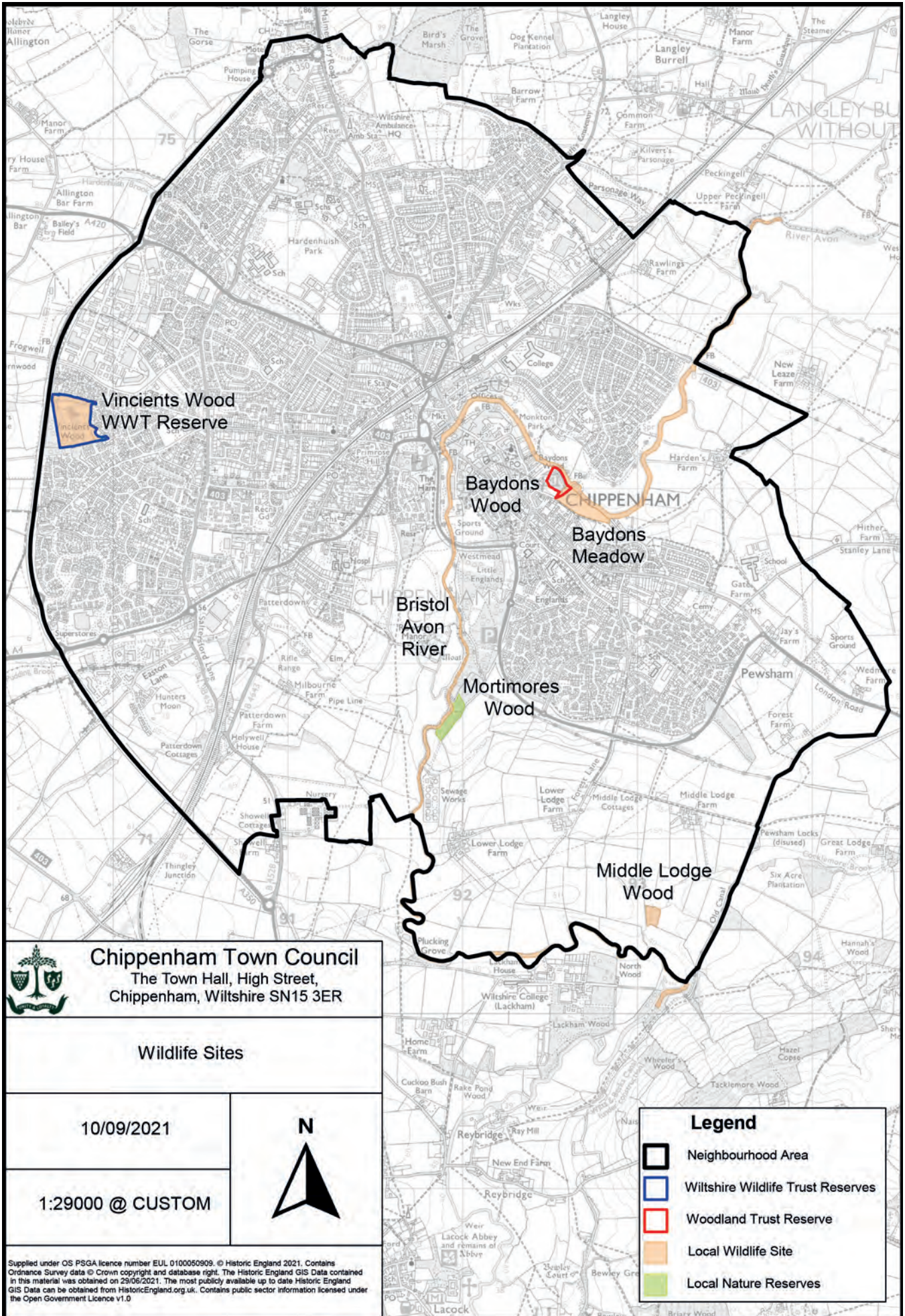


Fig 6.1: Designated Neighbourhood Area for Chippenham

## Biodiversity in Chippenham



*Cowslip (Primula veris) at Baydons Meadow County Wildlife Site*

- 6.15 The Neighbourhood Plan’s Community Survey confirmed that respondents highly value the biodiversity benefits of green spaces and GBI (see Appendix 7).
- 6.16 The Neighbourhood Area has only one designated protected site: Mortimore’s Wood, designated as a Local Nature Reserve. This site and Vincients Wood, Bristol Avon River, Baydons Meadow and Middle Lodge Wood are designated as County Wildlife Sites, shown in Figure 6.1. Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 50 seeks to protect these sites from development proposals which would damage or disturb them.
- 6.17 Green and blue spaces, regardless of their formal designation, are important repositories of wildlife and biodiversity within the Plan area. Appendix 4 provides evidence on species and habitats of importance in Chippenham and should be consulted for all planning proposals that might affect Chippenham’s biodiversity.
- 6.18 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Land at Monkton Park (Appendix 5) notes that the River Avon ‘is an extremely important natural feature and acts as an arterial route into (from the east), and out of (to the west), Chippenham town centre. The river is nationally important for its communities of dragonflies and aquatic plants.’
- 6.19 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for the River Avon: South West of Town Bridge (Appendix 6) notes that there are records of kingfisher, grey heron, and grey wagtail on the River, indicating a reasonable level of river health. The Appraisal explains that there have been past recorded sightings of brown trout, Eurasian otter, and water vole.
- 6.20 Bats are known to use the countryside in and around Chippenham for foraging, commuting and roosting. The Corsham Batscape Strategy<sup>61</sup>, part of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan (2019), models the landscape features likely to be of importance for the Bechstein’s, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bat populations associated with the nearby Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for bats. The model is based on known and available records of these species within the Corsham Neighbourhood Area and surrounding areas including the south west part of Chippenham Neighbourhood Area, together with the established understanding of roosting, foraging and commuting preferences of the species in question.
- 6.21 The Corsham Batscape Map identifies specific woodland and scrub, grass cropping and pasture, rough grassland and water feature habitats for foraging in the south western part of Chippenham Neighbourhood Area. It also identifies ‘connective habitats’ used by bats such as hedgerows. The Batscape Map identifies both the River Avon and railway line in Chippenham as ‘strategic flyways’, which are ‘are of key importance in allowing bat populations associated with the SAC to move across the landscape.’

<sup>61</sup> Corsham Batscape Strategy, Corsham Neighbourhood Plan, Corsham Town Council, 2019, p. 31

6.22 Chippenham Town Council has engaged Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to carry out site appraisals on the major green spaces it owns, with a view to protecting and enhancing biodiversity on these sites through the creation of Management Plans. However, the Neighbourhood Plan also recognises the important role the community and voluntary sector in Chippenham can play in supporting the biodiversity objectives of the Plan by maintaining habitats, gathering environmental data<sup>62</sup> and producing community environmental plans, using toolkits such as Wiltshire Council's Community Environmental Toolkit.



*Chippenham Town Council has developed a 5yr Management Plan for Monkton Park which seeks to improve biodiversity*

## Biodiversity Net Gain

6.23 The Environment Act 2021 will introduce a minimum 10% mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain for most types of developments. The legislation will allow these gains to be achieved through habitat creation, and/or enhancement. It is expected that in many instances BNG will be achieved on site in association with new public open space and green infrastructure, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and other nature based solutions associated with new development and this will always be the preference of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, in some instances where off-setting high value habitats is required, or where there are significant limitations on-site, off-site BNG can be proposed. Where no local solutions can be found Statutory BNG credits can be purchased.<sup>64</sup>

6.24 Many LPAs and developers are already beginning to implement BNG based upon the Environment Act 2021 requirements. Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI1 also sets out this requirement of schemes in the interim period, before it is required by law.

6.25 British Standard 8683 'Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain' (2021) sets out good practice for developers to adopt in designing and implementing biodiversity net gain.

### BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN:

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) in development is defined as 'development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before.'<sup>63</sup>



## Implementing Biodiversity in Development

- 6.26 There are numerous standards and good practice guidance documents when it comes to implementing biodiversity in new development, and further resources are suggested in Appendix 4.
- 6.27 SuDS and green/brown roofs present an ideal opportunity to enhance biodiversity on a site in addition to other benefits. The former provides an opportunity to bring urban wetlands and other wildlife-friendly green spaces into the town and link these with existing habitats, creating or extending green and blue corridors. Landscaping schemes, which include wildflower areas or climbing plants/trees against walls can be a cost effective way of increasing biodiversity on a site.
- 6.28 Simple and cost effective wildlife features can be incorporated into the design of new dwellings to increase biodiversity. These include: swift bricks (which are ‘universal’ nest bricks for other birds such as starlings, great tits, blue tits, house martins and house sparrows); bee bricks; bird and bat boxes; and hedgehog holes in rear garden fences.
- 6.29 British Standard 42021 ‘Integral nest boxes – Selection and installation for new developments’ (2021) advises new residential developments having a number of integral nest boxes at least equal to the number of dwellings. It advises for bird provision to be ‘integrated/integral’: ‘Integrated nesting bricks are preferred to external boxes for reasons of longevity, reduced maintenance, better temperature regulation, and aesthetic integration with the building design.’
- 6.30 Developer contributions, CIL or BNG offsetting/credits should be used to invest in the enhancement of biodiversity within green spaces in the town, particularly within Local Green Spaces and Green Corridors identified under Neighbourhood Plan Policies G12 and G13.
- 6.31 There are opportunities throughout the town for small scale, low cost biodiversity enhancements on existing sites. Priority should be given to biodiversity enhancement of green spaces that are currently laid to grass only with no other vegetation present. Input into the design of biodiversity enhancements should be sought from [Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) or other accredited Ecologists, and through consultation with the local community immediately surrounding the green space.

### BUILDING WITH NATURE:

[Building with Nature](#) is the UK’s first green infrastructure benchmark. It is a voluntary accreditation scheme that enables developers to create places that deliver multifunctional benefits including for people and wildlife. The standard has been developed by practitioners and policy makers, academic experts and end-users, and has been tried and tested in multiple schemes from Cornwall to Scotland. It is a means by which developers can demonstrate that the development meets an independently assessed and accredited standard for high-quality green infrastructure that supports the enhancement of biodiversity and other green infrastructure services.

<sup>62</sup> There are various online facilities available for the community to record environmental data. These include iRecord (<https://irecord.org.uk/enter-casual-record>) and Woodland Trust (<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/what-we-record-and-why/what-we-record/>)

<sup>63</sup> [Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development](#), CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA, 2016

<sup>64</sup> Topic Paper: Biodiversity Net Gain, Draft Plan (Reg 19) Consultation, BANES, 2021

## Policy GI1 - Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity

Proposals must demonstrate that the following on-site features, for the creation, protection or enhancement of wildlife habitat and biodiversity, have either been retained or incorporated into the design of the development:

- i) Ancient trees and hedgerows and/or trees and hedgerows of arboricultural value
- ii) Blue infrastructure. Where sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are being created these should be multi-functional
- iii) Native plants and wildflower areas in landscaping proposals
- iv) Green/brown roofs (where appropriate)
- v) Building integrated bird and bat boxes
- vi) Swift bricks and bee bricks in new buildings
- vii) 13cm x 13cm holes in fencing for hedgehogs and other small mammals to pass through

Major development proposals will only be permitted where a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10% is demonstrated and secured in perpetuity (at least 30 years). Development proposals that deliver in excess of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain will be supported. The latest DEFRA metric or agreed equivalent shall be used to calculate Biodiversity Net Gain.

Development proposals on sites which are located adjacent to existing green spaces and/or open countryside will demonstrate, through their layout and/or landscape design, that they can provide an appropriate and sensitive interface to existing adjoining habitats.

Development proposals that are accredited as meeting Building with Nature standards will be supported.

## Local Green Spaces

**Green and Blue Infrastructure Objective 3:**  
Protect and enhance important green spaces, by formally designating them as Local Green Spaces.

**Green and Blue Infrastructure Objective 1:**  
Protect, enhance and extend the 'River-Green Corridor' as a focal point for the Town, establishing green links to it from existing parks/green spaces, and connecting surrounding new development to it via green and blue infrastructure.

**Green and Blue Infrastructure Objective 2:**  
Identify a network of green and blue spaces that link together to allow people and fauna to travel freely between the town and surrounding countryside.

6.32 Chippenham is fortunate to have a variety of different green spaces, ranging in character, size and function: from large, semi-rural, informal spaces like the River Avon Open Space; to more formal Green Flag status parks like John Coles Park; to smaller areas of mown grass within housing estates.

6.33 Existing green spaces are highly valued by the local community in Chippenham as evidenced by the Pre-Vision Survey results, with 'green spaces and parks' being the second most mentioned item that the community liked about living in Chippenham (see Appendix 1). In the Community Survey, John Coles Park was named as the overall favourite location or venue for Chippenham residents, again indicating the high value the community place on parks and green spaces in the town (see Appendix 7).



***John Coles Park was the overall favourite venue or location for Chippenham residents identified from the Community Survey***

6.34 There will be increasing pressure to develop upon green spaces in the town (particularly those smaller-sized spaces which may be lost to infill housing development) during the Local Plan Review period, in order to meet Wiltshire's housing requirement. It is therefore important to retain and protect green spaces in accordance with the local community's desire for current and future generations to be able to enjoy them.

6.35 The NPPF recognises Local Green Space designation as an important tool for protection of green spaces via neighbourhood plan policy:

'The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.'<sup>65</sup>

6.36 Whilst larger green spaces in the town are currently afforded some general county-wide protection under Core Policy 52 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Local Green Space designation under Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI2 goes further and identifies specific green and blue infrastructure in Chippenham that is valued by the local community and is worthy of protection.



*Small green spaces can be just as valued by the local community, Redland Open Space*

6.37 Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI2 also recognises smaller local green spaces e.g. a mown grass area comprising of 0.1ha within a housing estate, which can be just as much valued by the community that live within the immediate vicinity of the space, as larger green spaces in Chippenham of a recognised size and quality. The policy therefore ensures that lesser-known local sites are retained and protected through designation. By designating and recognising such spaces, thereby giving greater certainty to their retention, the site owner, community and developer can better appreciate their value, and enhancement of these spaces can be encouraged to further benefit the local community and biodiversity.

<sup>65</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#), MHCLG, 2021, para. 101

6.38 The NPPF sets out key criteria for Local Green Space designation:

‘The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.’<sup>66</sup>

6.39 The NPPF goes on to explain that ‘Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.’<sup>67</sup>

6.40 In order to begin the process of assessing the town’s green spaces for Local Green Space designation, Neighbourhood Plan Green Infrastructure Topic Group Members visited 160 green spaces on foot to audit each space between Autumn 2019-Spring 2020. The methodology for the audit is explained further in the Local Green Spaces Topic Paper (Appendix 8).



*Some Local Green Spaces are designated because of their significant heritage value, St. Andrew’s Church Graveyard*

6.41 Topic Group Members used a Local Green Space Assessment Tool to assist them in shortlisting 49 sites for consideration as Local Green Spaces. The Tool was based on the above NPPF criteria for Local Green Space designation and is presented in the Local Green Spaces Topic Paper (Appendix 8).

6.42 Where a site met all three NPPF criteria, and there were no statutory designations, site allocations or planning permissions on the site which would prevent designation, it was shortlisted. Figure 6.2 identifies the Local Green Spaces designated in Chippenham, with larger scale maps for each Local Green Space contained within Appendix 9.

<sup>66</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, MHCLG, 2021, para. 102

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. para. 103

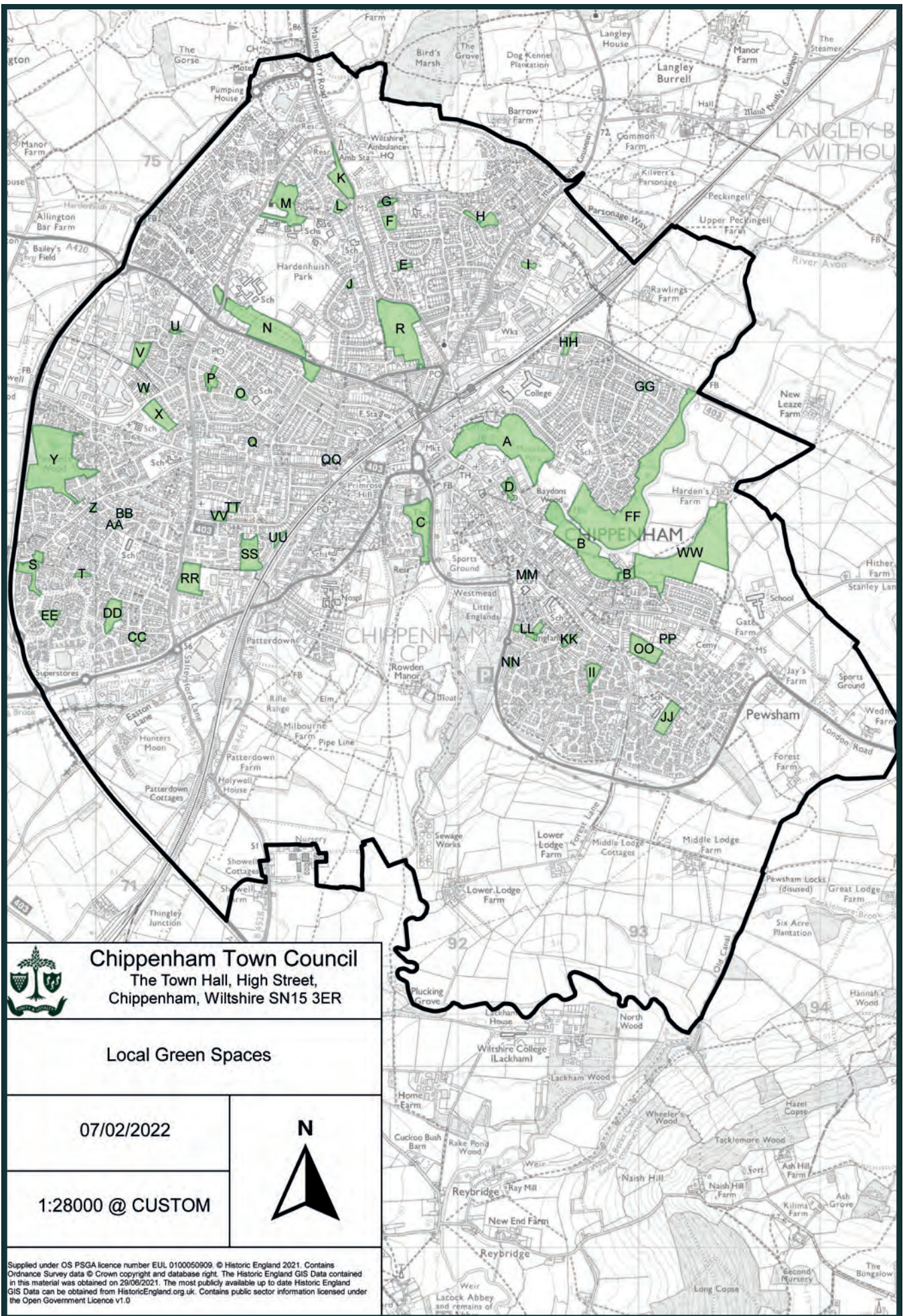


Fig 6.2: Designated Local Green Spaces in Chippenham

## Policy GI2 - Local Green Spaces

The following sites, as shown on Figure 6.2, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A. Monkton Park                              | AA. Farleigh Close Open Space                          |
| B. Baydons Wood, Baydons Meadow & Long Close | BB. Conway Road Open Space                             |
| C. Charter Road Parkland                     | CC. Thirsk Close Open Space                            |
| D. St. Andrew's Church Graveyard             | DD. Levi's Park  |
| E. Deansway Allotment                        | EE. Sandown Drive Open Space                           |
| F. Broomfield Open Space                     | FF. River Avon Open Space                              |
| G. Oaklands Open Space                       | GG. Black Bridge Road Open Space                       |
| H. Barrow Green & Hill Rise Open Space       | HH. Great Mead Open Space                              |
| I. Saxby Road Open Space                     | II. Jordan's Field                                     |
| J. Yewstock Crescent Open Space              | JJ. Pewsham Park                                       |
| K. Hardenhuish Allotment & Malmesbury Road   | KK. Bolts Croft Open Space                             |
| L. Brookwell Close Open Space                | LL. Humbolts Hold/Claypole Mead Open Space             |
| M. Hardenhuish Wood                          | MM. Wood Lane Children's Play Area                     |
| N. Donkey Field & Hardenhuish Brook          | NN. Blackwellhams Children's Play Area                 |
| O. Redland Open Space                        | OO. Cricketts Lane Allotment                           |
| P. Clifton Close/Boothmead Open Space        | PP. Hardens Close Open Space                           |
| Q. Stonelea Close Open Space                 | QQ. Audley Road Children's Play Area                   |
| R. John Coles Park                           | RR. Open Space Adjacent to Indoor Bowls Club           |
| S. Derriads Pond Open Space                  | SS. Kingsley Road Field                                |
| T. Drake Crescent Open Space                 | TT. Hungerdown Allotment                               |
| U. Allington Way Open Space                  | UU. Ladyfield Allotment                                |
| V. Little Battens Park                       | VV. Ladyfield Road Large Square                        |
| W. Frogwell Park Open Space                  | WW. Open Space Adjacent to Long Close/<br>Hardens Mead |
| X. Lords Mead Allotment                      |  |
| Y. Vincients Wood                            |  |
| Z. Derriads Lane Open Space                  |  |

Proposals for built development on these Local Green Spaces must be consistent with policy for Green Belt and will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of that Local Green Space.

## Green Corridors

**Green and blue Infrastructure Objective 1:** Protect, enhance and extend the 'River-Green Corridor' as a focal point for the Town, establishing green links to it from existing parks/green spaces, and connecting surrounding new development to it via green and blue infrastructure.

**Green and Blue Infrastructure Objective 2:** Identify a network of green and blue spaces that link together to allow people and fauna to travel freely between the town and surrounding countryside.

**Transport Objective 1:** Improve current walking and cycling networks and infrastructure throughout the town and into the surrounding countryside.



*The Wilts & Berks Canal is an important Green Corridor that allows for the free movement of wildlife and humans between town and countryside*



*A network of green corridors corresponding with public footpaths exists in Pewsham*

- 6.43 Green Corridors are a network of multi-functional green spaces and green and blue infrastructure (GBI) that provide opportunities for the free movement of wildlife (and humans through sustainable transport modes) between town and country. They also include road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths and rights of way, as well as blue infrastructure such as rivers, streams, canals and ponds. Green spaces that connect to form a network of green corridors provide multi-functional benefits for wildlife, biodiversity, outdoor sport and physical activities, flood protection, leisure opportunities, climate change mitigation, agriculture, and health and wellbeing of the community.
- 6.44 Existing green spaces are highly valued by the Chippenham community, as evidenced by the Pre-Vision survey results and Community Survey results (Appendices 1 and 7).
- 6.45 The Audit of Green Spaces (Appendix 8) carried out for the purposes of Local Green Space designation, and their subsequent mapping, revealed that Chippenham has many green spaces that link together, or could be linked together, to form linear Green Corridors. The Green Corridors Topic Paper (Appendix 10) sets out in more detail the background and methodology that the Topic Group used to identify Green Corridors in the town.
- 6.46 Some parts of the town benefit from having a good network of existing Green Corridors, particularly those newer residential estates such as Cepen Park and Pewsham where GBI was a key component incorporated into the design of new housing estates. Older parts of the town, and residential estates in more deprived wards where green spaces are generally isolated from one another, are disadvantaged in that they have few, if any, Green Corridors. In the past, Green Corridors have often been an overlooked asset of the town, with poor connections into the surrounding countryside.
- 6.47 Figure 6.3 illustrates the network and hierarchy of Green Corridors in the town determined by the Neighbourhood Plan Green Infrastructure Topic Group.



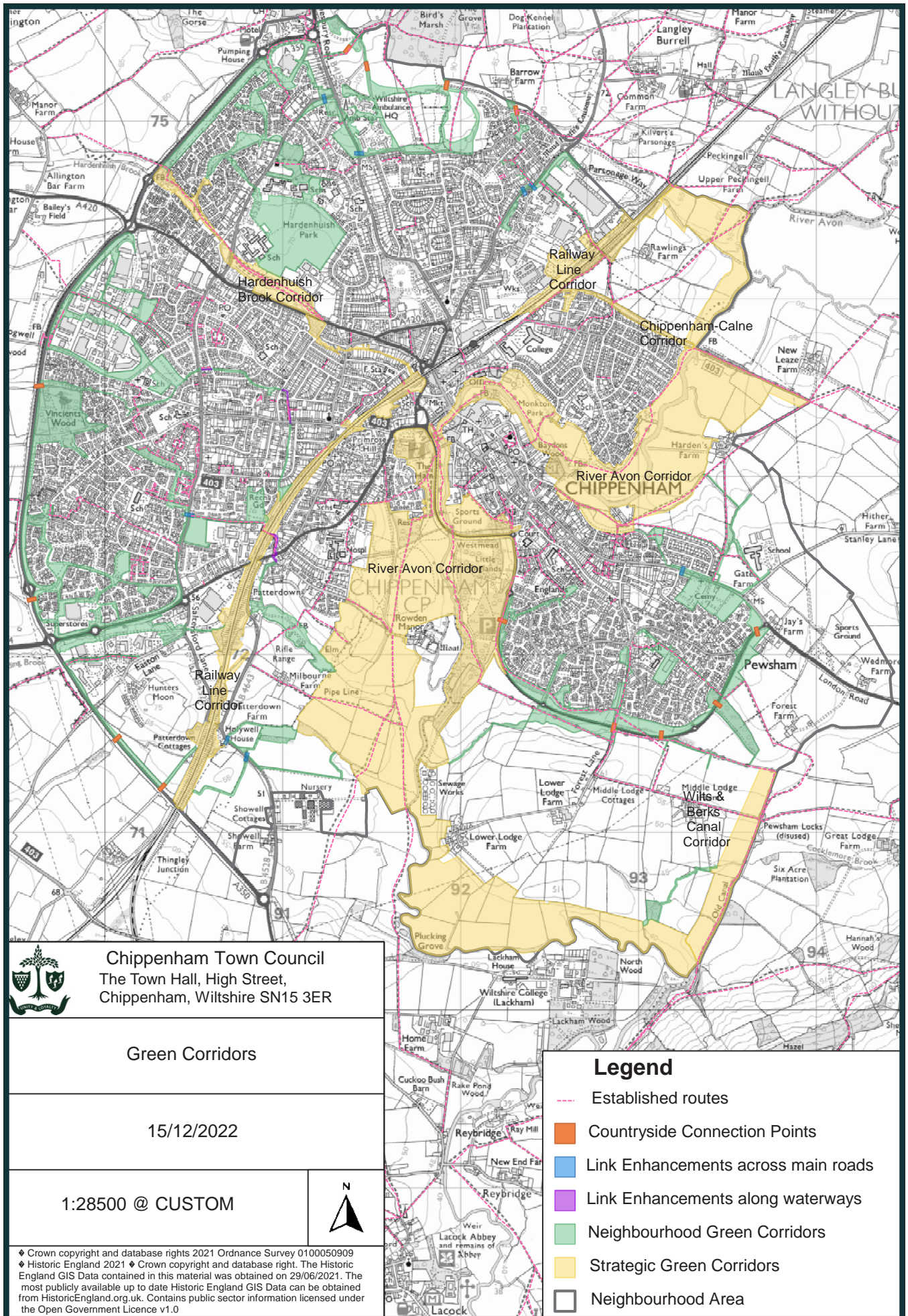


Figure 6.3: Green Corridors in Chippenham



***Hardenhuish Brook is identified as a Strategic Green Corridor linking the countryside to the town***

6.48 As shown in Figure 6.3, five ‘Strategic Green Corridors’ have been identified in the town:

- a) River Avon Corridor
- b) Hardenhuish Brook Corridor
- c) Railway Line Corridor
- d) Wilts & Berks Canal Corridor
- e) Chippenham-Calne Corridor

6.49 Each ‘Strategic Green Corridor’ extends beyond the Neighbourhood Area and links the countryside to the town (indirectly in the case of the Wilts & Berks Canal Corridor). Each is of a length which makes it viable as a key route for wildlife to enter the town, and in the case of the River Avon Corridor, Hardenhuish Brook Corridor and Chippenham-Calne Corridor, as a key route for people to enter the surrounding countryside.

6.50 With regard to the River Avon Corridor, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust explain ‘...the linear aspect of the river corridor found at this site should not be overlooked. It is an important link between the areas of open countryside on the north-east and southwest of the town.’<sup>68</sup>

6.51 As already highlighted in the supporting text to Policy GI1, the River Avon Corridor and Railway Line Corridor are identified as ‘strategic flyways’ in the Corsham Batscape Strategy, which are of key importance in allowing bat populations associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to move across the landscape.

6.52 With regard to Hardenhuish Brook Corridor, despite the barrier of the A350, there is a public footpath which crosses underneath the road in a tunnel providing access to the countryside.

<sup>68</sup> Refer to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for the River Avon South West of Town Bridge (Appendix 6)



*Link enhancements in Neighbourhood Green Corridors could include improved habitat creation to the margins of watercourses, Ladyfield Brook between Hungerford Road and Saxon Street*

- 6.53 The Neighbourhood Plan supports the restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal as an important blue infrastructure artery for wildlife and recreation.
- 6.54 A number of ‘Neighbourhood Green Corridors’ have also been identified and are shown on Figure 6.3. These tend to be less well connected to the surrounding countryside, less extensive in length, and in some cases more fragmented. Nonetheless they still provide important corridors for the movement of wildlife and humans through the town.
- 6.55 Figure 6.3 also identifies opportunities for link enhancements within Chippenham’s Green Corridor network. Development opportunities or developer contributions to realise or enhance these links and connections could make a fundamental difference to the longevity and effectiveness of the network.

- 6.56 Green Corridors should be multifunctional spaces that reflect and enhance the character of Chippenham and also operate at a landscape scale across the town as a whole. Where Green Corridors include farmland, for example because the land has a high flood risk or is formally allocated as a Country Park, the transition to an agro-ecological model on this land will be encouraged.
- 6.57 Green Corridors are becoming increasingly important to help mitigate the effects of extreme weather events because of climate change. With more frequent and intense extreme rainfall events occurring green infrastructure within the River Avon and Hardenhuish Brook Green Corridors can perform an important role in natural flood alleviation.
- 6.58 With more frequent and intense summer heatwaves Green Corridors can perform urban cooling. Data provided by 4 Earth Intelligence shows a significant variation in heat hazard scores across Chippenham, with a large part of the urban fabric of west Chippenham having high heat hazard scores and contrasting with low heat hazard scores for those parts of the town adjacent to larger areas of green space, such as the River Avon Corridor.<sup>69</sup>
- 6.59 The integrity of Green Corridors should be retained and enhanced by developments that may be located within or near to them. This can be achieved by using a range of green and blue features that are most relevant to that site and location and which can often act as drivers for place shaping. These may include: open space and recreational areas, raised fences allowing wildlife to move between rear gardens, planting of new trees and landscaping, green walls, green/brown roofs, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and natural land alongside sustainable transport routes and public rights of way.
- 6.60 Where development on greenfield land comes forward within the Neighbourhood Area, new green corridors created along the edge of the development site should form an integral component of masterplans in order to protect the rural character of the countryside. The Chippenham Design Guide (Annexe 1) provides further guidance on designing in green and blue infrastructure and taking into account views to/from the countryside where new residential development is concerned.
- 6.61 Wildlife species differ from humans in their sensitivity to light and may be adversely affected in a number of ways by it. The positioning, duration, type of light source and level of lighting are all factors that can affect the impact of light on wildlife.<sup>70</sup> The Strategic Green Corridors in particular are generally dark corridors suitable for bat commuting, foraging and roosting.
- 6.62 The Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) has produced guidance on obtrusive light which sets out specific constraints for lighting within different environmental zones.<sup>71</sup> Within each zone, targets are applied for skyglow, light intrusion, luminaire intensity and building luminance. Whilst recognising that there will already be variance in light levels between existing Green Corridors according to their nature and location, it is considered that Environmental Zone E2 'Rural' standards should be applied to proposals that require lighting within, or adjacent to, Green Corridors to reflect their general 'low district brightness' and maximise their potential for wildlife.
- 6.63 Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI3 aligns with Paragraph 179 of the NPPF and Core Policy 52 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy by identifying a GBI network for the town and seeks to ensure that the integrity of the overall GBI network is not compromised by inappropriate development and land management. It also complies with Policies CH1-CH3 of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan, which allocates land for Chippenham Riverside Country Parks at South West Chippenham and Rawlings Green.

## Policy GI3 - Green Corridors

### Strategic Green Corridors

The following are identified on Figure 6.3 as Strategic Green Corridors:

- a) River Avon Corridor
- b) Hardenhuish Brook Corridor
- c) Railway Line Corridor
- d) Wilts & Berks Canal Corridor
- e) Chippenham-Calne Corridor

All development located within, or adjacent to, Strategic Green Corridors must be designed to ensure that these Corridors remain intact, allowing for the movement of wildlife and humans between the surrounding countryside and urban area of the town.

### Neighbourhood Green Corridors

Figure 6.3 identifies Neighbourhood Green Corridors. Development which takes the opportunities to link Neighbourhood Green Corridors to the surrounding countryside at the Countryside Connection Points identified on Figure 6.3, or to Strategic Green Corridors, will be supported.

Development which takes the opportunities to realise or improve the missing links or connections for wildlife within Green Corridors, identified as Link Enhancements on Figure 6.3, will be supported.

### All Green Corridors

All development located within, or adjacent to, the Green Corridors identified on Figure 6.3 must be designed to protect and enhance these Corridors by:

- i) Not compromising their integrity and their principal open space use and function for wildlife and biodiversity, visual amenity, flood protection and movement networks
- ii) Ensuring that wherever possible new open space connects to them
- iii) Prioritising investment in enhancement of open space and informal recreation, where appropriate
- iv) Using developer contributions to facilitate improvements to the quality of Green Corridors, including establishing missing links and resolving poor connections within the network
- v) 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

### New Green Corridors

Green and blue infrastructure shall be strategically located along contours and the edges of greenfield development sites to help screen and filter harmful urbanising effects from new development and to avoid the creation of harsh new urban settlement edges fronting countryside.

New or improved sustainable transport routes shall be designed to include Green Corridors along their length in a manner that balances safe use by humans and allows free movement for wildlife.

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-62243280>, 2022

<sup>70</sup> Light Pollution, Planning Practice Guidance Note, DLUHC & MHCLG, 2019, Para. 6

<sup>71</sup> Guidance Note GN01/2020: Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light, Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP), 2020, Table 2

## Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

**Green and Blue Infrastructure Objective 4:**  
Establish a regime for new and replacement tree planting where development is proposed.



*Woodlands in Chippenham have a myriad of community and environmental benefits, Hardenhuish Woods*

6.64 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows in Chippenham bring about a myriad of benefits for the local community and environment, and are integral to the future development of the town and its rural hinterland. These benefits include: carbon absorption, reducing air pollution, and reducing air temperature through shading – all of which contribute towards combatting climate change; improving human health and wellbeing; providing ecological benefits; encouraging outdoor activity; absorbing noise; and helping to prevent flooding.

### Tree Cover

- 6.65 The Woodland Trust consider that neighbourhood plans can be an effective tool for the delivery of planning policies relating to trees.<sup>72</sup> They have reported the low level of woodland cover and tree cover in the UK and recommend an increase in UK woodland cover from its current 13% of land area to 19% by 2050 to tackle this country's biodiversity and climate crises.
- 6.66 Tree canopy coverage in Chippenham in 2020 was estimated to be an average of 14.1%.<sup>73</sup> This is lower than the estimated average canopy cover of 15.8% for the 283 English towns and cities which have been mapped to date using the i-tree canopy tool.<sup>74</sup>
- 6.67 Figure 6.4 shows the breakdown of tree canopy coverage in Chippenham Wards, based on the 2011 Census ward boundaries, using the i-Tree canopy tool. Ward boundaries and names subsequently changed in 2021. Nonetheless, the figures reveal large geographical variations in tree canopy cover within the town, being particularly poor in some areas, and a need for tree coverage to be increased in Chippenham overall.

<sup>72</sup> Emergency Tree Plan: How to Increase Tree Cover, Woodland Trust, 2020, p. 8

<sup>73</sup> UK Urban Canopy Cover, Forest Research

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 6.4: Tree Canopy Cover in Chippenham Wards**

Ward	Tree Canopy Cover %
Chippenham Cepen Park and Derriads	22.67
Chippenham Cepen Park and Redlands	13.25
Chippenham Hardenhuish	19.76
Chippenham Hardens and England	5.75
Chippenham Lowden and Rowden	17.25
Chippenham Monkton	12.25
Chippenham Pewsham	9.25
Chippenham Queens and Sheldon	12.75

6.68 The Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network advise that ‘a minimum standard for tree canopy cover is set for a local area, with evidence showing that 20% is a good aspiration.’<sup>75</sup> This target of 20% tree canopy cover on new development sites is considered to be realistic and achievable for Chippenham and is set out in Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI4.

<sup>75</sup> [England’s Urban Forests: Using tree canopy cover data to secure the benefits of the urban forest](#), Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network

## Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Retention

- 6.69 Trees and hedgerows in Chippenham mark gateways and landmarks, and define key spaces and routes. They make a primary contribution to the distinctiveness and quality of the town. They mark historical boundaries and rights of way, providing a connection between nature and our past. They should be protected and integrated into new development proposals wherever possible. Ancient, veteran and mature trees or hedgerows, which have intrinsic ecological, arboricultural and amenity value, must be retained.
- 6.70 Failure to provide a sufficient distance between existing woodlands or tree belts and new dwellings can result in reduced quality of life for residents due to heavy shading and perceived danger. It can also adversely affect the ecology of the woodland/tree belt, due to dumping of garden rubbish, light and noise pollution and pressure for lopping trees and removing valuable deadwood habitat. For these reasons Policy GI4 applies at least a 20m buffer zone between the edge of the woodland/tree belt and the development to provide a naturally graded edge to the woodland and allow for maintenance access and natural processes of tree death and decay to occur without unnecessary risk to people or property.

## Tree Replacement

- 6.71 Where there is unavoidable tree loss due to development proposals, the number of trees required to compensate for this loss should take into account the amenity value and size of the tree.
- 6.72 The Bristol Tree Replacement Standard (BTRS)<sup>76</sup> (a tool which Bristol City Council developed for its Local Plan) does this, and is arguably more sophisticated than using tree replacement ratios, as it takes into account the size (and therefore age) of the existing tree. The BTRS has also been successfully adopted at parish level, with Cam Parish Neighbourhood Plan<sup>77</sup> using it.
- 6.73 The Tree Planting Guide, which accompanies Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI4 and which can be found in Annexe 4 of the Plan, uses the BTRS to specify the number of replacement trees required where tree loss is unavoidable. It also provides guidance on species selection depending on the different characteristics of a site. Where new trees are to be planted, the Guide explains there is a preference for native trees and large-canopied species which provide a wider range of ecological benefits. In addition, the Chippenham community were keen to see an increase in orchard trees for, amongst other things, a local food resource.
- 6.74 A lack of trees planted within rear gardens of recent large scale housing developments in the town has been a missed opportunity to increase tree coverage and encourage wildlife routes through rear gardens. Policy GI4 supports those housing developments which incorporate suitable rear garden trees.

<sup>76</sup> [Bristol Local Plan - Site Allocations and Development Management Policies](#), Bristol City Council, 2014, Policy DM17

<sup>77</sup> [Cam Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 - 2031 Referendum Version](#), Cam Parish Council, 2020, Policy CAMCD2





*Many green spaces in residential areas laid to mown grass could benefit from tree planting and improved biodiversity, Hill Rise/Barrow Green Open Space*

6.75 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF explains that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree lined. Chippenham has a limited number of street trees and its stock could be increased to improve amenity and place making. Commuted sums are therefore encouraged to be used through planning obligations to plant new street trees and maintain existing street trees in the vicinity of a site.

6.76 Residential estates in Chippenham often accommodate local green spaces which are open and laid to grass. Opportunities should be sought to plant suitable new trees on these local green spaces and maximise biodiversity in accordance with Neighbourhood Plan Policy G11.

6.77 Street tree planting, and tree planting on open areas laid to grass, should consider the location of existing underground infrastructure, such as water mains and sewers which can be damaged by tree roots.

6.78 Outside of the urban area, farming practices which retain existing trees, woodland and hedgerows, and create new, will be supported.

6.79 Policy G14 supports NPPF Paragraphs 131 and 174 and adds local detail to Core Policies CP51 and CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which seek to ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through retention and enhancement of natural features such as trees, woodlands and hedgerows.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for further background information and evidence in the formulation of Neighbourhood Plan Policy G14

## Policy GI4 - Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

### Existing Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows

Proposals should seek to protect existing trees, woodland and hedgerows and avoid removal wherever possible. Ancient, veteran and mature trees or trees and hedgerows of ecological, arboricultural or amenity value should be retained. Protection before and after development should be in accordance with British Standard BS5837.

A buffer zone, of at least 20m, consisting of semi-natural habitat, shall be provided between new development (including gardens) and the edge of a woodland or tree belt unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated, through the detailed design process, that the proposal would have no adverse impacts on trees, ecology, people, or property.

### New and Replacement Tree Planting

Development will be supported that takes the opportunities to:

- a) Incorporate gateway or landmark trees for placemaking purposes
- b) Deliver new street trees

Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, the number of replacement trees shall have regard to the advice set out in the Tree Planting Guide (Annexe 4).

In selecting new or replacement tree species regard shall be had to the advice set out in the Tree Planting Guide - with a preference for native, large-canopied and orchard species.

### Tree Canopy Cover

Proposals should demonstrate a future tree canopy cover of at least 20% of the site area on sites outside of the town centre and greater than 0.5 ha in size. This will principally be achieved through retention and planting of trees, but where it can be demonstrated that this is impractical, the use of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs) can be used to deliver equivalent benefit. On residential development sites, some of this tree canopy cover will be expected to be met through incorporation of new trees within rear gardens, having regard to the advice set out in the Tree Planting Guide.

## Green Buffers

**Chippenham Identity Objective 3:** Establish green buffers to protect the town's identity by preventing coalescence with surrounding settlements.

- 6.80 Chippenham has grown significantly in recent decades which has led to urban encroachment into the surrounding countryside. The town's relationship with its surrounding agricultural landscape is a key feature of its character, and the countryside was the fourth most popular reason people liked living in Chippenham according to the results of the Pre-Vision Survey (Appendix 1).
- 6.81 As the town continues to expand surrounding rural settlements such as Langley Burrell, Tytherton Lucas, Derry Hill, Studley and Notton are at risk of losing their individual identities as Chippenham's built form spreads towards them. This was one of the most important concerns raised by neighbouring parishes during the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's early engagement sessions with them.



*Greenfield land adjacent to Parsonage Way provides important separation between Chippenham and Langley Burrell village (visible in distance)*

### GREEN BUFFERS:

Green buffers, or areas of retained countryside on the urban fringe, have been successfully used in neighbourhood plans for a variety of reasons, including to:

- Prevent the coalescence of settlements
- Protect local character and identity
- Protect areas of special landscape and views of countryside
- Protect ecology and areas worthy of environmental conservation

They can have multi-functional benefits for agriculture, biodiversity, leisure and recreation, flood protection, climate change mitigation, and health and wellbeing of the community.

- 6.82 The proposals in the [Wiltshire Local Plan Review \(Regulation 18\)](#) identify significant levels of new housing land in the countryside to the east of Chippenham, in the direction of Tytherton Lucas, Derry Hill and Studley; and to the south, in the direction of Notton and Lacock. This further encroachment into the surrounding countryside threatens the visual character, historic character (the setting of conservation areas and listed buildings) and social character of Langley Burrell and Tytherton Lucas in particular.
- 6.83 Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the emerging Local Plan, and Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan all acknowledge the importance of retaining separate identities for the rural settlements and landscape surrounding Chippenham.
- 6.84 The [Langley Burrell Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan \(2017\)](#) and the [Bremhill Parish Neighbourhood Plan \(2018\)](#) both contain policies which seek to prevent further encroachment from Chippenham's urban fringe.

6.85 The Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan can also play a part in helping to protect the character of surrounding settlements by securing green buffers between them and the urban edge of Chippenham where possible to do so. However, where green buffers are arguably most needed, no sizeable areas of land exist for this purpose in the Neighbourhood Area. In most cases it will be up to surrounding parishes and their own neighbourhood plans to establish how green buffers will be promoted in their areas.

6.86 Our Neighbourhood Plan is limited to an expression of support for green buffers, with an exception being the provision of a small green buffer in our Neighbourhood Area between Chippenham and Tytherton Lucas/Langley Burrell.

6.87 The most recent [Landscape Character Assessment](#) for Chippenham was prepared in support of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan (CSAP) 2017. It identified landscape qualities to be safeguarded, indicating the separation to Tytherton Lucas as important. This was reinforced by the CSAP Site Selection Report and the Inspector's Report, the latter noting that one of his most significant concerns with the Rawlings Green site allocation was 'the visual separation of the urban edge of Chippenham from Peckingell Farm and Tytherton Lucas to the north-east and the visual impact of development on the more open landscape of the river valley and more distant views to the east.'

6.88 The approximate 10ha Country Park incorporated around the northern and eastern edges of the Rawlings Green site allocation and referred to in Policies CH2 and CH3 of the CSAP, is important in 'providing a substantial visual buffer between the developed area and Peckingell Farm' (as noted by the Inspector in his Report). The sixth bullet point of Policy CH2 of the CSAP reinforces the need to protect the open character of these areas, stating 'no new buildings should be located in the Country Park unless they are ancillary to the use of the Country Park, or to the east of the 50m contour.'



*The Green Buffer site provides important visual separation between the future urban edge of Chippenham and hamlet of Peckingell (Grade II Listed Upper Peckingell Farm can be seen in distance when looking north east from the Green Buffer site)*

6.89 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, Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI5 secures a green buffer on two fields, which have been allocated as part of the Country Park in the CSAP. The extent of this green buffer is identified on Figure 6.4.

6.90 Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI5 complements Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI3 (Green Corridors) because land which is identified as a green buffer also forms part of the River Avon Strategic Green Corridor. However, the function and purpose of these two policies are materially different.

## Policy GI5 - Green Buffers

No new buildings, unless ancillary to the use and function of open space, shall be located in the Green Buffer identified on Figure 6.4 in order to prevent the coalescence of Chippenham with Langley Burrell, Tytherton Lucas and Peckingell.

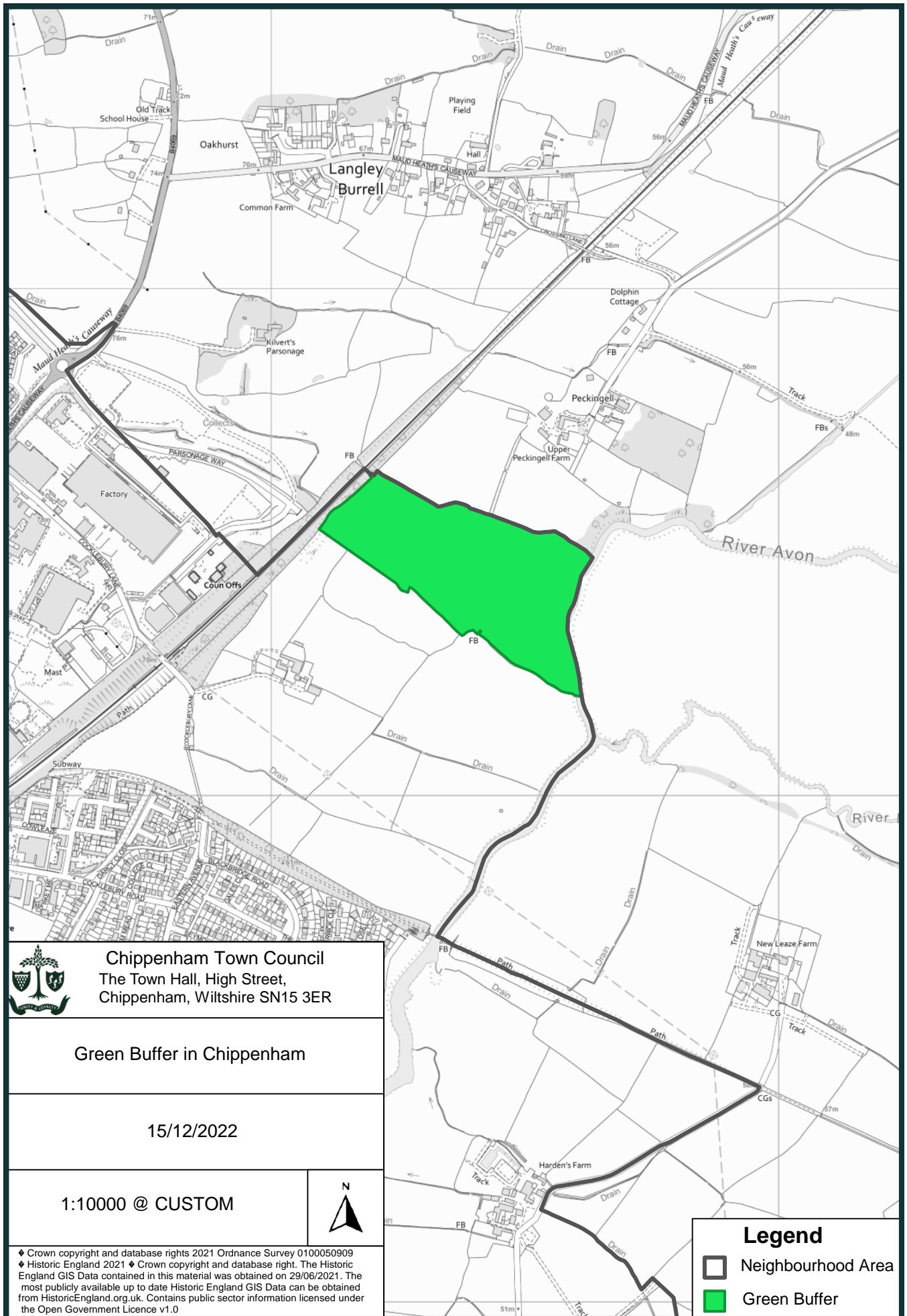


Figure 6.4: Green Buffer in Chippenham

## 7. Housing

### Introduction

- 7.1 Anticipated future housing growth in Chippenham will be determined by the Local Plan Review and be of a strategic scale outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.<sup>79</sup>
- 7.2 The [Chippenham Site Allocations Plan \(2017\)](#) fulfilled Core Strategy Policy 10 to provide for at least 4,510 new homes to be delivered by 2026. A residual requirement of 1660 dwellings was identified as needing to be planned for. Strategic allocations were made at South West Chippenham and Rawlings Green. Most of these allocations have now received outline planning permission and in some cases are being built out.
- 7.3 The [Wiltshire Local Plan Review \(Regulation 18 draft, January 2021\)](#) indicated that the emerging strategy for 2016-2036 for Chippenham had an overall housing requirement of 9225 dwellings, which, after accounting for existing allocations, completions and permissions, left a residual requirement of 5100 dwellings to plan for.<sup>80</sup> In addition to this, a 'brownfield target' for 2021-2031 of an additional 240 dwellings was included as an estimated amount of development that would come forward in the first part of the Plan period.
- 7.4 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot influence strategic housing numbers, where it is determined that new housing is required for Chippenham it intends to achieve this housing according to evidence of local need and design expectations, and less by speculative market demand.
- 7.5 A range of housing types and sizes will need to be provided in order to help meet local needs for different groups of the population in a sustainable manner. This should include new homes which meet the needs of an ageing population, thereby allowing people to live for longer within the local community.
- 7.6 On the whole, past development in Chippenham by volume housebuilders has been of mediocre and uninspiring design, and poor in terms of its eco-credentials. Connectivity to the town centre and its facilities has been lacking.
- 7.7 It is vital that the bar is raised and that new housing is of high quality design incorporating energy efficient measures, contemporary architecture using the latest technology and materials, the necessary infrastructure to provide all the facilities that will be required by future occupiers, and a strong sense of place and identity. The Neighbourhood Plan has produced a Chippenham Design Guide (Annexe 1) for new housing developments to ensure that high quality design is realised.

**Housing Vision:** Chippenham will manage housing growth so as to meet the needs of its existing and future population, whilst ensuring that the necessary physical and community infrastructure to support such growth is delivered at an early stage. It will maintain a separate and distinctive identity by avoiding coalescence with neighbouring settlements. Housing development will be net zero carbon, of high-quality design and of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenure to support a sustainable community.

<sup>79</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, MHCLG, 2021, para. 29

<sup>80</sup> [Planning for Chippenham, Wiltshire Local Plan Review, Regulation draft](#), January 2021, p. 14

## Housing Mix and Types

**Housing Objective 2.** Ensure that new housing development contains the right type and mix of housing, including affordable and market housing to meet the identified needs of the whole community.

- 7.8 Aecom were commissioned by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to undertake a Housing Needs Assessment for Chippenham, which can be viewed in Appendix 11 and is summarised alongside other local evidence in the Housing Mix Topic Paper (Appendix 12). The information from the Chippenham Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) has been verified by comparison to the Community Survey results (Appendix 7) which showed that the Assessment's recommendations were robust and should meet locally identified needs.
- 7.9 Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies 43 and 45 require that planning decisions take account of locally defined housing need. Proposals for five or more dwellings are required to provide 40% affordable housing in Chippenham according to Core Policy 43. However, NPPF Paragraph 64 subsequently states that affordable housing should be provided for schemes with 10 or more dwellings.
- 7.10 With regard to the type of affordable housing provision, Paragraph 65 of the NPPF requires 'where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership.'
- 7.11 The Chippenham HNA (2020) recommended that affordable houses for rent should be a priority and that the remainder should be affordable home ownership comprising of both shared ownership and discounted market sale. The full recommended housing mix from the HNA can be viewed in Appendix 11 of the Plan.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

'Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)' - NPPF, 2021

Annexe 2 of the NPPF, 2021, provides 4 definitions of affordable housing: a) affordable housing for rent, b) starter homes, c) discounted market sales housing, and d) other affordable routes to home ownership.

7.12 Subsequent to the production of the Chippenham HNA, in 2021 the Government issued a Written Ministerial Statement and published associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on First Homes. The PPG clarifies that First Homes are the Government's preferred discounted market tenure, and it is expected they should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.

7.13 In order to comply with the obligations of both the First Homes legislation and Paragraph 65 of the NPPF the percentage of discounted market ownership set out in Neighbourhood Plan Policy H1 has been adjusted from 4% of all new housing (as recommended in the Chippenham HNA) to 10% of all new housing (or 25% of all new affordable housing), of which is now solely to be achieved through the First Homes route. A corresponding adjustment has had to be applied to shared ownership from 8% of all new housing (as recommended in the Chippenham HNA) to 2% of all new housing in Neighbourhood Plan Policy H1.

7.14 The Neighbourhood Plan's Community Survey indicated that in 2020, most people who wished to move could only afford rent or a mortgage of a maximum of £700 per household (Appendix 7). In identifying housing types, applicants should justify their decisions on the level and type of affordable housing provided, and should also take account of local affordability (i.e. what local people can actually afford to pay).

7.15 The HNA has recommended that new major development should aim to meet the recommended dwelling sizes set out in Figure 7.1 The HNA has also recommended that it may be beneficial to diversify to include more terraced homes and flats, though 2-3 bedroom bungalows may be in high demand. 14% of the Community Survey respondents indicated that they would wish to live in a bungalow if they were able to move.

**Figure 7.1:**  
Recommended housing mix set out in the Chippenham Housing Needs Assessment

Dwelling Size (number of bedrooms)	Percentage of expected delivery
Five or more bedrooms	15%
Four bedrooms	5%
Three bedrooms	40% (of which 10-15% should be bungalows)
Two bedrooms	30% (of which 10-15% should be bungalows)
One bedroom	10%



**FIRST HOMES:**

First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing that meets the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value, and after the discount has been applied, in Wiltshire the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000. The homes must be sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria.



*Bungalows are not commonly built yet the Housing Needs Assessment indicates a high demand for 2-3 bedroom bungalows in Chippenham, Monkton*

7.16 Paragraph 62 of the NPPF requires that the size, type and tenure of housing for different groups in the community should be reflected in planning policies. Older people are specifically referred to and the HNA also identified that there is a need in Chippenham for additional specialist units for older people. Provision of specialist housing for older people could help to free up more of the existing housing stock for families and younger people.

7.17 Paragraph 62 of the NPPF also refers to providing for those people wishing to commission or build their own homes - also known as self-build and custom housing. Self-build and custom build help to diversify the housing market and increase consumer choice. Housebuilders choose the design and layout of their home and this can be innovative in both its design and construction. Neighbourhood Plan Policy H1 supports self-build and custom build housing.

## Policy H1 - Housing Mix and Types

Proposals for 10 or more dwellings will be expected to provide:

- 60% market housing
- 28% affordable housing for rent
- 10% First Homes
- 2% shared ownership

Where individual site circumstances, updated evidence of local need or development viability dictates a variation from these figures, robust evidence shall be submitted to justify this variation.

Affordable housing units will be dispersed throughout a development and units shall be physically indistinguishable from the equivalent market units in terms of quality and size.

The following dwelling size mix shall be used as a guideline within which a range of sizes will also be provided as part of the affordable housing offer:

- 10% One bedroom
- 30% Two bedrooms  
(of which 10 shall be bungalows)
- 40% Three bedrooms  
(of which 10 shall be bungalows)
- 5% Four bedrooms
- 15% Five or more bedrooms

Proposals for specialist housing for older people will be supported where a need can be demonstrated.

Major development schemes will be expected to demonstrate that consideration has been given to self-build and custom plots as part of the housing mix.

## Housing Design

**Housing Objective 1:** Ensure that housing growth is sustainable and supported only where key infrastructure is delivered at an early stage - including social, transport and green and blue infrastructure.

**Housing Objective 3:** Secure a high quality of design for new housing development and encourage self-build, use of local materials and innovative housing design.

**Housing Objective 4:** Ensure that all new housing development is net zero carbon by incorporating energy efficiency measures, water efficiency measures, renewable energy generation and sustainable transport connectivity.

**Housing Objective 6:** Ensure that green space for public recreational use is incorporated into new housing development, and linked to existing and proposed green corridors where possible.

7.18 Chippenham has grown significantly in size in recent decades. Past land allocations have led to the development of many housing estates, each with their own character. The Neighbourhood Plan's Housing Topic Group felt that lessons could be learned from the past to prepare policies for the high quality, beautiful and sustainable housing that will be required under the Wiltshire Local Plan Review to 2038.

7.19 The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.<sup>81</sup>

7.20 Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.<sup>82</sup>

7.21 To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design.<sup>83</sup>

7.22 The [National Design Guide](#) and [National Model Design Code](#) set out the Government's vision for good design to be used across the planning process from initial policy development to scheme design, to decisions and implementation.

<sup>81</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#), MHCLG, 2021, para. 126

<sup>82</sup> [Ibid.](#) para. 127

<sup>83</sup> [Ibid.](#) para. 128

<sup>84</sup> [Building for a Healthy Life](#) Birkbeck, D., Kruczkowski, S. with Jones, P., McGlynn, S. and Singleton, D, 2020



*Although high quality and innovative new build housing design in Chippenham is scarce, there are many design aspects of this high density development which are commendable such as landscaping, active frontages, large windows, and varied material palette and roof forms, Great Mead*

**BUILDING FOR A HEALTHY LIFE:**

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL)<sup>84</sup> is a design tool to help structure discussions about proposed new residential development. It is England’s leading process for creating well-designed homes and neighbourhoods and cited in the NPPF. Its 12 key considerations provide a structure for discussions between local communities, the Local Planning Authority, the developer and other stakeholders, to ensure that the design of new homes and neighbourhoods are as attractive, functional and sustainable as possible. The 12 considerations, grouped under three headings, are:

Based on a traffic light system, a scheme is assessed against each consideration and given either a green, amber or red light. The aim is to achieve as many green lights as possible, and avoid red lights. The more green lights a development secures, the better designed it will be. If a development secures at least nine green lights out of twelve (and no red lights) a BHL Commendation can be applied for. There are currently no housing developments in Chippenham which have secured a BHL Commendation or similar such commendation under its predecessor Built for Life Quality Mark.

Integrated Neighbourhoods	Distinctive Places	Streets for All
Natural connections	Making the most of what’s there	Healthy streets
Walking, cycling and public transport	A memorable character	Cycle and car parking
Facilities and services	Well defined streets and spaces	Green and blue infrastructure
Homes for everyone	Easy to find your way around	Back of pavement, front of home

7.23 The Steering Group appointed the Housing Topic Group to work with the local community to identify good design practice from existing housing estates in Chippenham that could be carried forward into new residential developments. It was decided to prepare a design guide that sets out the clear expectations of what should be provided on different scales of residential developments, right through from large scale major residential development allocations in the Local Plan to a windfall minor residential development of one house for example.

7.24 The Topic Group held three public consultation events in early 2020. The full report and outcomes of the events are set out in the Housing Design Topic Paper (Appendix 13).

7.25 This evidence collected was consolidated in the Chippenham Design Guide (Annexe 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan). The Design Guide sets out masterplanning principles for future residential development, including housing allocations from the Wiltshire Local Plan Review. The Guide requires masterplans for all schemes of 50 dwellings or more in Chippenham.



*Post-it note exercise from Housing Topic Group's community workshop on housing design, February 2020*

- 7.26 All new non-householder residential development proposals should address the respective design principles set out in the Chippenham Design Guide covering each of the following characteristics:
- a. The site's relationship to town and country
  - b. Local centres
  - c. Parks
  - d. Green and blue infrastructure
  - e. Boundary treatments
  - f. Sustainable transport
  - g. Parking
  - h. Inclusive design principles
  - i. Domestic building design principles
  - j. Commercial and community infrastructure design principles
  - k. Architecture and building materials
  - l. Development phasing

- 7.27 Consultation on masterplans should be meaningful and the community's involvement in the design process should be demonstrated. The NPPF requires effective community engagement in the preparation of design policies, guidance and codes.<sup>85</sup>
- 7.28 For masterplanning work, with which the Local Planning Authority is involved, consultation will be carried out in line with Wiltshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement. For masterplanning work, either with or without the involvement of the Local Planning Authority, it is advisable that a stakeholder consultation activity or event is carried out during the pre-application phase of the development.
- 7.29 Evidence should support planning applications that demonstrate how the community consultation led to improvements and changes in the scheme. For larger or more contentious proposals, it may be desirable to undertake a second consultation to agree changes mooted at the first.

## Policy H2 - Housing Design

All residential development in Chippenham will be sustainably designed in accordance with the local design guidance in the Chippenham Design Guide (Annexe 1) and other policies in the Development Plan.

Major residential development schemes shall demonstrate that they achieve at least nine out of twelve green lights, and no red lights, under the Building for a Healthy Life design tool.

<sup>85</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#), MHCLG, 2021, para. 127

## 8. Town Centre

### Introduction

8.1 Chippenham has managed to retain a relatively vibrant town centre compared with other similar sized market towns in the UK. However, the high street is arguably facing more challenges now than at any point in time in the Post-War period, with the multiple onslaught of increased online shopping and COVID-19 drastically decreasing footfall, loss of the town centre Business Improvement District (BID), a longer term trend of retail from the town centre to out-of-town retail parks on the western edges of the town, and recent changes to the Use Classes Order and permitted development rights. In the last 20 years there has been underinvestment in the town centre and it is in need of regenerating.

8.2 Chippenham town centre is no different from other town centres across the UK facing similar pressures. It may be more resilient because of some key strengths. It has: a compact, and therefore sustainable, retail core; attractive/historic shop buildings; green and blue infrastructure in the form of the River Avon Corridor; a generally pedestrian-friendly environment; and a range of community/service facilities within its town centre.

8.3 The Wiltshire Retail and Town Centres Study 2020<sup>86</sup> found that:

'Chippenham remains a healthy town centre, which has been able to adapt to the on-going trends facing the UK retail sector and also the changes in out of centre floorspace in the town. The town centre has seen falling vacant retail units alongside changes to the comparison goods and service sectors, which have mirrored the national trend. Given the growing amount of foodstore floorspace outside of the town centre, the centre will increasingly concentrate upon top-up food shopping trips and there is a need to ensure that the High Street and the two purpose built shopping areas (Emery Gate and Borough Parade) continue to underpin the health of the centre.'

**Town Centre Vision:** Chippenham will revive its town centre, serving as a centre for community activity, sub-regional public services, and retaining a mix of national traders and attracting independent traders whose presence will embed its market town character. The town centre will be a vibrant meeting place for the community to shop, interact and enjoy their leisure time, and a visitor destination in its own right. The distinctive identity of the town centre, which has been shaped by its varied and special historic architecture, and by the River Avon, will be at the core of its regeneration.



*Market day on High Street. The historic, pedestrian friendly and compact nature of the town centre contributes to a lively and pleasant environment in which to meet and shop*

8.4 In 2022 Chippenham town centre had a smaller percentage of vacant ground floor units than the national average - 10% as opposed to 11.2% nationally. It also had a higher percentage of independent businesses in comparison to the national average - 52.9% as opposed to 40.3% nationally.<sup>87</sup>

- 8.5 In order for the town centre to remain resilient it needs to adapt so that it is not just a shopping destination but also a vibrant meeting place for the community to interact and enjoy their leisure time, and a visitor destination.
- 8.6 Key to the town centre remaining vibrant will be the encouragement of residential uses in the right location, for instance flats above commercial premises and/or residential uses located outside of the retail core.
- 8.7 There are also some clusters of commercial uses, located outside of the town centre core, where rents are more affordable, (for example on Upper New Road or Station Hill) and which have therefore attracted independent and niche businesses. These clusters have formed their own identity, fostered strong community ties, and uses are highly valued by the local community. Their loss should be avoided.
- 8.8 There are a handful of sites within the town centre which, if developed in the right way, could form a catalyst for the regeneration of the town centre.
- 8.9 Development of the longstanding blight that is the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre site is key to providing a new western gateway to the town centre.
- 8.10 Poor Post-War development, at the heart of the town centre, has resulted in the centre turning its back on the River Avon, when the River is one of the most distinctive and important assets of the town. Securing planned integration of the town centre's built form and infrastructure with the River Avon is vital.
- 8.11 Development at the Upper Market Place presents an opportunity to provide a new southern gateway to the town centre and an opportunity to improve the poor public realm there.
- 8.12 The town centre contains many fine buildings, some of which are statutorily listed, others locally recognised for their historic or architectural quality. The town centre is located wholly within Chippenham Conservation Area. The retention of many buildings and structures through conservation area policy has ensured that the special historic character of the town centre remains. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to conserve and enhance this special character for existing and future generations to enjoy and has produced an updated Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Annexe 2 of the Plan) to assist in this task.
- 8.13 One of the most visually prominent features of the Conservation Area and town centre is the design of shopfronts and their associated advertisements, and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have produced a Shopfront Design Guide (Annexe 3 of the Plan) to encourage appropriately designed shopfronts in the town centre.
- 8.14 Chippenham town centre boundary is defined in the Wiltshire Core Strategy, with the boundaries for Saved Policies R1 (Town Centre Primary Frontage) and R2 (Town Centre Secondary Frontage) shown on the policies map. The town centre boundary is being reviewed as part of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review. For the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, the wider secondary retail frontage area boundary, identified within the Wiltshire Retail and Town Centres Study 2020, will be used. This is shown on Figure 8.1.

<sup>86</sup> *Wiltshire Retail and Town Centres Study 2020*, 2020, Avison Young, para. 4.75

<sup>87</sup> Chippenham – Springboard Vacancy Rate, Springboard, July 2022

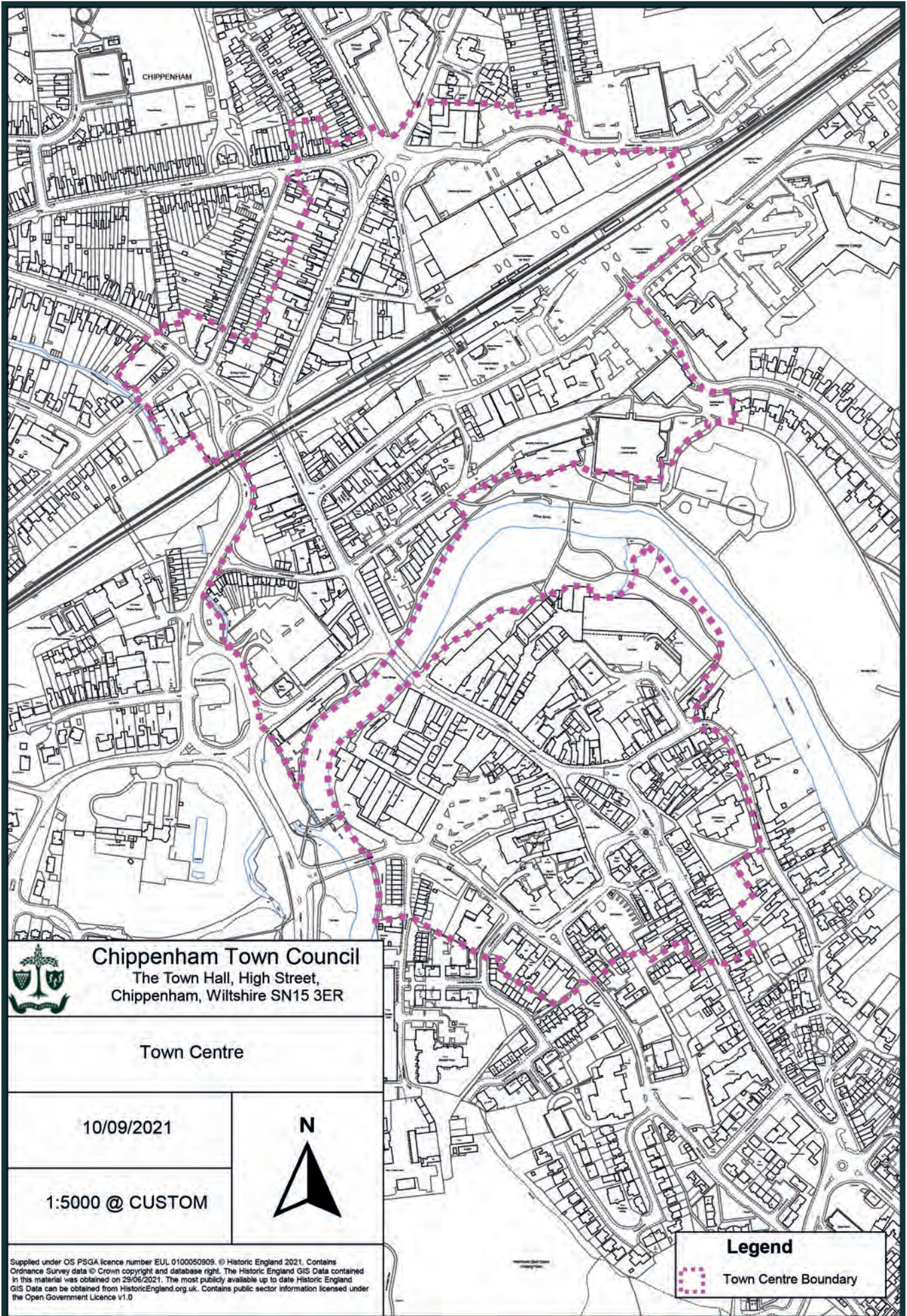


Figure 8.1: Chippenham Town Centre Boundary



**8.15 The Wiltshire Retail and Town Centres Study 2020** recommends ‘there is no requirement for the retention of primary and secondary retail frontage in light of (A) the changing approach at the national planning policy level; and (B) the changing nature of the retail sector and town centre environments.’ It recommends replacing these with defined primary shopping areas and town centre boundaries in the main town centres across Wiltshire.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Wiltshire Retail and Town Centres Study 2020, 2020, Avison Young, para. 8.48

## Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site

**Town Centre Objective 1:**  
Develop the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site as an extension of the town centre, for mixed-use development.



*Bath Road Car Park (centre) and Bridge Centre (left) sites represent a key regeneration opportunity for the town*

8.16 The Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre site represents a longstanding blight on Chippenham Town Centre and is a key regeneration opportunity for the town. Currently in the ownership of Wiltshire Council, the site has been the subject of several development proposals during the last three decades which have failed to come to fruition due to a combination of factors including the need to alter the gyratory system which divides the site, the impact of recent recessions, and the impact of out of town shopping trends - all of which have affected the financial viability of development.

8.17 In order to ensure that the development of this key site is realised, and meets the aspirations of the Chippenham community the site requires a detailed and up to date design framework which can deliver:

- a) high quality development befitting of the town centre location;
- b) viable uses and buildings which meet current and future market trends;
- c) buildings, uses and public realm that reflects the wishes of the community;
- d) connectivity to the rest of the town centre; and
- e) benefits to the historic environment.



*The Grade II Listed Bank House fronts on to Bath Road and sits in isolation on the site*

## History of Site

- 8.18 Since the early part of the 19th Century, the site formed part of the Nestlé complex, accommodating factory buildings, with the main condensed milk factory sited at Avonbridge House. Bank House was the administration centre of the business and Ivy Lane was a two-way street connecting into Bath Road.
- 8.19 After closure of the Nestlé factory the buildings on the site remained derelict until the mid-1980s, when major road and building alteration works were implemented. The construction of Avenue La Fleche as an inner relief road led to the creation of the current gyratory system surrounding the Bridge Centre and separating the site into two parts. Avonbridge House was subsequently converted into offices, and the Bath Road car park was created. The existing metal roof structure over part of the car park was built for the Saturday market. In 2017 the then empty buildings on the Bridge Centre site were demolished. The site remains today a mixture of surface car parking and highway.

## Site Constraints and Opportunities

- 8.20 The site is located within Chippenham Conservation Area, the majority within Character Area 6 (Bath Road & Ivy Lane) of the Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal (2007), with only Nos. 13-17 The Bridge and Citadel Hall, which immediately adjoin the site, located in Character Area 7 (The Bridge & Lower New Road).
- 8.21 The Grade II Listed Bank House is located on the Bath Road Car Park section of the site, whilst located opposite the site, on the south side of Bath Road, is the Grade II Listed Avonbridge House. There are several Grade II Listed properties which adjoin the northern boundary of the site and front on to Foghamshire. The Grade I Listed Ivy House and West Wing, and Grade II\* Listed Ivy Longhouse and Stables are located opposite the site to the south west and set within extensive treed grounds.
- 8.22 There is public sewer and water supply main crossing the site. Hardenhuish Brook, which also crosses the site, is culverted, presenting an opportunity for it to be opened up again. A similar such opportunity exists to the west of Bank House, where historic maps and references indicate there was a chalybeate spring, Arthur's Well. Historically, this was an important feature for the town, covered over by changes to the road system in the 1960s.
- 8.23 There are existing public toilets on the site housed within the former covered market shed - a dark, rundown feature with poor natural surveillance, and which creates a barrier to Bath Road.
- 8.24 The Neighbourhood Plan Town Centre Topic Group carried out a SWOT analysis of the site, which can be viewed in the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site Topic Paper (Appendix 14). The Topic Paper also details the other constraints and opportunities they identified on the site.

## Planning Policy Background

8.25 The NPPF places a strong emphasis on high quality design and placemaking, and promotes the use of design guides and codes as a tool to achieve this, recognising neighbourhood planning groups as having an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how this should be reflected in development through their own plans.<sup>89</sup>

8.26 Chapter 16 of the NPPF explains that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

8.27 Both the [Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal \(2007\)](#) and [Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG \(2010\)](#) concluded that there were many negative aspects of the townscape resulting from Bath Road Car Park and Bridge Centre sites. The former identified this as an 'enhancement site', whilst the latter went further and advised production of a design brief for the site which amongst other things aimed to:

- examine the opportunity to open out culverted parts of Hardenhuish Brook and better integrate it into the townscape as a positive element of the urban environment;
- provide an active frontage of suitable scale to Bath Road in place of the former market sheds;
- re-design the gyratory road junction to significantly reduce the land take and improve facilities for people walking and people cycling;
- provide a high quality built frontage to Ivy Lane that gives a positive image of the town; and
- create a more urban street character to Ivy Lane by reducing suburban planting, street lighting and underused land and provide an active built frontage to the road where possible.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#), MHCLG, 2021, para. 127

<sup>90</sup> [Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG](#), Wiltshire Council, 2010, para. 7, pg. 19

- 8.28 The Management Plan SPG went on to advise ‘Development proposals should be encouraged that include demolition of the Bridge Centre and redesign of the gyratory to reduce land take significantly and reintegrate this important inner gateway site with the urban fabric of the town centre and create a suitable high quality landmark building.’<sup>91</sup>
- 8.29 The Bath Road Car Park site only was originally identified as a retail site allocation in the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011, based on evidence in a retail study at the time.
- 8.30 Chippenham Vision, a partnership between different stakeholders in the town, was established to undertake a critical analysis of Chippenham that identified its existing problems and more importantly, the opportunities for improvement. Their accompanying [2014 Chippenham Central Area Masterplan](#) set out proposals for a retail-led scheme on the site. This work was carried through into Core Policy 9 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which also envisaged a retail-led development. This was supported by a new retail study and the site extended to include the Bridge Centre site.
- 8.31 Previous retail-led proposals in the Chippenham Masterplan and Core Policy 9 are not now fit for purpose because they:
- a) rely too heavily on a single, large, retail use and therefore would not be viable to progress in the current climate
  - b) do not take into account changing work and shopping patterns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
  - c) do not take into account pre-COVID-19 changes to the retail landscape e.g. consents for out-of-town retail development, the rise of online shopping
  - d) do not ensure that high quality architecture and public realm would be provided
  - e) do not take into account subsequent sustainability and climate change factors
  - f) lack permeability through the site
  - g) lack community backing and involvement, and
  - h) lack community uses and a community focal point.
- 8.32 In 2019 Wiltshire Council commissioned a Market Assessment of the site, which concluded that a mixed-use scheme, as an extension to the town centre, and which amalgamates the two sites, could be commercially viable.<sup>92</sup>
- 8.33 Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC1 is therefore in accordance with the aim of Core Policy 9 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy to develop the site. It is also in accordance with the Wiltshire Local Plan Review, where one of the place shaping priorities identified for Chippenham is ‘Developing the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre site as a mixed-use scheme which complements and enhances the town centre and secures completion of planned highways improvements.’<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* para. 8

<sup>92</sup> Market Assessment: Bridge Centre, Bath Road, Chippenham, Cushman & Wakefield, 2019

<sup>93</sup> Planning for Chippenham, Wiltshire Local Plan Review, Regulation 18 draft, January 2021, p. 5

## Site Proposals

- 8.34 A detailed, up to date masterplan or development brief to secure a high quality, mixed-use alternative scheme on the site, which has community backing and puts the public realm at its heart, is now required to support the regeneration of the town centre.
- 8.35 In order to remedy the highway-dominated public realm that currently exists, it is deemed essential to link the sites and remove the gyratory system. Understandably this may only be feasible if other strategic highway works are implemented by Wiltshire Council. To that end, it may be necessary to phase development of the wider site over a longer time period to ensure a viable development proposition, with the immediate priority focusing on developing the Bath Road Car Park half of the site whilst the gyratory remains in situ on a temporary basis.
- 8.36 The site represents an opportunity to provide an extension to the town centre and create a unique 'place', with new buildings arranged around a new public square to help create this 'place'. Development of the site would initiate an exciting growth phase of the town centre, to match the growth of the town as a whole and meet the needs of the expanded community.
- 8.37 Taking into account the above vision for the site and planning policy which both promotes a design-led approach and seeks to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, a set of General Design Principles has been developed which should be used to inform a future masterplan for the site.

### GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THE SITE

- A. Bridge Centre and Bath Road Car Park sites shall be amalgamated into a single larger site (phased or not) by rearranging/downgrading the gyratory
- B. The site shall become an extension of the town centre, but have its own unique identity imparted by its uses and architecture
- C. A new public square shall anchor the development and shall provide multi-functional space for town centre activities, a meeting place, and an attractive environment in which the public can enjoy spending time
- D. New buildings shall introduce a finer urban grain to the site to reflect that of the historic town centre. New development shall respond positively to the guidance in Character Area 6, and where appropriate Character Area 7, of the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Annexe 2 of this Plan)
- E. The site shall provide greater permeability and connectivity between the town centre (both north and south of the River) and suburbs adjoining to the west through the creation of new pedestrian routes, segregated cycleways which link to surrounding cycleways and quiet streets, and sight lines
- F. New development on the site shall respect the setting of the Grade II Listed Bank House, Grade II Listed Avonbridge House, and other adjoining non-designated heritage assets, such as Citadel Hall

- G. A mix of uses, which complement existing town centre uses, shall be provided on the site to ensure flexibility, viability and longevity
- H. A common, high quality, material palette shall be used throughout, featuring Bath Stone as the predominant facing material. Architectural styles of individual buildings can vary, with more traditional styled buildings to front Bath Road
- I. Storage, waste, servicing and facilities on the site shall be accessible and well- integrated into the design of streets, spaces and buildings from the outset to minimise visual impact, unsightliness and avoid clutter
- J. New buildings on the site shall be designed to be net zero carbon
- K. New buildings and spaces on the site shall be designed and planned for long-term stewardship and shall be easily adaptable
- L. Existing Category A and B trees shall be retained on the site
- M. Where possible, SuDS shall be incorporated within the development to ensure sustainable drainage and improve resilience to flooding
- N. New trees and high quality soft landscaping shall be incorporated throughout the development to improve biodiversity and provide an attractive environment in which the public will enjoy spending time
- O. Where possible, covered over water features on the site shall be revealed/restored for place making purposes, enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and increasing biodiversity
- P. Existing public toilets on the site shall be replaced, preferably on-site, or at an off-site location within the same area of the town centre
- Q. Public realm and highway improvements shall give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists. This may include shared space and/or segregated cycleways, subject to traffic assessments, and new street tree planting

8.38 To inform a future masterplan or development brief, a parameters plan (Figure 8.2) has been produced which demonstrates how the General Design Principles could be translated into an indicative arrangement for the layout of new buildings, uses and spaces on the site that are desired by the community and those that could be viable. It is acknowledged that uses would also depend on market trends and viability.

8.39 The indicative parameters plan and accompanying Policy TC1 should be used as a basis to prepare a detailed masterplan or development brief to accompany any future planning application. The masterplan or development brief should be prepared in collaboration with urban designers and conservation officers at Wiltshire Council. It may be advantageous to carry out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the final design.

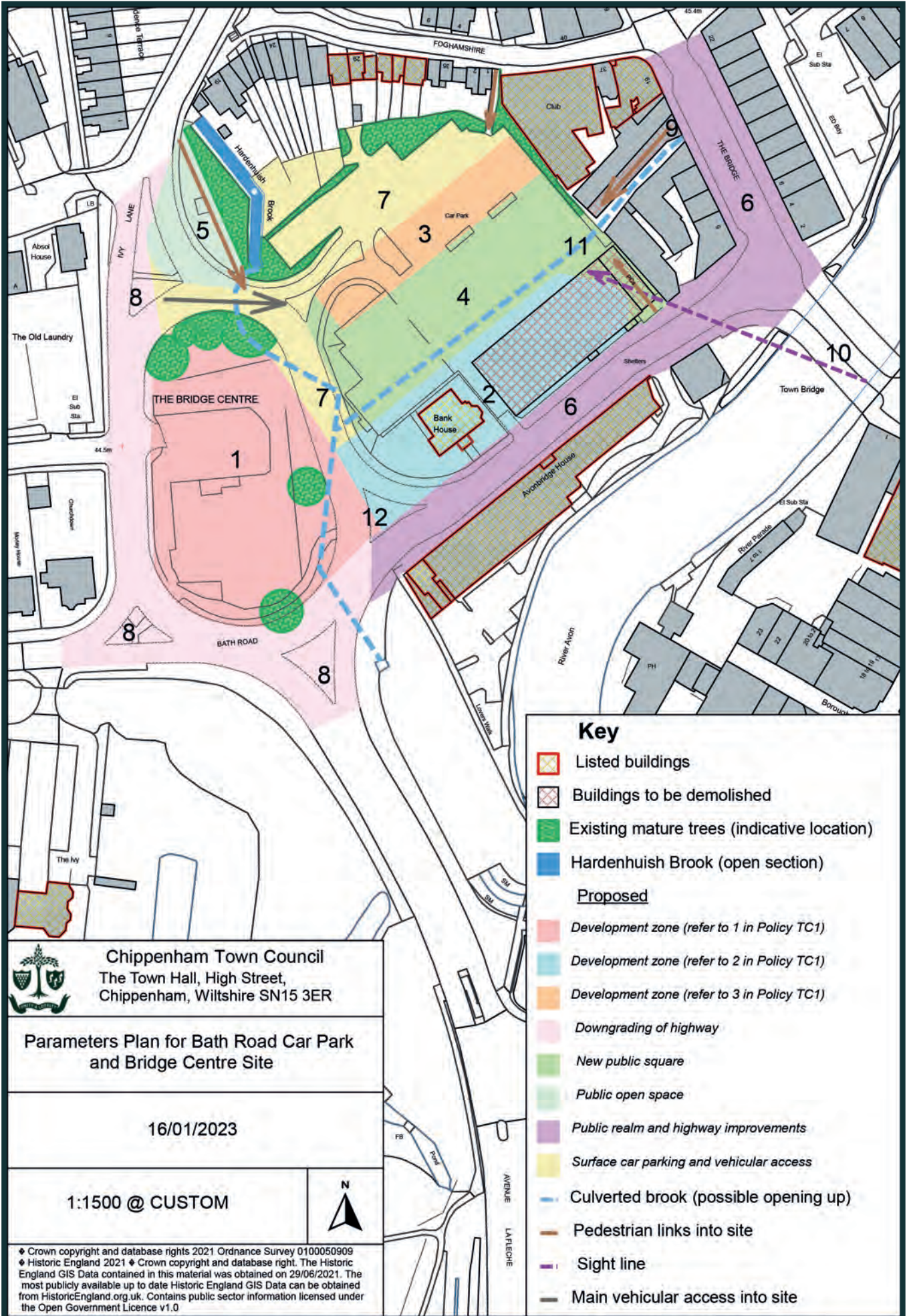


Figure 8.2: Parameters Plan for Bath Rd Car Park/Bridge Centre Site



## Policy TC1 – Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site

Development proposals on the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site will be supported where they are accompanied by an up to date masterplan and/or development brief which has been prepared in accordance with the General Design Principles for the Site and the following parameters as shown on Figure 8.2:

### 1. Zone for built development

(does not represent building footprint)

- Built development of 2-4 storeys in height and not to exceed the height of the tallest neighbouring building
- Accommodate one or more of the following uses: large retail unit, office headquarters, hotel, or multi-storey public car park
- Building(s) shall:
  - Be a landmark feature to reflect gateway status to the town centre
  - Have active and attractive frontages to the public realm
  - Use a contemporary architectural style if desired, whilst still reflecting the material palette of other buildings on the site and nearby

### 2. Zone for built development

(does not represent building footprint)

- Built development of 2-3 storeys in height
- Accommodate one or more of the following uses: ground floor retail units, restaurants, cafes or bars, or upper floor residential apartments
- Building(s) shall:
  - Reinstate building line to Bath Road
  - Be dual aspect, with entrances and windows on to both Bath Road and the public square (Zone 4)
  - Use a traditional architectural style, including a pitched roof, to reflect historic local vernacular
  - Use Bath Stone as the predominant facing material to reflect local vernacular and robustness
  - Incorporate large, vertical, glazed elements/windows to reflect fenestration on Bank House/Avonbridge House/Citadel Hall
  - Use vertical elements and/or change of materials to reflect verticality of local buildings and help to break up massing of any new building(s)
  - Provide a significant gap to Bank House in order to respect the setting of this listed building

### 3. Zone for built development (does not represent building footprint)

- Built development up to 2 storeys in height
- Accommodate low-cost, flexible E Class units, with small floor areas. These could include: niche/independent retail and pop-up shops; restaurants, cafes or bars; workshops; incubator units; arts or community uses.
- Building(s) shall:
  - Have an active frontage on to the public square (Zone 4)
  - Use a contemporary architectural style that reflects the use of the building(s) e.g. shipping containers or prefabricated units to accommodate flexible uses

### 4. New public square to anchor the development and be safe, attractive and accessible to all.

It shall:

- Incorporate a focal point/meeting place. This could take the form of a single storey bespoke building to accommodate a café or community use, or a pavilion, water feature, or public art installation
- Use high quality hard landscaping materials, street furniture, soft landscaping and trees to provide an attractive environment
- Incorporate public art to provide a distinctive identity to the public square
- Incorporate public cycle storage facilities

### 5. Extension and enhancement of existing green space for biodiversity

### 6. Public realm and highway improvements to create shared space for pedestrians/vehicles on Bath Road and The Bridge, and new street trees.

### 7. Surface car parking/delivery areas accessed off Ivy Lane to provide drop-off, disabled parking, delivery and access to rear of Foghamshire properties

### 8. Highway works to close up eastern side of gyratory and downgrade remaining highway to two-way traffic, using mini-roundabouts if appropriate. Inclusion of segregated cycleway to link in to surrounding cycleways and quiet streets

### 9. Demolition of No. 13 The Bridge to provide pedestrian link from the site to The Bridge

### 10. Sight line created between the Town Bridge and new public square

### 11. Opportunity for opening up of culvert

### 12. Opportunity to restore Arthur's Well

## River-Green Corridor Masterplan

### Chippenham Identity Objective 1:

Promote and enhance the special character of Chippenham as a historic, riverside, market town by ensuring that all new development is sustainable and of the highest quality design.

### Green and Blue Infrastructure Objective 1:

Protect, enhance and extend the 'River-Green Corridor' as a focal point for the town, establishing green links to it from existing parks/green spaces, and connecting surrounding new development to it via green and blue infrastructure.

**Town Centre Objective 3:** Identify sites within the town centre which could be developed/enhanced to increase the attractiveness of the public realm.

**Town Centre Objective 6:** Enhance the River Avon frontage as a place-shaping feature for the regeneration of the town centre.

8.40 The River Avon frontage is one of the largest river frontages in the country in comparison to the town's size. The Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Vision Survey results demonstrate that the local community values the River Avon and Monkton Park as an asset to Chippenham, and it is used for events such as the Folk Festival. Yet both the local community and Wiltshire Council consider that there is a missed opportunity for better connection of the River and Park with the town centre, the town centre currently turning its back on the former.

8.41 The community considers it a high priority that the River-Green Corridor is best utilised as a placemaking feature in the future development of the town, whilst preserving and enhancing its special character.

8.42 The Masterplan area covered by Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 relates to buildings and areas on either side of the stretch of the River Avon running from Monkton Golf Course to Avenue La Fleche, through the town centre. This is wholly located within Chippenham Conservation Area and includes a number of Grade II Listed Buildings. The River Avon is identified as a Local Wildlife Site. National Cycle Route 403 runs parallel to the River through Monkton Park.



*The River Avon is both a key asset and a missed opportunity in the town centre*

- 8.43 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisals for River Avon South West of Town Bridge and Land at Monkton Park (Appendices 5 and 6) recognised the River Avon as an important green corridor, and the area downstream of Gladstone Road Bridge as important for wildlife. However, it notes that obstacles such as the radial gate weir and Town Bridge currently inhibit movement of wildlife along the corridor.
- 8.44 Solutions to improve movement through, under or over these visually intrusive obstacles, or their complete removal or replacement, could significantly improve the biodiversity of the corridor and enhance the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area. The Environment Agency are currently exploring a range of options for the removal/replacement of the radial gate whilst aiming to reduce flood risk.
- 8.45 The Appraisals make a number of recommendations for the management and maintenance of land bordering the River. Some of these elements may require planning permission, such as re-routing or improving the Avon Valley Path to limit the risk from flooding around Gladstone Road Bridge, new/replacement fishing platforms, and removal or replacement of the radial gate weir.
- 8.46 The Monkton Park Management Plan (2021) sets out how the high level recommendations from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal referred to above, which mainly relate to biodiversity enhancements, will be taken forward in detail by the Town Council over a five year period.



*The area downstream of Gladstone Road Bridge is identified as important for wildlife*

## Planning Policy Background

- 8.47 The NPPF explains that ‘Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.’<sup>94</sup> It also places a strong emphasis on high quality design and placemaking, and promotes the use of design guides and codes as a tool to achieve this, recognising neighbourhood planning groups as having an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how this should be reflected in development through their own plans.<sup>95</sup>
- 8.48 Chapter 16 of the NPPF explains that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

<sup>94</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#), MHCLG, 2021, para. 86

<sup>95</sup> [Ibid.](#) para. 127



*Emery Gate Shopping Centre turns its back on the River and presents unattractive and dead frontage*

## Chippenham Vision and Central Area Masterplan

- 8.49 Core Policies 50, 52 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seek to protect green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity, and ensure high quality design in new development.
- 8.50 Both the [Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal \(2007\)](#) and [Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG \(2010\)](#) identified a number of features in the vicinity of the River Avon which have a negative contribution on the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area, and outlined suggestions for enhancements.
- 8.51 The Management Plan SPG encourages the redevelopment of No. 1 High Street with 'a high quality building of more suitable height for its prominent location, and which addresses both the High Street and river frontage and removes the vacant space to the side of the current building.'<sup>96</sup>
- 8.52 Support for 'providing active frontages onto the park from Emery Gate and Wilkinson's to provide a stronger and more attractive link between the shopping centre and park' is also a priority listed in the Management Plan SPG.<sup>97</sup>
- 8.53 Various unrealised proposals have been put forward in the past to transform the River Corridor. The most recent, Chippenham Vision, was formally commissioned by Wiltshire Council, and included a variety of local community stakeholders. In relation to the town, one of six Vision statements identified 'Its setting on the River Avon will be its defining and connecting feature'.
- 8.54 The subsequent [2014 Chippenham Central Area Masterplan](#) set out masterplans for the High Street Area and wider River Character Area, with the River as a key component identified for enhancement and improvement in places.
- 8.55 Due to resourcing issues, the Masterplan was never formally adopted as a Development Plan document and the Chippenham Vision Group was subsequently disbanded. The work was translated into Core Policy 9 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which refers to the River Avon Corridor being enhanced for leisure and recreation uses in an environmentally sensitive manner and developed as an attractive cycle/pedestrian route connecting the town centre with the wider green and blue infrastructure network, whilst conserving and enhancing its role as a wildlife corridor.
- 8.56 The Chippenham Central Area Masterplan now stands as a key piece of work which has no status in the Development Plan. Members of both the Neighbourhood Plan Town Centre Topic Group and Green Infrastructure Topic Group considered it essential to have a masterplan for the River Avon Corridor in the Development Plan, to enable planned and coherent regeneration of the town centre, and to preserve and enhance the green character of the River Corridor and the special historic environment of the town centre.

<sup>96</sup> [Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG](#), Wiltshire Council, 2010, p. 33

<sup>97</sup> [Ibid.](#) p. 29

- 8.57 Members of the Topic Groups reviewed the 2014 Masterplan and found much of its content remained relevant, although there were some aspects they considered would need to be updated. There are proposals contained within it which do not reflect the climate and ecological emergencies, the current economic climate, changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes to planning legislation, viability issues, and physical changes on the ground with regard to new development.
- 8.58 Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 therefore seeks to update and modify the 2014 Masterplan so that it is fit for purpose, is arguably a more streamlined and flexible version than previously, and forms part of the Development Plan to aid decision making in the vicinity of the River Avon corridor.
- 8.59 The Topic Groups identified modifications to the 2014 Masterplan and these are discussed in more detail in the River-Green Corridor Topic Paper (Appendix 15). In summary these include:
- supporting proposals to redevelop Emery Gate Shopping Centre and the side elevation of No. 31-33 High Street with active frontages facing the River
  - replacement or removal of the radial gate weir and redevelopment of No. 1 High Street
  - creating level access to the River in places to increase biodiversity and public enjoyment of the River
  - improving pedestrian and cycle routes on the stretch of the River between the Town Bridge and Gladstone Road
  - enhancing the riverfront south of Gladstone Road Bridge for nature and as an attractive open space
  - retaining public indoor sport, recreation and fitness uses on the Olympiad site.
- 8.60 The Neighbourhood Plan's updated Masterplan is shown in Figure 8.3. It is intended that this be used as a basis to prepare more detailed masterplan(s) or development brief(s) to cover smaller sites within the wider Masterplan area, which would accompany any future planning application(s). Any future masterplan or development brief should be prepared in collaboration with urban designers and conservation officers at Wiltshire Council. It may be advantageous to carry out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the final design.
- 8.61 Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 is in conformity with Paragraphs 86 and 127 of the NPPF by supporting the role of the town centre and taking a positive approach to its growth, management and adaptation, through the use of a masterplan to set out a clear design vision and expectations for the River-Green Corridor.
- 8.62 The Masterplan better realises, Core Policies 9, 50, 52 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy by supporting the enhancement of the River-Green Corridor area for leisure and recreation uses in an environmentally sensitive manner. It supports the retention of green open space on either side of the River (which falls within the River Avon Strategic Green Corridor identified under Neighbourhood Plan Policy GI3) for its wildlife and biodiversity function and supports the improvement of the Corridor as an attractive cycle/pedestrian route connecting the town centre with the wider green and blue infrastructure network.
- 8.63 Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC2 complies with Section 16 of the NPPF on the historic environment, Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG by enhancing and better revealing the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area and the setting of Grade II Listed Buildings.

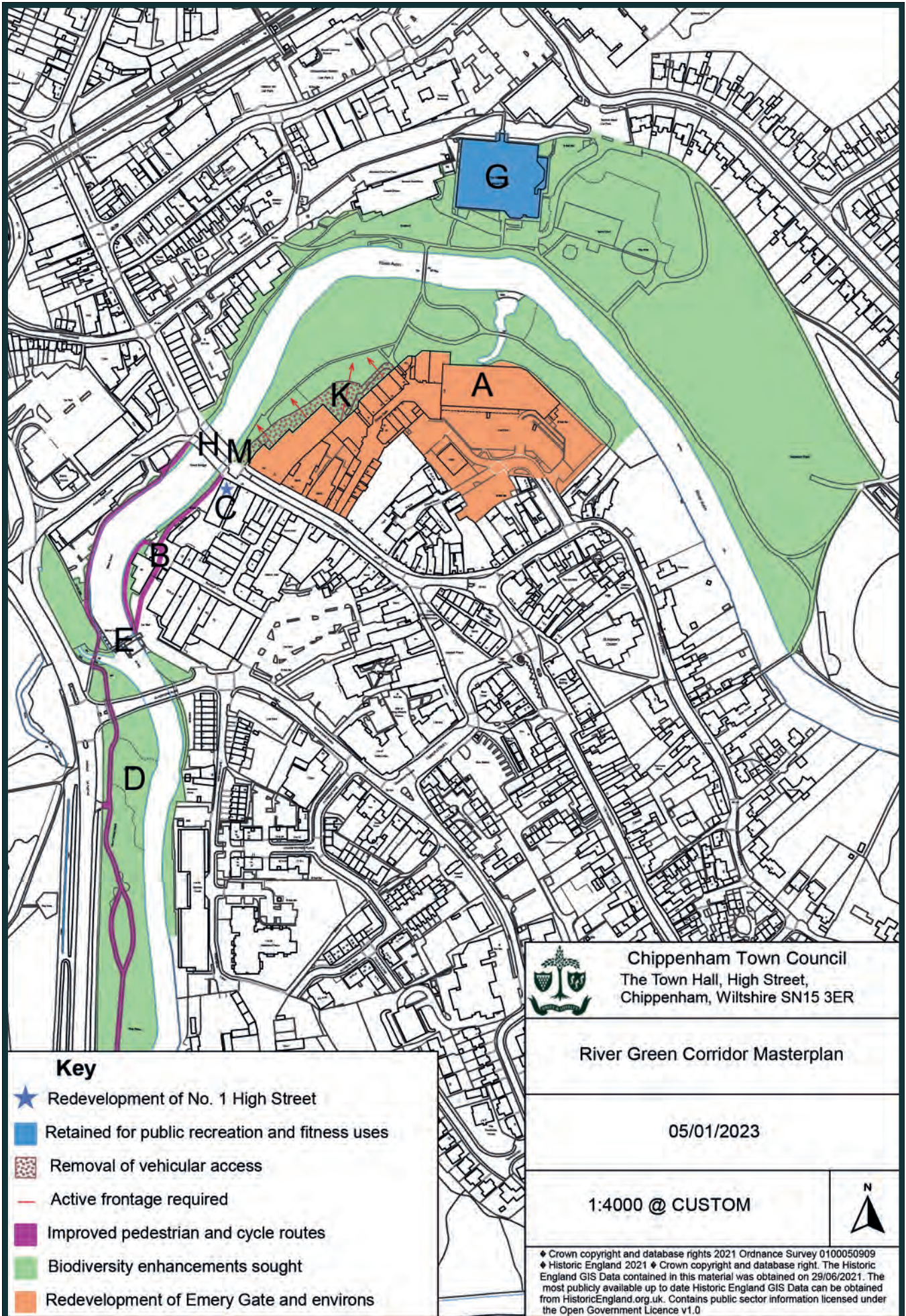


Figure 8.3: River-Green Corridor Masterplan (modified from the Chippenham Central Area Masterplan)

## Policy TC2 - River-Green Corridor Masterplan

Proposals will be supported where they contribute towards enhancing the River Avon as a defining connecting feature in the revitalisation of Chippenham Town Centre, whilst also protecting and enhancing the function of the River Avon Strategic Green Corridor.

Development in the River-Green Corridor area will be supported in accordance with the Masterplan shown on Figure 8.3 and where it meets the following objectives:

- A. Proposals to redevelop Emery Gate Shopping, within its existing curtilage, with existing High Street facades retained, and with uses that continue to underpin the vitality and viability of the town centre, will be supported subject to compliance with the design principles I-M.
- B. Improved pedestrian and cycle routes alongside the River, between the Town Bridge and Gladstone Road, will be provided by adjacent major developments or developer contributions associated with these developments, in order to meet any increase in active travel demand to/from these developments. The feasibility of re-routing or improving the Avon Path to limit the risk from flooding and provide year round access in the vicinity of Gladstone Road Bridge will be explored.
- C. Demolition of No. 1 High Street and redevelopment as a 2-3 storey high quality landmark building with active street and river frontages will be supported. Bath Stone as a prevalent facing material will be required.
- D. The riverside downstream of Gladstone Road will be enhanced for biodiversity, whilst providing attractive open space for the community to enjoy.
- E. Replacement or removal of the radial gate weir in a manner that improves biodiversity and reduces flood risk will be supported. Opportunities should be explored to provide renewable energy at any replacement weir structure.
- F. The creation of section(s) of level public access to the River within Monkton Park will be supported.
- G. The Olympiad site will be retained for public indoor sport, recreation or fitness uses. The demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site to retain these uses will be supported, providing that any new building frontages on to Monkton Park are designed to be sympathetic to the parkland setting and enhance the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area.
- H. Proposals which help wildlife to move over, under or through the Town Bridge, such as a wildlife underpass and/or improved landscaping of banks, will be supported. The feasibility of providing shared space on the Town Bridge will be explored to improve the pedestrian experience and public realm. Proposals for the replacement of the Town Bridge with a new bridge which enhances the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area will also be supported.

All development on the River Avon frontage, or public/semi-public spaces with a functional connection to the River Avon, within the Masterplan area, will be required to demonstrate conformity with the following design principles:

- I. Active frontages will be required for any development facing the river corridor. Passive uses such as loading, parking, blank walls and tall/visually impermeable fencing on river facing frontages will be resisted.
- J. Design and Access Statements shall demonstrate, through photo-visuals, that the frontages of development proposals facing the River are of the highest quality design and will provide a pleasing backdrop for the River when viewed from the opposite bank.
- K. For any redevelopment of Emery Gate Shopping Centre, ground floor active frontages in Use Class E will be required facing on to the River.
- L. For any redevelopment of Emery Gate Shopping Centre, a public car parking area will be retained on the site and designed to ensure that it is not visible from Monkton Park.
- M. For any redevelopment of Emery Gate Shopping Centre, the existing vehicular access to the car park/service yard from the Town Bridge shall be removed in order to resolve the pinch point and improve public realm/access for pedestrians to Monkton Park.
- N. Walls facing the river frontage should be visually permeable, or where they are visually impermeable no taller than 1m in height, to allow the development behind to be viewed from the opposite bank of the River Avon.
- O. Balconies and terraces overlooking the River Avon corridor will be supported where they are of high quality design.

## Public Realm Improvements to Upper Market Place



*Car dominated public realm surrounds the Grade II Listed War Memorial in the Upper Market Place*

**Town Centre Objective 3:** Identify sites within the town centre which could be developed/enhanced to increase the attractiveness of the public realm.

**Town Centre Objective 5:** Make the town centre a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

8.64 The Market Place is the historic core of Chippenham, adjacent to the parish church of St. Andrew and the site of the Saxon town. The area once formed a single large open space and there was a market here from 1320 onwards. Encroachment of buildings over the centuries effectively divided up the Market Place into two distinct spaces: the Lower Market Place - the area around the restored Buttercross; and the Upper Market Place - the area around the War Memorial, which is the largest space in the Market Place.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for further background information and evidence used to formulate Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC3



8.65 The 2007 Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal notes 'The Buttercross space has benefited from the recent town centre enhancements and the contrast between this and the war memorial space, which has not been enhanced, is most notable... parts of the war memorial space remain distinctly shabby in appearance.'<sup>99</sup>

8.66 Today, the Upper Market Place continues to remain a car dominated, peripheral area of the town centre. Yet, as the southern gateway to the town centre, surrounded by some of the town's finest listed buildings and with the Grade II Listed War Memorial at its heart, it has significant potential to be transformed through high quality and sensitive public realm improvements.

8.67 The Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG<sup>100</sup> specifically refers to enhancement proposals for the Upper Market Place area:

'Any enhancement scheme for the war memorial area should seek to reduce the negative impact of vehicles, move parking away from building frontages where possible, rationalise highway infrastructure, improve the setting of the war memorial, improve the setting of the Rose and Crown pub and improve the quality of the approach to the church in addition to improvements to the quality of surface materials.'

<sup>99</sup> Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal, North Wiltshire District Council, 2007, p. 164

<sup>100</sup> Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan, Wiltshire Council, 2010, p. 38

8.68 An indicative parameters plan (Figure 8.4) has been developed to guide future development in the Upper Market Place area and to address the enhancement proposals referred to in the Management Plan, as reproduced in the preceding paragraph, in the following way:

- ‘reduce the negative impact of vehicles’ by downgrading the highway and introducing shared space to make for a more pedestrian friendly environment
- ‘move parking away from building frontages’ by relocating and rationalising car parking and removing the access road
- ‘rationalise highway infrastructure’ by introducing shared space
- ‘improve the setting of the war memorial’ by removing the access road and creating a new public square/event space around its southern perimeter
- ‘improve the setting of the Rose and Crown pub’ by removing the access road/ parking spaces and introducing new surface materials
- ‘improve the quality of the approach to the church’ by redesigning the access, removing inefficient parking spaces and introducing new surface materials
- ‘improvements to the quality of surface materials’ by introducing stone pavements
- ‘pedestrianisation of Lords Lane’ (referred to separately in the Management Plan under enhancement proposals to the bus station area).

8.69 The indicative parameters plan and accompanying Policy TC3 should be used as a basis to prepare a detailed masterplan or development brief to accompany any future planning application. The masterplan or development brief should be prepared in collaboration with urban designers and conservation officers at Wiltshire Council. It may be advantageous to carry out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the final design.

8.70 The wider benefits of improvements to the public realm in the Upper Market Place area include:

- extending the town centre function to the south and benefitting surrounding local businesses by increasing footfall
- creating a pedestrian and cycle friendly environment with improved permeability to the rest of the town centre and Lower Market Place
- improving the appearance of the town centre by creating a southern gateway
- providing reflection space and event space for community activities and/or new public art
- increasing soft landscaping and decreasing tarmac, providing environmental benefits.

8.71 A key feature of the Upper Market Place public realm improvements is to introduce areas of shared space for people driving, walking and cycling. The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation recognises there are different types of shared space and found benefits to such schemes in terms of safety, quality of place, economic benefit, and ease of movement.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> [Creating Better Streets: Inclusive and Accessible Places – Reviewing shared space](#), Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT), 2018

**SHARED SPACE:**

The now withdrawn Local Transport Note 1/11 defined shared space as:

‘A street or place designed to improve pedestrian movement and comfort by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles and enabling all users to share the space rather than follow the clearly defined rules implied by more conventional designs.’

LTN 1/11 made it clear that there is there is not a ‘one size fits all’ approach to shared space and each scheme must be designed to meet local circumstances. One of the key decisions that will need to be taken is how much separation there should be between user groups (particularly pedestrians and vehicles) and how this should be achieved. Shared space schemes can often remove regulations and features such as kerbs, road surface markings, conventional street surfaces like tarmacadam, traffic signs and controlled crossings. The Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (2018) identified three broad categories of shared space: pedestrian prioritised streets, informal streets and enhanced streets and explains these in further detail.<sup>102</sup>

8.72 It is recommended that a further feasibility study into the incorporation of shared space is carried out in order to inform the type of shared space that might be acceptable in this location, particularly ensuring that an inclusive environment can be delivered to accommodate the needs of all types of pedestrians, including those who may be visually impaired.

- 8.73 The results from the Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Vision Survey (Appendix 1) demonstrated that traffic and congestion is one of the biggest issues for the local community, with lack of parking also ranking high as an issue. Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC3 would have a negligible impact on town centre parking removing only a limited number of short stay parking spaces. Walking and cycling opportunities, also considered important by the local community in the Survey results, would be delivered by the Policy proposals and could help to alleviate traffic congestion.
- 8.74 The results from the Survey demonstrate that the community value Chippenham’s historic environment, and consider that there are existing issues with the town centre environment as a whole - which the public realm improvements set out in this Policy could materially improve.
- 8.75 The indicative Parameters Plan and Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC3 is in conformity with Paragraph 86 of the NPPF by supporting the role of the town centre and taking a positive approach to its growth, management and adaptation. It is also in conformity with Paragraph 127 of the NPPF, and Core Policies 9 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy through the use of a plan to set out a clear design vision and expectations for the high quality re-design of the public realm at the Upper Market Place. It enhances the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area and the setting of statutorily listed buildings in conformity with Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG. Finally, it aligns with Core Policies 60 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy by rationalising car parking and making the Upper Market Place pedestrian and cycle friendly.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. p. 11-13

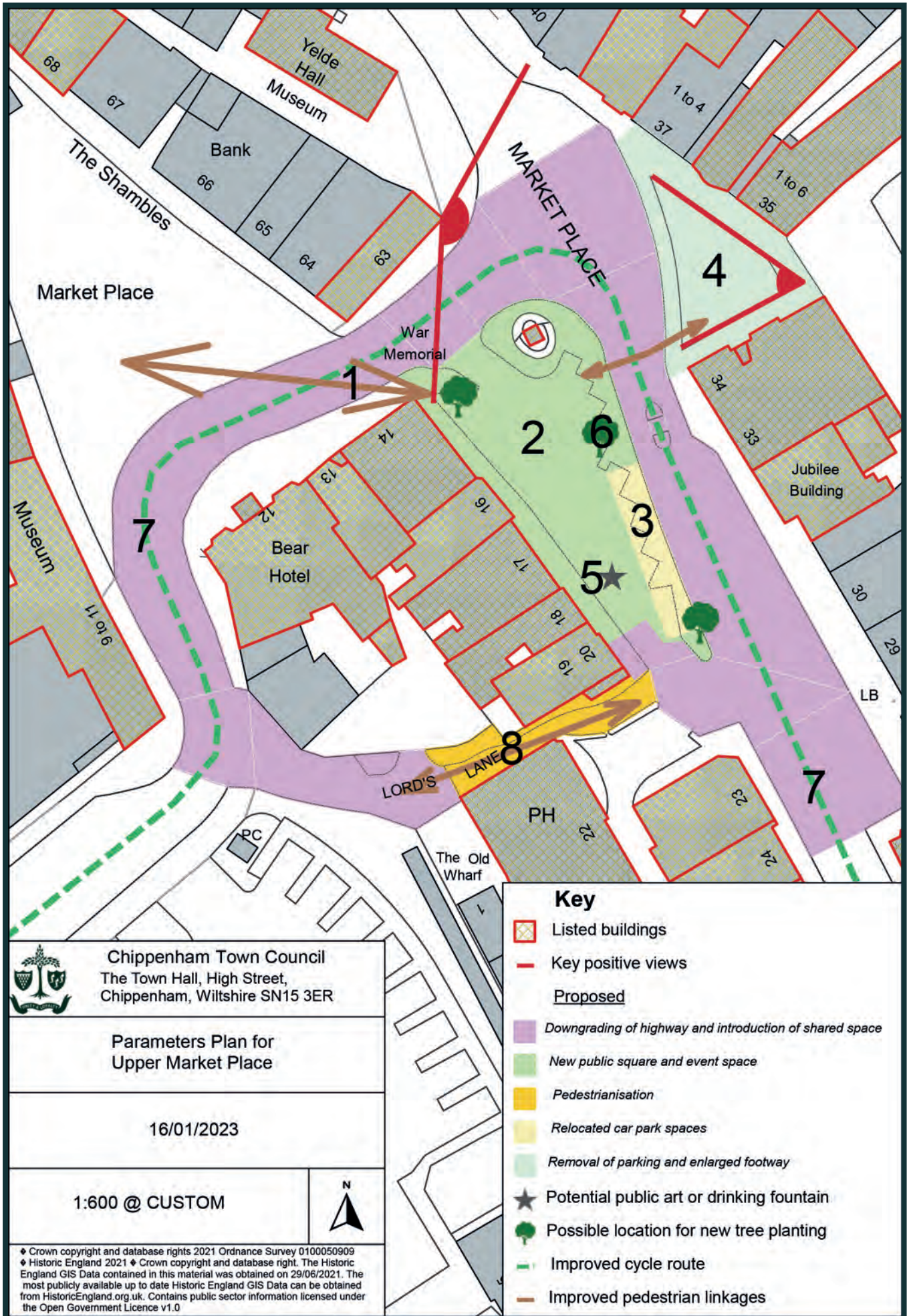


Figure 8.4: Parameters Plan for Upper Market Place

## Policy TC3 - Public Realm Improvements to Upper Market Place

Public realm improvements within the Upper Market Place will be supported where they are accompanied by an up to date masterplan and/or development brief which has been prepared in accordance with the following parameters as shown on Figure 8.4:

1. Downgrading of highway and introduction of shared space to create a pedestrian friendly environment and restore the visual connection between Lower and Upper Market Places through use of a common high quality surface material such as stone paviours. A feasibility study shall be carried out prior to the submission of any planning application to inform the detail and type of shared space that would work for all users in this location.
2. Removal of access road and inefficient car parking spaces to create a new public square/ event space, with the Grade II Listed War Memorial as its focal point. Stone paviours and high quality street furniture will be installed in the new public space. High quality and low maintenance soft landscaping shall be provided to add interest and increase biodiversity.
3. Relocation and realignment of eight car parking spaces with access off The Causeway. Three of these spaces shall be for disabled parking.
4. Removal of inefficient parking space and enlargement of the footway. Replacement of tarmac with stone paviours to provide an improved setting for the Grade II\* Listed St. Andrews Church and a pedestrian friendly environment.
5. Installation of public art and/or public drinking water fountain to provide a focal point at the southern end of public square/ event space, to help create and reinforce a sense of place, and to respond appropriately to the historic/local context.
6. Planting of new trees within the public square to improve air quality, biodiversity and provide shading subject to the location of existing underground infrastructure (refer to Neighbourhood Plan Policy G14 for details on new tree planting).
7. Improved cycle route as part of a wider cycle loop connecting the Market Place with The Causeway, Burlands Road, Wood Lane and Timber Street. Improvements will depend on the type of shared space proposed and options for implementing segregated cycle paths outside of the shared space and linking these to existing or future cycle paths will be explored.
8. Restriction on through traffic using Lord's Lane, and installation of high quality surface material such as stone paviours to provide for an improved pedestrian route, and improved setting for the Grade II\* Listed Rose and Crown Public House.

## Development within Chippenham Conservation Area

**Town Centre Objective 2:** Preserve and enhance the special historic character of the town centre by ensuring that new development, including advertising and shopfronts, is sympathetically and sensitively designed, and enhances the significance of heritage assets.

### HERITAGE ASSET:

'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'  
- NPPF, 2021

8.76 The results from the Pre-Vision Survey (Appendix 1) demonstrated that the local community values Chippenham's historic environment and want to see it conserved.

8.77 Chapter 16 of the NPPF explains that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires that development should seek to preserve the special character or appearance of conservation areas.

8.78 The Chippenham Conservation Area, first designated in 1973 and subsequently extended, is large and complex, and contains a rich variety of buildings, spaces and landscapes. There is no one character or appearance which defines the Conservation Area, with different parts having distinctively different characters and functions.

8.79 Figure 8.5 shows the boundary of the Conservation Area, which is focused on the historic town centre and immediate environs. It also shows the numerous statutorily listed buildings within the Conservation Area, which contribute to its significance.



*St. Mary Street has been described by Nikolaus Pevsner as ‘the best in Chippenham’ and by Sir John Betjeman as ‘one of the prettiest streets in England’*

8.80 The [Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal](#), drawn up by the former North Wiltshire District Council in 2007, identified and analysed 18 different character areas. The Appraisal was used as a base for the subsequent adoption, by Wiltshire Council in 2010, of the [Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG](#), which sets out development guidelines and enhancement proposals for each of the different character areas.

8.81 Whilst the 2007 Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal is detailed and comprehensive, it is also incomplete, out of date, contains some errors, and does not form part of the Development Plan. It has therefore been reviewed and updated as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process to take account of:

- new developments and physical changes to the Conservation Area
- changes to planning legislation
- changing attitudes to the historic environment and greater appreciation of Post-War architecture

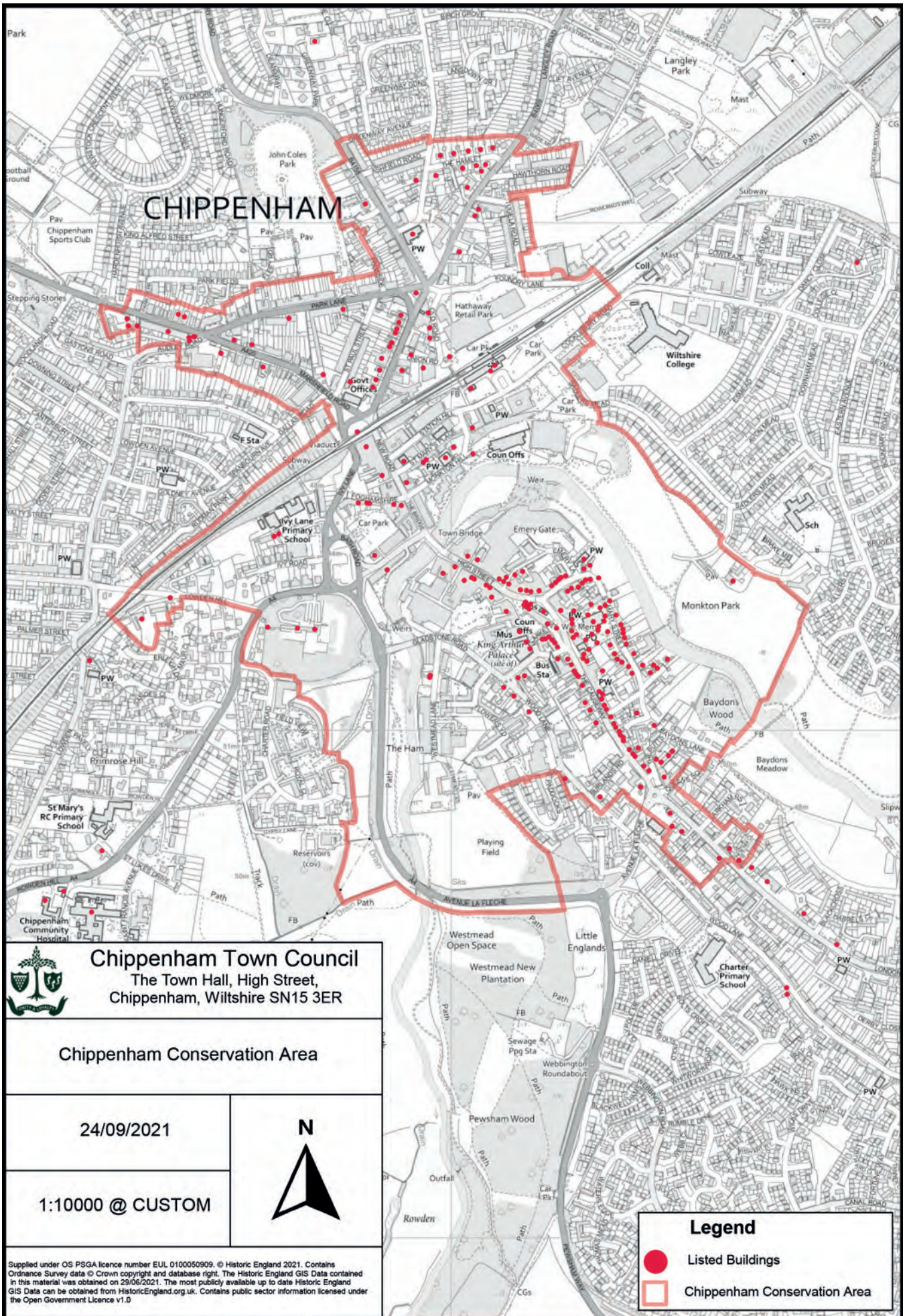


Figure 8.5: Chippenham Conservation Area and Listed Buildings



8.82 The updated Conservation Area Character Appraisal can be viewed in Annexe 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan. It adopts a more positive tone when compared to the 2007 Appraisal – one which recognises the value of the best examples of more recent architecture, thereby celebrating diversity and interest in the historic environment.

8.83 The character area analysis in the updated Appraisal and Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC4 should be used by applicants to inform their design choices, and by decision takers to determine planning outcomes, recognising that each character area has its own unique set of buildings, spaces, landscapes and views which combine to form that special local character and distinctiveness.

8.84 Heritage assets further contribute to that local character and distinctiveness, be they designated assets (e.g. listed buildings) or non-designated assets such as: buildings; monuments; veteran trees; landscapes; or features such as boundary walls or street furniture such as signs, lighting columns or telephone boxes.

8.85 In the context of Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC4, high quality design which makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness means development which:

- positively responds to existing site features (topography, green or blue infrastructure, ground conditions, services etc.), adjoining land uses, and the wider setting
- is sympathetic to the scale, density, mass and setbacks of existing or neighbouring buildings
- is sympathetic to the architecture and detailing of existing or neighbouring buildings. This may be achieved through either traditional or contemporary architecture. Where contemporary architecture is chosen, the form and/or materials and/or architectural features of the local vernacular should be embedded into the design
- is sympathetic to the materials used in existing or neighbouring buildings and uses the highest quality façade materials
- is suitable for the use it contains and can be easily adapted to accommodate future uses
- contributes positively to the public realm
- makes a positive impact in both close up and long distance views
- incorporates boundary treatment and landscaping consistent with the local vernacular

8.86 Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC4 aligns with Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF and the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG by sustaining and enhancing the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area and by ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution to its local character and distinctiveness.

## Policy TC4 – Development within Chippenham Conservation Area

In considering proposals for development within Chippenham Conservation Area, or that affects its setting, full regard must be given to the relevant character area analysis in the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Annexe 2).

Development within Chippenham Conservation Area, or which would affect its setting, will be permitted where it:

- a) preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area;
- b) is of high quality design that makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;
- c) maintains or enhances positive views, and/or where possible eliminates or reduces the effect of negative views identified in the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Annexe 2);
- d) retains those heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area;
- e) accords with the development guidelines for the relevant character area in the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG; and
- f) secures the enhancement proposals for the relevant character area in the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG where appropriate.

## Buildings of Local Merit

### Town Centre Objective 2:

Preserve and enhance the special historic character of the town centre by ensuring that new development, including advertising and shopfronts, is sympathetically and sensitively designed, and enhances the significance of heritage assets.

8.87 Throughout Chippenham Conservation Area there are buildings that, whilst not currently considered to be of sufficient historic significance and/or architectural interest to warrant listed status, have a distinct and valued local character and/or appearance that is worthy of retention. Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC5 recognises these buildings and structures as 'locally listed' or being important non-designated heritage assets.

8.88 These buildings have been identified as Buildings of Local Merit for their architectural, historic and/or local interest. A description of their special character and selection process for inclusion is set out in the Buildings of Local Merit Topic Paper - Appendix 16, which should be used to guide and assess development proposals.



*The attractive façade of Nos. 31-33 High Street (Wilko)*

8.89 In accordance with Paragraph 203 of the NPPF, the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining a planning application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

### SIGNIFICANCE (FOR HERITAGE POLICY):

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.' - NPPF, 2021

## Policy TC5 – Buildings of Local Merit

The following buildings are important non-designated heritage assets:

- a. Reel Cinema, No. 91 Marshfield Road
- b. Former Chippenham District County Technical and Secondary School, Cocklebury Road
- c. Nos. 63-66 New Road
- d. Nos. 31-33 High Street (Wilko)
- e. No. 1 Market Place (formerly Burtons)
- f. Chippenham Library, Timber Street
- g. The Citadel, Bath Road
- h. Nos. 1-10 Providence Terrace, Ivy Lane
- i. The Old Laundry chimney, Ivy Road
- k. 6 no. Second World War pillboxes, near the River Avon at Monkton Park Golf Course, No. 28 Sadlers Mead, Rawlings Farm, Rowden Farm, Milbourne Farm and Rowden Manor
- l. Nos. 17-25 Station Hill (former Palace Theatre)

The effect of a proposal on the significance of a Building of Local Merit will be taken into account to avoid or minimise harm.

## Design of Shopfronts and Advertisements

### Town Centre Objective 2:

Preserve and enhance the special historic character of the town centre by ensuring that new development, including advertising and shopfronts, is sympathetically and sensitively designed, and enhances the significance of heritage assets.

- 8.90 The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the special character of Chippenham Conservation Area. The Pre-Vision Survey results indicated that improving the town's retail offer, reviving its town centre, and celebrating and protecting its historic environment were all things that the local community considered important for Chippenham's future.
- 8.91 One of the most visually prominent features of the Conservation Area and town centre is the design of its shopfronts and their associated advertisements. These are usually only altered once premises change ownership, when planning consent would need to be sought for any new, altered or replacement shopfronts or advertisements.
- 8.92 Whilst acknowledging that there are many well-designed shopfronts in Chippenham, there are also examples that are inappropriate and harmful to the significance of the Conservation Area and general town centre shopping environment.
- 8.93 The Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG specifically listed those shopfronts that were considered, at the time, to be inappropriate, clearly indicating a prevalent issue with some shopfronts. For example one of its enhancement proposals for the Bridge and Lower New Road Character Area is to 'produce a comprehensive and detailed guidance leaflet for shop-front and advertisement design to aid the improvement of the quality of shop-fronts through the development control process.'<sup>103</sup>



*Shopfronts on the High Street that are designed to be sympathetic to their historic buildings*

- 8.94 Shopfront design guides are a proven and recognised tool used by Local Planning Authorities and Neighbourhood Plan groups to secure high quality design in historic town centres. Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC6 and the accompanying Shopfront Design Guide (Annexe 3) fill an existing void in the Development Plan and provide detailed design guidance on new shopfronts and advertisements in Chippenham town centre.
- 8.95 The Guide is applicable to property owners as well as residents, estate agents, developers, contractors, shopfitters, architects, planning officers, and civic societies. It explains the principles of what makes good shopfront design and provides local evidence of inappropriate shopfronts and appropriate shopfronts in order to guide and inform.

<sup>103</sup> [Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG](#), Wiltshire Council, 2010, p. 22

- 8.96 The Shopfront Design Guide was developed by members of the Neighbourhood Plan Town Centre Topic Group who undertook surveys of 58 shopfronts within the town centre during 2019/20 and found both good and bad examples of local shopfronts, which subsequently formed an evidence base for the Guide (please refer to the Shopfronts Design Guide Topic Paper in Appendix 17).
- 8.97 The Buildings of Local Merit Topic Paper (Appendix 16) should be used to guide and assess development proposals which relate to the shopfronts of Buildings of Local Merit (see Policy TC5) or advertisements on these buildings.
- 8.98 Neighbourhood Plan Policy TC6 aligns with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF and the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG by sustaining and enhancing the significance of Chippenham Conservation Area and by ensuring that new shopfront development makes a positive contribution to its local character and distinctiveness.

## Policy TC6 - Design of Shopfronts and Advertisements

Within Chippenham Town Centre, new or altered shopfronts and their associated advertisements must have full regard to the design advice set out in the Shopfront Design Guide (Annexe 3 of this Neighbourhood Plan).

## 9. Transport

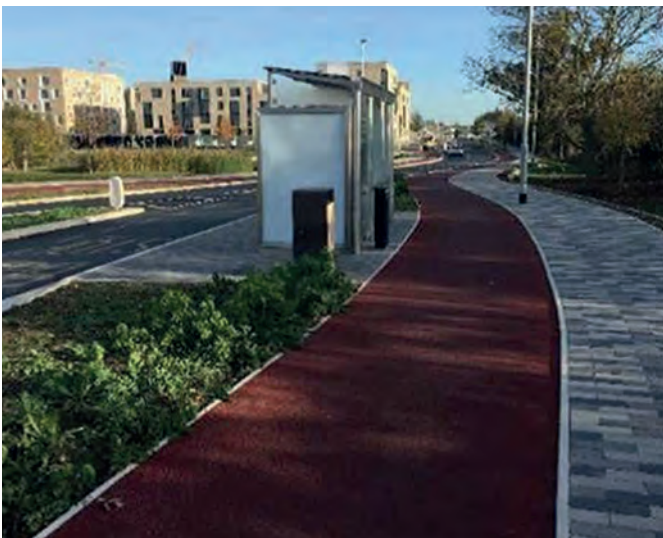
### Introduction

- 9.1 Chippenham's growth as a town has largely been as a result of its excellent transport links, being located in close proximity to the M4 motorway and on the main Bristol to London railway route (Great Western Railway). However, the town is by no means unique in suffering traffic congestion at certain times, comparable to that of similar sized towns.
- 9.2 The COVID-19 pandemic and climate change movement have seen increasing numbers of the local community turn to cycling and walking as a means of both travelling around the town and for physical exercise and mental wellbeing. In order to retain this momentum and shift to sustainable transport modes, and reduce the effects of climate change more rapidly, it is essential that safe and effective infrastructure for cycling and walking is incorporated within new development and through developer contributions. It is also essential that this new infrastructure links into the existing cycle path and footpath networks in the town.
- 9.3 New public transport infrastructure should be designed to be integrated with different sustainable transport modes and link up with existing sustainable public transport infrastructure, to enable journeys to be made solely via sustainable transport modes.
- 9.4 Rental e-scooters may become popular in Chippenham in the future and it is important to ensure appropriate infrastructure, such as parking at transport hubs and bus interchanges, is provided for this newest sustainable transport mode.

**Transport Vision:** Chippenham will be a town where people can move around easily on foot, bicycle, motorcycle or public transport as an alternative to travelling by car. It will avoid unnecessary commercial traffic crossing through the town centre, and parking will make a positive contribution to good traffic management. Air pollution and carbon emissions will be minimised. There will be a network of well connected walking and cycling routes across the town, and through into the surrounding countryside, with more people choosing active travel and public transport as a means of getting around.



*Infrastructure, such as cycle stands, can assist in the shift to sustainable transport modes, New Road*



*Integration of bus stop and cycle lane allows for journeys to be made via sustainable transport modes, North-west Cambridge development*

9.5 In order to ensure that certain sectors of the community are not disadvantaged through choice of public transport modes it is important that community access to the bus network remains, and that adequate bus infrastructure is provided within new development. It is also important to ensure that developer contributions are sought to upgrade existing bus facilities and infrastructure.

9.6 The Neighbourhood Plan supports the decarbonisation of transport in Chippenham, and the cleaner air that this provides. The Government's intention to phase out petrol cars by 2030 means that electric vehicles will likely replace petrol vehicles as the dominant mode of private transport. Little in the way of electric vehicle charging infrastructure currently exists in the town, and therefore new development needs to incorporate this infrastructure in order to meet Government targets.

## Provision and Enhancement of Cycle Paths

### Transport Objective 1:

Improve current walking and cycling networks and infrastructure throughout the town and into the surrounding countryside.

### Transport Objective 3:

Promote sustainable transport by improving infrastructure and making modal shift easier in favour of public transport, walking and cycling.

### Economy Objective 2:

Ensure local employment sites are connected to the town via sustainable transport modes.



*Two-way segregated cycle route to protect people cycling from high volume motor traffic as advocated by LTN 1/20, London*

- 9.7 Currently, cycle provision for new developments consists of shared-use paths that often hinder people cycling on their journeys, due to the inclusion of non-priority road crossings, sharp turns and obstacles. By slowing down people who are cycling and increasing the amount of energy required from them due to the stop-start nature of the routes, these paths do not encourage cycling as much as they could.
- 9.8 When shared paths become popular with people walking, wheeling or cycling, conflicts can arise, due in part to the different speeds these groups travel. Within Chippenham, this issue is seen in the paths around Monkton Park. Further afield, conflicts between people cycling and people walking are becoming common on sections of the Bristol-Bath railway path, due to its popularity as a cycle route.
- 9.9 Providing cycle infrastructure that is designed to facilitate quick, safe and easy journeys will encourage the desired modal shift away from private cars. Segregation of people cycling from people walking and other slower road users has the additional benefit of making footways safer and more pleasant for these groups. Segregation of people cycling from high volume motor traffic is also essential for their protection.<sup>104</sup>
- 9.10 Guidance on [Cycle Infrastructure Design, Local Transport Note 1/20](#), was issued by the Department for Transport in 2020. It requires cycle networks and routes to be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. Inclusive design and accessibility should run through all five of these core design principles. Designers should always aim to provide infrastructure that meets these principles and therefore caters for the broadest range of people.

<sup>104</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for further background information and evidence used to formulate Neighbourhood Plan Policy T1



- 9.11 The ‘Cycling Level of Service Tool’ set out in Appendix A of LTN 1/20 can be used to assess existing and potential routes and help create optimal cycle path designs.
- 9.12 Cycling facilities should be regarded as an essential component of the site access and any off-site highway improvements that may be necessary. This may include some off-site improvements along existing highways that serve the development.<sup>105</sup> Developments that do not adequately make provision for cycling in their transport proposals should not be approved.
- 9.13 Wiltshire Council produced a Town Cycle Network Map for Chippenham in 2013 showing existing cycleways, quiet streets and on-street cycle routes.<sup>106</sup> Given its age, the [Chippenham Cycle Network Development Group \(CCNDG\)](#) have updated this map utilising resources developed by local residents who cycle. Using their unique knowledge and insight they have identified key improvements and linkages to the existing network which are required in order to facilitate active travel throughout the town and increase sustainability.
- 9.14 The ‘on road connecting links’ identified by CCNDG are not formally designated as ‘quietways’ or classified according to other official designations (such as the Local Planning Authority’s ‘quiet routes’) but are based on the Group’s practical experience of using these roads.
- 9.15 The routes, and segments in need of improvement have been prioritised by CCNDG and are the community user’s vision for improving the future cycle network. The high priority improvements are shown in Figure 9.1, and CCNDG have set out in more detail the specific high priority improvements that could be made in each location in Appendix 22 - High Priority Improvements to the Cycle Network. This represents a starting point for discussion with developers and highway engineers as and when the need arises.

<sup>105</sup> [Cycle Infrastructure Design, Local Transport Note 1/20](#), Department for Transport, 2020. para. 14.3.12.

<sup>106</sup> [Town Cycle Network Map for Chippenham](#)

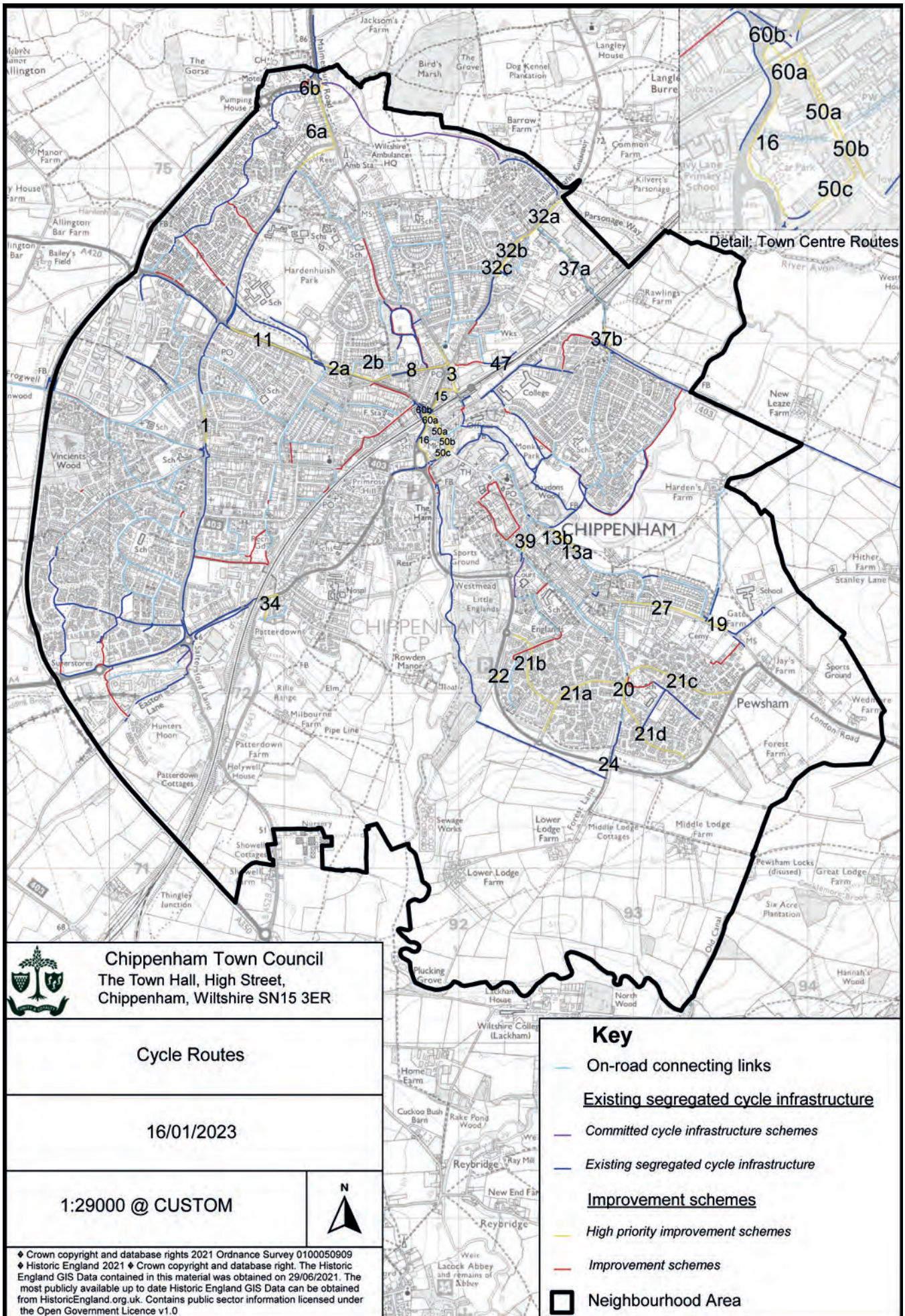


Figure 9.1: Required Route Improvements to Chippenham Cycle Network

9.16 New development places additional pressure and demand on the existing cycle network. Therefore developer contributions (through S106 Agreements, CIL monies or S278 Agreements) will be sought for high priority improvements to the cycle network where a major development is proposed.

## Policy T1 - Provision and Enhancement of Cycle Paths

Cycling schemes shall be prepared for all large scale major development proposals, and the majority of major development proposals, to encourage modal shift from the private car to cycling. Such schemes should comply with LTN 1/20 (or any subsequent updated version of this) and the developer must demonstrate how the design adheres to the Core Design Principles set out in Section 4 of LTN 1/20.

The quality of cycling infrastructure that has been incorporated into the design must be quantified by using the 'Cycling Level of Service Tool' as set out in Appendix A of LTN 1/20 (or any subsequent updated version of this).

Cycle paths incorporated within major development proposals, particularly those for strategic housing sites, need to link to the existing town cycle network, as shown on Figure 9.1.

Major development proposals which generate increased use of the existing cycle network to access the site (directly or indirectly) will require on-site or off-site financial contributions towards the relevant high priority improvements to the cycle network shown on Figure 9.1 and set out in more detail in Appendix 22 - High Priority Improvements to the Cycle Network.

## Access to the Bus Network

### Transport Objective 3:

Promote sustainable transport by improving infrastructure and making modal shift easier in favour of public transport, walking and cycling.

### Economy Objective 2:

Ensure local employment sites are connected to the town via sustainable transport modes.



*Bus route serving residential estate in Chippenham*

9.17 Buses provide an important public transport mode in towns and cities. However, a report by Transport for New Homes<sup>107</sup> was severely critical of the way planning policy for new housing development is still car-focused. The report concluded that where bus services were provided as part of developments built close to large towns, bus provision was secondary in design to the continued predominance of cars. Sometimes roads were too narrow for buses, buses were relegated to distributor road stops, only went through a small area of the estate, or simply stopped at the entrance.

9.18 It is common for greenfield housing developments to be designed primarily for the car with buses and other sustainable modes tacked on. This approach is no longer sustainable and it will be necessary for new housing developments to provide attractive bus alternatives to the private car.

9.19 New housing developments provide existing operators with the opportunity to introduce new services (or extend or amend existing ones). Such developments should be located and designed in ways that provide the best opportunities to bus operators who provide services - preferably on a commercial basis without the need for subsidy by Wiltshire Council. This is in line with the [Wiltshire Local Transport Plan \(LTP3\)](#) strategy which states that 'The council will seek to promote the viability of commercial bus operation particularly on main inter-urban corridors and in Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge, so that revenue support funding can be targeted at areas where commercial operation is less likely.'<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> [Garden Villages and Garden Towns: Visions & Reality](#), Transport for New Homes, 2020

<sup>108</sup> [Local Transport Plan 3](#), Wiltshire Council, 2011

- 9.20 Chippenham differs from its neighbours in having an excellent train service that in many ways provides better access to Bath and Bristol and other destinations than by bus (or car).
- 9.21 In comparison with towns of similar size, Chippenham has relatively good bus services - currently those services to Bath and Swindon run every 30 and 20 minutes respectively, those to Trowbridge and Frome run every 30 minutes, those to Malmesbury run hourly, and there are less frequent services to Devizes and the Dauntsey Vale. All of these bus routes serve the outer reaches of Chippenham town as well as the rural hinterland.
- 9.22 The town bus services, currently operated by Faresaver, cover parts of the town fairly comprehensively, although only hourly and not at times that would meet the requirements of many of those travelling to work, as school transport tends to take priority at those times.
- 9.23 Outside of the town centre, the dispersed location of workplaces and medical facilities makes the use of buses unattractive, especially where a change of bus may be required. There are noticeable gaps in bus provision in Cepen Park South and the western half of Pewsham. The Neighbourhood Plan supports development which makes it easier for residents in these areas to access bus infrastructure, and to improve frequency and access to key facilities in the town by bus.<sup>109</sup>
- 9.24 The Community Survey (Appendix 7) indicated that only around 3% of those who live in the town used buses to travel to the town centre, although others use buses to visit the town from villages and towns further afield. This is much in line with statistics contained in recent publications on national bus usage<sup>110</sup> which show that the demographic pattern of bus usage is heavily slanted to those of school and pensionable age while being little used by those aged between 25 and 60 with their families. The figures for students attending school and college shows a take up of bus services of around 20%.<sup>111</sup>
- 9.25 The Neighbourhood Plan strongly supports electric bus and hydrogen bus infrastructure, and other bus infrastructure which reduces carbon emissions, improves air quality and/or increases biodiversity. This includes 'living roofs' on bus shelters for pollinator species, off-grid bus shelters powered by a combination of incorporated solar panels and wind turbines, and electric bus charging points.

<sup>109</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for further background information and evidence used to formulate Neighbourhood Plan Policy T2

<sup>110</sup> [Passenger Transport Review 2015/2016 - Summary of Consultation Results](#), Wiltshire Council and more generally [The Shape of Changing Bus demand in Britain](#), Independent Transport Commission Report, 2020

<sup>111</sup> Chippenham Transport Strategy, SKM, 2013, para. 5.6

- 9.26 Funding for the provision of new or amended bus services for areas of new housing or employment can be provided through developer contributions agreed with Wiltshire Council as the local highways authority. Sufficient funding should be allocated for the long term maintenance of bus infrastructure, such as bus stops. There is a need to support the introduction of new bus services, at least until they become commercially viable.
- 9.27 Developers, bus operators and Wiltshire Council should continue to collaborate to plan new bus services or amend existing ones to serve new areas of housing and employment. Such a service, Faresaver's 44K, was introduced in 2022 serving Birds Marsh View estate.
- 9.28 Neighbourhood Plan Policy T2 and the 'Sustainable Transport' section of the Chippenham Design Guide (Annexe 1) requires that the road network and other infrastructure in new developments is properly designed to ensure that bus services can serve these neighbourhoods effectively and that bus stops are located within easy walking distance of new development to provide an attractive public transport option. Further evidence collected by the Transport Topic Group on walking distances to access bus services can be found in Appendix 23 - Pedestrian Access to Public Transport.

## Town Centre

9.29 Chippenham town centre has a bus station, a significant bus stop in Bath Road, and an interchange at the railway station. The bus station is the terminus for most routes, while most also stop at the Bath Road/Town Bridge stops. The current pattern of routes and bus stops is attractive for bus users as most serve both ends of the town centre. The railway station is not a suitable location for a single combined bus station for the town given its location away from the town centre and the steep approach up Station Hill, but it is an important interchange.

9.30 In recent years there has been substantial improvement to signage in the town centre and maps have been installed in many places. There may still be a need for an audit to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the signage to direct visitors to the main transport interchanges.

9.31 As new strategic housing developments come on stream, it will be necessary to improve the town centre bus infrastructure. Chippenham Bus Station will remain at its existing site unless an equivalent or improved facility can be provided on a new site that would also be located within the town centre. Improvements to the town centre's bus infrastructure, linked to the National Bus Strategy<sup>112</sup>, have been identified by the Neighbourhood Plan's Transport Topic Group. Developer contributions or funding should be sought to implement these improvements.



*Integrated public transport at Chippenham Railway Station*



*Coach and bus stops, Bath Road*

<sup>112</sup> [National Bus Strategy: Bus Service Improvement Plans - Guidance to local authorities and bus operators](#), Department of Transport, 2021

## Policy T2 - Access to the Bus Network

Proposals that seek to retain and improve existing bus infrastructure, particularly at important town centre locations, will be supported. Proposals that seek to reduce bus infrastructure will be resisted unless a suitable alternative facility can be provided.

Major development that will add to demands on public transport should prioritise the inclusion of new on-site bus network infrastructure. Financial contributions fairly and reasonably related to the development will be sought towards the cost of new or improved bus services which link the site to the town centre, where the direct impact of development would make such measures necessary. Such contributions can also be used to reduce carbon emissions, improve the passenger experience, reduce air pollution, increase biodiversity and encourage greater bus use in the town centre by providing:

- Improved seating and shelter at main bus interchange points, and other well-used bus stops in the town centre
- real-time passenger information indicators (for local and National Express bus services) at strategic locations
- electric bus charging points at the Bus Station (in accordance with the requirements of Neighbourhood Plan Policy T3)
- new or improved signage to direct visitors to main bus interchanges
- 'living roofs' for pollinator species on new or upgraded bus shelters
- solar powered and/or wind powered new or upgraded bus shelters

All buildings within major development proposals shall be located within a maximum of 400m walking distance from an existing bus stop, or new bus stop (where this is to be provided as part of the development proposal). For development proposals which seek to provide purpose built accommodation for vulnerable and/or older people or where regular usage by people with mobility impairments may be anticipated the maximum walking distance should be reduced to 150m.



## Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

**Transport Objective 2:**  
Incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure for car users into new development and in public places.

**Chippenham Identity Objective 4:**  
Promote net zero carbon development and ensure that future development is resilient with respect to climate change.



*Electric vehicle charging infrastructure is lacking at public car parks in Chippenham, Gladstone Road car park*

- 9.32 The Government announced its intention to phase out petrol cars by 2030. In addition, new Building Regulations came into force in 2022 and set out requirements for electric vehicle charge points to be installed in new residential and non-residential buildings, and buildings undergoing major renovation or a material change of use.<sup>113</sup>
- 9.33 Wiltshire’s adopted [Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 \(LTP3 2011\)](#) makes reference to the existence of charging points for electric vehicles, but does not include proposals, strategies or policies to implement such infrastructure in new development or for existing development. There are currently no Development Plan policies on electric vehicle charging.<sup>114</sup>
- 9.34 At the time of writing there were only nine locations where charge-accessible car parking spaces were available to the public within Chippenham, and less than a third of the car parks operated by Wiltshire Council provide access to a charging point for electric vehicles. The majority of residential, and commercial developments in Chippenham are not currently being built with electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- 9.35 Plug-in electric vehicles accounted for more than one in five of all new car registrations in the UK in 2022.<sup>115</sup> The proportion of electric vehicles will rise as the Government’s target is realised, growing to 100% before 2030. In the intervening years it will be necessary to ensure that charging infrastructure is put in place. Rapid charging points and solar panel charging points are the preferred choice of charging infrastructure.
- 9.36 In order to prevent the lack of infrastructure becoming a barrier to the future take-up of electric vehicles in Chippenham, Neighbourhood Plan Policy T3 prescribes minimum standards for the provision of charging facilities in all new developments in line with those standards set out in Building Regulations.
- 9.37 Unlike Building Regulations, Policy T3 does not provide local exemptions where the cost of an individual connection is more than the price cap. This is because the Neighbourhood Plan considers that new development should not proceed where electric vehicle charging points cannot be incorporated given the importance of the climate emergency.

<sup>113</sup> Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles: Approved Document S, DLUHC, 2021

<sup>114</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for further background information and evidence used to formulate Neighbourhood Plan Policy T3

<sup>115</sup> SMMT, September 2022

9.38 Wiltshire Council CIL funding should be used towards retrofitting electric vehicle charging points in every Wiltshire Council operated car park in Chippenham and other key locations such as community centres and the railway station. New development will be required to make its own provision.

9.39 PAS 1899:2022 'Electric vehicles - Accessible charging - Specification' by the British Standards Institution specifies requirements for the provision of accessible public charge points for electric vehicles to all potential users, including, for example, disabled people and older people.

## Policy T3 - Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

New residential buildings with associated off-street car parking spaces will provide at least one electric vehicle charge point.

Residential buildings undergoing a major renovation which will have more than 10 car parking spaces must have at least one electric vehicle charge point per dwelling, with associated parking along with cable routes in all spaces without charge points.

New non-residential buildings and non-residential buildings undergoing a major renovation with more than 10 parking spaces, must have a minimum of one electric vehicle charge point and cable routes for one in five (20%) of the total number of spaces.

Where an electric vehicle charge point is to serve more than one parking space the charge point must include more than one charging socket outlet.

Where it is not possible to provide off-street parking in new development the provision of cable routes, to allow for electric vehicle charging on-street, will be encouraged. Such charging infrastructure should be placed in the road/carrageway, and not on footways where it could create obstructions or trip hazards for people walking or cycling.

Public electric vehicle charge points will be designed to be fully accessible to all potential users, including disabled people, those with reduced mobility and older people, in line with the latest industry recognised technical standards.

Rapid electric vehicle charge points will be provided at new taxi ranks.

Electric bus charging points will be supported at Chippenham Bus Station, (in accordance with the requirements of Neighbourhood Plan Policy T2)

## Access for Disabled People and those with Reduced Mobility

### Transport Objective 1:

Improve current walking and cycling networks and infrastructure throughout the town and into the surrounding countryside.

### Transport Objective 3:

Promote sustainable transport by improving infrastructure and making modal shift easier in favour of public transport, walking and cycling.

- 9.40 The NPPF requires development to cater for the needs of pedestrians and specifically to address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility for all modes of transport.<sup>116</sup>
- 9.41 *Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure* (2021) published by the Department for Transport has detailed best practice guidance for use by anyone designing and installing public realm schemes and improvements, including local authorities and their consultants, highways practitioners, and urban designers. It applies to both new build schemes and upgrades to existing layouts. It is primarily aimed at transport infrastructure and the public highway but much of its advice is relevant to private land accessible to the public. It provides good practice on designing the public realm to be accessible to all.
- 9.42 Walking is active travel. By walking, people move from place to place, irrespective of the duration of their journey, and with as much purpose as anyone in a motor vehicle. Past failure to take account of walking children, adults, adults pushing buggies or pulling trollies, mobility scooter and wheelchair users, people with service dogs or with symbol, guide, long, or red and white banded canes, or with walking aids, amounts to exclusionary road and pavement design, which especially in the centre of Chippenham, can put pedestrians in danger. Neighbourhood Plan Policy T4 seeks to address 'exclusionary design' and ensure that the needs of this sector of the Chippenham population are properly considered in future design decisions.
- 9.43 *The Access for Disabled People and those with Reduced Mobility & Waymarking Signage on the Footpath Network* Topic Paper (Appendix 18) explains this concept in detail and provides many relevant examples collected by the Neighbourhood Plan's Transport Topic Group. The Topic Paper should be reviewed by planning applicants for relevant schemes, particularly any schemes that seek to provide for sustainable transport that make changes to the road network or provide significant levels of parking.

<sup>116</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework](#), MHCLG, 2021, paras. 104, 106, 108, 112

9.44 Exclusionary design in Chippenham's transport and parking policies will no longer be tolerated. All members of the community require and are entitled to equal access to footways, public spaces and public toilets.<sup>117</sup>

9.45 Level access at all road crossings is essential, particularly for wheelchair users, whether by a dropped kerb or a raised crossing, as well as to public facilities. Due consideration must be given to pedestrian desire lines.

9.46 As well as exhibiting intrinsic and serious flaws of design, the condition of many pavements in Chippenham is poor (as referred to in the accompanying Topic Paper). Many pavements are, for those with mobility challenges, difficult or sometimes unsafe to use. Severely uneven footways pose danger to those who may be visually impaired or unsteady on their feet. Footways and footpaths should be constructed of durable materials that are not subject to cracking or splitting and should anticipate the need for utilities providers to make repairs and allow for easy and cost effective reinstatement, leaving a level area upon completion.

9.47 Many of the main car parks and public toilets in Chippenham do not take proper account of the needs of pedestrians, people with reduced mobility, or disabled people. Evidence set out in the aforementioned Topic Paper shows that car park scheme designs have failed to properly segregate foot from motorised traffic creating dangerous spatial conflicts that particularly affect those who are visually impaired, not able to move quickly out of the way of faster moving traffic (for instance the conflict between pedestrians and people cycling/vehicles) nor are routes clearly marked. None of the publicly accessible toilets in Chippenham have braille signage.



*No demarcated pedestrian routes makes for exclusionary design, Bath Road Car Park*

9.48 Many people in the community have dogs, and dog walking is beneficial because it promotes wellbeing and combats loneliness. For the blind, dogs can be a necessity. However, though dog ownership is beneficial, it is not well catered for in Chippenham's built environment. Dog stops are specifically designed for securely tethering dogs. Dogs are excluded from Emery Gate Shopping Centre, but there are no dog stops outside. Dogs are allowed in Borough Parade, which has two dog stops in a single wing of the precinct. The High Street and Market Place have one dog stop each. Other than these four locations, there is nowhere in the town centre for people to safely secure their dogs.

<sup>117</sup> [Equality Act 2010](#), Section 149 and [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#)

## Policy T4 - Access for Disabled People and those with Reduced Mobility

Development proposals which include works to adopted and unadopted footways and footpaths, including developer contributions to upgrade existing footways and footpaths, should address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility by demonstrating that full regard has been given to best practice design set out in *Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure* (2021) by the Department for Transport (including any subsequent updated versions of this guidance).

Development proposals must make provision for the long-term maintenance, upkeep and repair of unadopted footways and footpaths.

Where development proposals will likely lead to increased use of existing public footways and footpaths, developer contributions should be sought to make provision for their upgrade and/or long-term maintenance, upkeep and repair, subject to the tests for developer contributions in the NPPF.

Development proposals which include planting schemes adjacent to footways, footpaths and other walking routes will either favour planting that is unlikely to cause an obstruction to users, or put in place a long-term maintenance programme to manage overgrowth and obstruction.

Where it is likely that users of a development will access that development on foot it will be necessary to provide places where dogs can be securely tethered.

## Waymarking Signage on the Footpath and Cycle Network

### Transport Objective 1:

Improve current walking and cycling networks and infrastructure throughout the town and into the surrounding countryside.

### Transport Objective 3:

Promote sustainable transport by improving infrastructure and making modal shift easier in favour of public transport, walking and cycling.



*No waymarking of public footpath between Spanbourne Avenue and Ivy Lane*



*No waymarking for the public footpath (left), despite this being the most direct walking route to the town centre from this location on Cocklebury Lane*

9.49 Evidence gathered in support of the Neighbourhood Plan shows that waymarking in Chippenham is poor. For pedestrians who do not have access to an OS map or a satnav, finding a way from one part of the town to another can be problematic.

9.50 The Access for Disabled People and those with Reduced Mobility and Waymarking Signage on the Footpath Network Topic Paper (Appendix 18) provides many examples where poor signage is an impediment to easy access across town. It also demonstrates that signage along the wider footpath network, including that linking the town to the countryside, is poor.

9.51 Residents and employees of new developments are encouraged in other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan to use the footpath and cycle network in the town centre and more widely. The wider public rights of way network is used by visitors and residents and contributes positively to their health and wellbeing. In order to encourage greater use of the footpath and cycle network, it is necessary to improve waymarking signage so that users can easily navigate their routes.

9.52 New major development that relies upon the wider footpath and cycle network should provide, or make a contribution to, waymarking signage for people walking and people cycling. This should be a requirement of all development that seeks to promote sustainable transport so that new residents and employees are more likely to use the network rather than their cars.

9.53 Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure (2021) sets out best practice guidance for producing accessible signage that can be used by disabled people,

## Policy T5 - Waymarking Signage on the Footpath and Cycle Network

Major development schemes that are located adjacent to, or within 200m of an entrance to, a public right of way or cycle path should either provide, or contribute to, waymarking signage where none exists already, or where such signage needs to be upgraded, according to the following specifications:

1. The sign will clearly indicate the end destination(s), the distance to the destination(s) and the time it will take to reach the destination(s) both for walking and cycling.
2. The sign will be produced to the latest signage specifications of the local highway authority, unless there are specific projects which require bespoke signage, which should be agreed with the local highway authority.
3. The sign will be mounted in such a manner that it is unlikely to become obscured or vandalised over time.
4. The sign should be designed to provide accessible information that can be used by disabled people, in accordance with best practice guidance set out in *Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure (2021)* by the Department for Transport (including any subsequent updated versions of this guidance).

## 10. Community Infrastructure

### Introduction

- 10.1 An enormous range of activities can take place within community facilities, including parent and toddler groups, IT training, bingo and dance, to name only a few. The benefits that accrue from these activities come in promoting health and welfare, education and training, and helping to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- 10.2 Some community buildings provide only one type of activity, while others provide as diverse a range as possible in response to the needs of the communities they serve. Some community facilities will serve the local area in which they are located, and others are of borough-wide importance. These facilities also ensure that diverse elements of Chippenham's community have the potential to come together, where this might not otherwise be feasible.
- 10.3 The Chippenham of the future will likely be larger and will remain an important urban centre for the surrounding rural areas and smaller towns and villages. It has a strong community offer now, but it needs to improve this if it is to meet its full potential as a cultural and social hub.
- 10.4 Good quality open space, interesting cultural opportunities and flexible and attractive community facilities can attract new residents and visitors, and add a sense of vibrancy and buoyancy that will make people proud to be in Chippenham. Public art also has a significant role in placemaking, particularly in the town centre.

**Community Infrastructure Vision:**  
Chippenham will have a strong sense of community that is diverse and inclusive. It will provide a range of sport, recreation and leisure opportunities, and amenities for the whole community, including specific facilities for young people. This will be complemented by a diverse programme of events, festivals and activities that take place within the town and its green spaces.

#### COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE:

The term 'community infrastructure' refers to all the buildings, public spaces and locations where members of the community meet and come together. It is a broad term that includes local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses, post offices and places of worship.



## Community Infrastructure

**Community Infrastructure Objective 1:**  
Protect or enhance existing facilities, or create new top class facilities, for sporting and recreational opportunities.

**Community Infrastructure Objective 2:**  
Encourage the community to come together by providing a range of indoor and outdoor meeting places and event spaces.

**Community Infrastructure Objective 3:**  
Resist the loss of existing community uses and buildings.

**Community Infrastructure Objective 4:**  
Promote a strong sense of community that is diverse and inclusive.

**Community Infrastructure Objective 5:**  
Protect or enhance existing facilities, or create new facilities, for young people.

**Town Centre Objective 4:**  
Identify sites or buildings that could be developed or used for community or leisure purposes.

10.5 The Wiltshire Local Plan Review, and its strategic site allocations, will likely result in the creation of new communities and a larger population. Evidence gathered for the Neighbourhood Plan, set out in the Community Infrastructure Topic Paper (Appendix 19), indicates that current community provision is at capacity and that new development will need to make further provision for community infrastructure. In addition, the currently thriving arts and culture offer could be strengthened by new development.

10.6 Wiltshire Core Strategy policies indicate that community facilities are important in Chippenham, that they will be encouraged to be established where there is a need for them, and that once established, these land uses will be protected. Core Policy 3 vi, in particular, raises the expectation that local circumstances should be taken into consideration. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan has scope within these policies to set the local circumstances and requirements.

10.7 Chippenham has many arts and culture venues, shown in Appendix 19. These range from publicly funded venues to small independent establishments. All have a role to play in Chippenham life, and as the Community Survey data shows (Appendix 7), are valued by residents.

10.8 Neighbourhood Plan Policy CI1 affords existing community infrastructure protection to ensure that the long-term potential value of land in community use is not lost without good reason. Its intent is broadly in line with Core Policy 49 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, although this only applies to rural areas. The existing development plan remains silent on community facilities in principal settlements.



### *Yarn bombing at the Buttercross*

- 10.9 Public houses are an important community facility in Chippenham and those remaining are particularly at threat of being lost to other uses. Retention and improvement of public houses is supported because they can be important community assets by helping to create a sense of place and a hub for developing social networks between the local community.
- 10.10 The town centre is the location for many of the available arts and cultural activities. Research has proven that a strong arts and culture sector will have a positive impact on place shaping. A strong arts scene attracts people to an area and keeps them there. As Chippenham town centre struggles with the pressures caused by changed shopping habits and the impact of COVID-19, it is important to use arts, culture and leisure to provide an attractive destination. This will be an important end in itself but will also help local retailers by increasing town centre footfall.
- 10.11 In the town centre, and other locations such as the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre Site, funds raised from CIL and other contributions from development, should support and augment arts and cultural opportunities in accordance with Core Policy 3 v of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 10.12 The Community Survey, Community Infrastructure Survey and Community Groups and Organisations Survey showed that there is an active community sector providing valued services to local people but that they are all operating at capacity (see Appendices 7, 20 and 21 for the full Survey results).
- 10.13 To maintain this service and allow this sector to evolve alongside Chippenham's growing population, it will be necessary to have new venues that can be rented or leased and sometimes that serve multiple functions. This means that as new development is realised in Chippenham, particularly at strategic allocations, new infrastructure must be provided to meet the needs of the new communities.
- 10.14 A particular focus should be on the provision of improved and additional facilities for young people which groups and bodies such as Chippenham Youth Council have identified a need for through peer engagement.
- 10.15 High quality public open spaces will be required to allow the community to grow and thrive. For old and young alike, living a healthy lifestyle is important, and Neighbourhood Plan Policy CI1 seeks to ensure that ample opportunities for healthy lifestyles are available for existing and future residents.

- 10.16 The Community Survey, Community Infrastructure Survey and Community Groups and Organisations Survey are a good starting point for applicants who are designing major schemes. The surveys indicate where further provision is required and for which groups. The information about individual providers is also available for applicants to consider and they are strongly encouraged to contact these groups individually or through [Chippenham Town Council](#).
- 10.17 For the purposes of Neighbourhood Plan Policy C11 the term 'community infrastructure' refers to all the buildings, public spaces and locations where members of the community meet and come together. This includes local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses, post offices and places of worship. This is generally the place-shaping infrastructure referred to in Core Policy 3 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. 'Community infrastructure' does not include the 'essential infrastructure', also referred to in Core Policy 3, which includes healthcare or education facilities.

## Policy C11 - Community Infrastructure

### New Community Infrastructure

Proposals for all major residential development shall include a Community Infrastructure Statement which demonstrates how the community infrastructure needs of new residents, generated as a result of the scheme, can be fully met on site or nearby without placing additional pressure on existing community infrastructure.

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have considered up to date local evidence of the need for community infrastructure so that new residents have access to safe, affordable and attractive venues and sites which cater for all age groups. Venues should be flexible and available to local groups to rent and use where possible.

Largescale major residential development will be expected to provide new community infrastructure on site. Where major residential development cannot accommodate on-site community infrastructure an appropriate financial contribution, based on individual site circumstances, will be provided towards off-site community infrastructure or public art provision.

Proposals for arts and culture facilities and venues, including the creative re-use of redundant buildings for this purpose, will be strongly supported in the town centre and at the Bath Road Car Park/Bridge Centre site.

### Existing Community Infrastructure

Proposals that would result in the loss of existing community infrastructure will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the facility, or the on-going delivery of the community value of the facility, is no longer financially viable or no longer needed for a community purpose or a change of use or a mixed use will help to retain the community benefit of a building.

Change of use applications for large buildings in the town centre, that may have the capacity to be converted to community infrastructure, should not be permitted until their use as a community or arts and culture facility has been fully explored and demonstrated not to be feasible or viable. Applicants should explain how a community use was explored, including demonstration of discussions with the community and the Town Council, and why it was not possible to use the building for the benefit of the community.

## 11. Economy

### Introduction

11.1 A healthy local economy is a key objective of sustainable development. It provides job opportunities and skills, and generates the wealth and prosperity to bring about positive change, such as improved public transport and a high quality environment. In order to retain jobs and attract new investment, areas must be able to offer the facilities necessary for companies to prosper. This includes land, properties, a skilled and adaptable workforce, utilities and services and an attractive environment. The planning process can assist with all of these.

11.2 Chippenham had a strong local economy in the past, with notable agricultural and engineering sectors. However, in recent decades there have been a number of challenges to the local economy including: employment land being redeveloped for housing; changes to the way people work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic with many not working from a traditional office base; a shortage of available employment land; slow build out on employment land; and a lack of local government incentives or marketing to businesses looking to establish at sites in Chippenham. In contrast, housing land has been developed out at a quicker pace, and in greater quantity, than employment land.

11.3 Chippenham is now a place where many people commute out during the day to go to work. A significant increase in local housing over the last few years and future planned housing development means additional jobs are required for people to be able to sustainably work in the place where they live.

11.4 The [Regulation 18 Wiltshire Local Plan Review \(January 2021\)](#) indicates that an additional 5 hectares of employment land will be required in Chippenham. The draft proposes that this will largely be met as part of strategic housing allocations.

**Economy Vision:** Chippenham will support its existing businesses, recognising the importance of the agricultural and engineering industries in the Parish. It will encourage new businesses to relocate, or start up, within and around the town so that it becomes much more self-sufficient and less of a commuter town. Its commercial areas will be attractive to a range of businesses, so that employment opportunities will enable people to live and work locally. Future development will be employment-led, with high quality jobs on offer from businesses that are oriented towards future and circular economies

11.5 The Neighbourhood Plan wishes to reverse the out-commuting trend, whilst retaining the great local employers it already has. It will seek to ensure that more employment opportunities come forward, taking advantage of the town's location within the M4 and A350 employment growth areas, and that Chippenham's economy is supported and continues to grow.

11.6 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate new employment sites (because these are considered to be strategic policies), it can play a role in supporting businesses that are aligned with the circular economy (which also benefits sustainability and climate change). It can also ensure that any new employment sites allocated by the Local Plan delivers choice and a variety of different unit sizes and types to ensure that local entrepreneurs can start and grow their own businesses in the town.

## Circular Economy

**Economy Objective 3:** Ensure support and infrastructure is available for small businesses and those which utilise the circular economy.

11.7 The Neighbourhood Plan's vision for the future economy is one that is sustainable. Businesses are increasingly putting sustainability at the core of their business goals.

11.8 As the availability of extractive resources decrease worldwide<sup>118</sup>, it becomes increasingly important that businesses evolve towards the circular economy. Figure 11.1 shows how the circular economy works.

### CIRCULAR ECONOMY:

The key principle of the circular economy is a shift in focus from using resources more efficiently towards reusing resources. The circular economy is an industrial system that is restorative and regenerative by design. It rests on three main principles: preserving and enhancing natural capital, optimising resource yields, and fostering system effectiveness.<sup>119</sup> This means managing existing resources such that products and materials are kept in circulation as long as possible.



Figure 11.1: The Circular Economy

11.9 Neighbourhood plans are not empowered to contain policies on waste, but there are lessons to be learned from the [Wiltshire Waste Core Strategy \(2009\)](#):

‘Industrial and commercial waste forms the largest quantity of all waste that is produced in Wiltshire and Swindon. Wastes generated from the industrial sector and the commercial sector have differing characteristics. Industrial waste arises from factories and activities such as manufacturing. Commercial waste includes waste produced from business establishments such as stores, markets, office buildings, restaurants and shopping centres. The predicted growth in Wiltshire and Swindon over the next 20 years is likely to cause a substantial increase in the amount of I&C waste produced, as more employment land is developed.’<sup>120</sup>

<sup>118</sup> [Wiltshire & Swindon Minerals Core Strategy](#), Wiltshire Council, 2009, p. 6

<sup>119</sup> [Concepts in Sustainable Development: An Introduction to the Key Issues](#), University of Leicester.

<sup>120</sup> [Wiltshire & Swindon Waste Core Strategy](#), Wiltshire Council, 2009, p. 7

- 11.10 Other policies in the Development Plan encourage local business to grow and for new businesses to become established. Some of these will be industrial in nature and in order to avoid increasing the amount of waste generated and/or costs of removing this waste businesses will be looking to transform their waste into new consumer goods.
- 11.11 It is increasingly common to see examples of the circular economy in action such as carpet tiles being made from old fishing nets, coffee cups being made from a special polymer that can be turned into more coffee cups, converting unwanted airline seats into handbags and purses, tyres recycled into footwear, and plastic from used ink cartridges and toners reused for new ink cartridges.<sup>121</sup>
- 11.12 Creating production models that reduce reliance on raw materials to continuously cycle materials also helps to insulate a company from fluctuations in the commodity market. Waste can be viewed as technical nutrients.
- 11.13 Procurement processes are changing, and it is more common to see equipment such as mobile phones, cars, and DIY equipment rented rather than purchased. Vendors become service providers, leasing access to a product or service, instead of selling ownership.
- 11.14 Reconditioning of products is also going to become more necessary and legislation may be enacted forcing manufacturers to design products that are easier to dismantle into component or reusable parts. Often the materials themselves can have an embedded energy component that makes them even more valuable than their virgin source.
- 11.15 It is challenging for individual businesses to become sustainable in a circular way without system change and a collective transition element. Industry can make use of the unwanted residues from other industries to reduce waste and resource use. However, some recycling and repurposing processes have their own impacts and the benefits of each reuse stream should be considered individually.

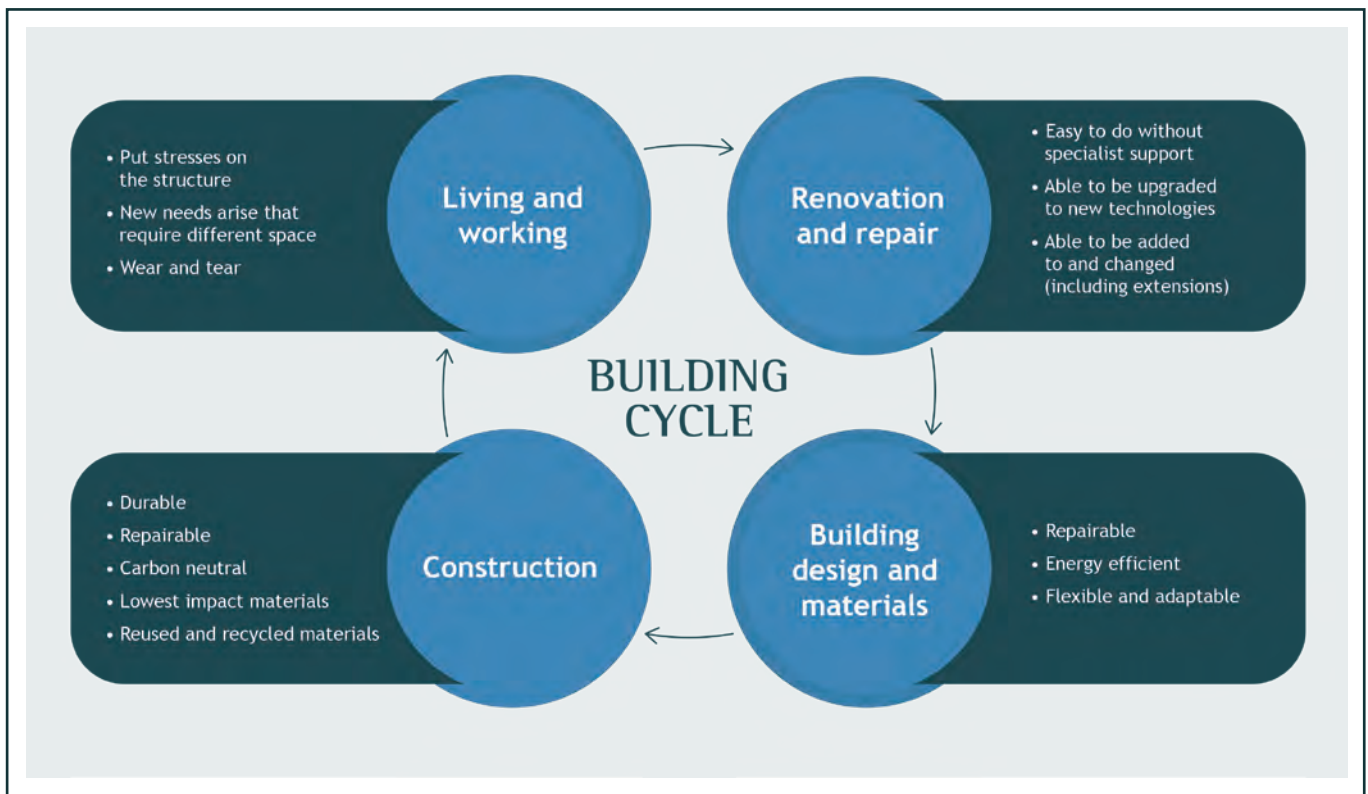


*Circular economy business that sells pre-loved clothing and re-fashions/mends clothing in order to help reduce textile waste, Borough Parade*

- 11.16 Another way that materials can be effectively re-used is in building construction. If buildings are constructed of high performing and sustainable materials, such as those that are re-purposed or recycled, they may cause less net environmental harm (please refer to Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction).

<sup>121</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for further background information and evidence used to formulate Neighbourhood Plan Policy E1

<sup>122</sup> Circular Economy: Waste-to-Resource & Covid 19, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



**Figure 11.2: The Circular Economy in the Built Environment**

11.17 A well performing built environment that requires minimal maintenance but which can be adapted as needs change will help Chippenham become carbon neutral. Figure 11.2 shows how the circular economy can be applied to the building cycle.

11.19 Given that farmland immediately surrounds Chippenham, and agriculture is key to the local economy, there are opportunities for farming to evolve to agro-ecological and circular economy practices which regenerate natural systems, minimise demands on natural resources, close nutrient loops, and reduce the environmental impact from discharges and runoff. Organic waste from farming and food waste has long been used as a source of natural fertiliser for agriculture. Urban activities and agricultural activities, such as animal production and irrigation runoff, create wastewater, which if treated properly can also be reused for pastures and plant production.<sup>122</sup>

11.18 The circular economy essentially mimics nature in the way it reuses resources. It is therefore much easier to apply to businesses centred on agriculture, food production, and farming.

11.20 Wiltshire has a large agriculture base with a major centre for land based study at Lackham, part of Wiltshire College and University Centre. Chippenham is therefore particularly well placed to evolve many of its agricultural businesses towards a circular economy.

11.21 Neighbourhood Plan Policy E1 therefore supports planning applications that demonstrate a move to a circular economy, which in turn supports the Wiltshire Waste Core Strategy - 'achieve waste elimination and reduction, maximising reuse, recycling and composting, and energy recovery, strictly in that order of priority.'

## Policy E1 - Circular Economy

Development proposals that seek to create circular economy benefits for industrial or agricultural processes or for built development will be supported in Chippenham.

Development proposals from businesses that can demonstrate that they are designing-out waste and pollution and keeping products and materials in use and economic circulation will be supported unless they create unacceptable impacts.

In the built environment, all new development is encouraged to avoid use of primary resources by:

- a) maximising the use of reused, repurposed and recycled products in building construction
- b) creative refurbishment and retention of existing buildings
- c) designing infrastructure that is durable, repairable and easily maintained.



## Business Incubator Units

**Economy Objective 1:** Promote and encourage new businesses to locate within and around the town and provide diversified employment opportunities for the local population, including provision for business incubator units and start-ups.

**Economy Objective 3:** Ensure support and infrastructure is available for small businesses and those which utilise the circular economy.

### BUSINESS INCUBATOR UNITS:

Business incubator units are spaces that specialise in supporting the growth of new and early stage businesses. They offer resources such as laboratory, industrial or workshop space alongside office facilities. Infrastructure is generally purpose built and offers customisable spaces to attract a range of business types and sizes as well as accommodating future growth needs. Usually, incubator units are offered with subsidised rent and/or business rates and can offer affordable premises with low levels of business risk.

- 11.22 Business incubator units can service any number of markets but often have a particular segment focus - such as life sciences, clinical, environmental, clean-tech, engineering or digital development. Most incubators are at least partially self-funded through membership fees or rent, though some are often subsidised by a university or public funding.
- 11.23 Recent economic pressures and the lasting impact of COVID-19 restrictions have created a precarious trading environment. Incubator units allow small businesses to start up, or sometimes to down-size to adjust to depressed trading conditions. The benefits of incubator units include:
- flexible leases with favourable terms such as a rent-free or discounted initial period
  - access to facilities that might otherwise be unaffordable
  - reduced overheads and initial start-up costs
  - maintenance covered
- 11.24 The Wiltshire Employment Land Review recommends a portfolio of different employment sites and premises, which includes being able to accommodate the requirements of start-ups and early stage businesses in smaller premises that are affordable, flexible and fully serviced.<sup>123</sup>
- 11.25 The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) also recognises that Chippenham is located within an important employment growth zone and refers to Wiltshire needing to support a network of incubation units meeting the needs of start-up and micro businesses.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup> [Wiltshire Employment Land Review](#), Hardisty Jones Associates, 2018, p. 68

<sup>124</sup> [Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan](#), Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP), 2016, p. 17

11.26 Chippenham has an allocated supply of employment land in the current Local Plan and is ideally located both within the A350 growth zone and M4 growth zone to make it an attractive location in which to accommodate incubator units for start-up businesses. It is also ideally located to maximise opportunities from leavers at Wiltshire College, which has a campus in the town centre and at its nearby Lackham site - with a focus on the emerging Agri-tech sector.

11.27 The benefits of having incubator units in Chippenham are that they could:

- support sustainable economic development of the town in terms of innovation and high-quality job growth
- improve the likelihood of start-up business survival by reducing risk of failure in early years
- establish close working relations with existing businesses, colleges and universities
- create a competitive business environment

11.28 The Neighbourhood Plan Economy Topic Group found that existing employment land in Chippenham at Bumpers Farm Industrial Estate, Methuen Park and Parsonage Way does not have additional space or capacity for incubator units, despite there being demand for smaller units of less than 5000 sq. ft. in the local area. Future allocated employment land is either not being built out, or if it is being built out is being developed for large distribution/warehouse units, which are less beneficial for the local economy and job market.<sup>125</sup>



*High demand and scarcity of existing business incubator units in Chippenham like these at Bumpers Enterprise Centre*

11.29 Where new employment land comes forward, or where reserved matters submissions are still to be made on existing employment land, Neighbourhood Plan Policy E2 ensures that a diverse portfolio of unit sizes (including incubator units) are provided, to meet the needs of a range of different types of employment uses and different sized businesses. It is important that consideration is given to this at an early stage in the planning process. Homogenisation of employment uses in Chippenham will neither provide local jobs in sufficient number, nor be good for local enterprise/entrepreneurship or local supply chains.

11.30 Neighbourhood Plan Policy E2 supports and encourages sustainable economic growth as advocated in the NPPF, and adds local detail to Core Policy 34 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Policies CH1/CH2 of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan.

<sup>125</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for further background information and evidence used to formulate Neighbourhood Plan Policy E2

## Policy E2 - Business Incubator Units

Development proposals for employment uses on allocated employment land, including those proposed under reserved matters submissions, shall demonstrate that a range of unit sizes to suit the local needs and requirements of different sized businesses will be provided on the wider employment site.

Within this range, provision shall be made for business incubator units of less than 5000 sq. ft. in size. These units shall be fully serviced prior to being let.

## 12. Developer Contributions

- 12.1 The development of sustainable communities requires the provision of a wide range of local facilities and services, or infrastructure requirements.
- 12.2 Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan sets out clear expectations on the design of new development and its infrastructure requirements. Developer contributions, currently including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), are intended to help pay for the infrastructure required to support new development.
- 12.3 Major and strategic infrastructure will be delivered by Wiltshire Council paid for from the county portion (75%) of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds and specific government grant awards. The [Planning Act 2008](#) provides a wide definition of the infrastructure which can be funded by Wiltshire Council CIL including transport, schools, play areas, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities and health and social care facilities.
- 12.4 Chippenham Town Council will also receive 25% of all CIL contributions levied within the Neighbourhood Plan area once the Plan is 'made', and may make contributions towards smaller-scale, localised infrastructure projects within its remit.
- 12.5 There will be many instances where development must meet its own needs, as set out in the NPPF, and where planning obligations will be used to deliver infrastructure requirements, subject to any future changes in Government policy.
- 12.6 Whilst the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Emerging Local Plan will address the matter of developer contributions, it is incumbent upon the Neighbourhood Plan to set out its clear expectations on where developer contributions will be expected to deliver its policies, in conformity with NPPF Paragraph 34. The Neighbourhood Plan has identified the following infrastructure requirements needed to support new development:
- Biodiversity enhancements to existing green spaces, particularly Local Green Spaces and those green spaces in residential estates laid only to grass
  - Improvements to the quality and biodiversity of Green Corridors (particularly the River Green Corridor), including establishing missing links and poor connections within the network
  - Tree planting, including street trees
  - Design proposals for development of Bath Road Car Park/ Bridge Centre Site and/or changes to the road gyratory system to facilitate a scheme on the site
  - Public realm improvements to the Upper Market Place, including a feasibility study into shared space
  - Improvements to the existing cycle and footpath network

## 13. Monitoring and Review

- Improvements to the local bus network linking new development to the town centre, including Bath Road bus shelter improvements, real-time passenger information indicators (for local and National Express bus services) at strategic locations, and electric bus charging point at the bus station
- Improved waymarking signage to the footpath and cycle network
- Retrofitting of electric vehicle charge points in Wiltshire operated car parks and other key locations such as community centres and the railway station
- Arts and cultural opportunities, including public art

12.7 The Town Council would wish to see the above projects included in Wiltshire Council's [CIL Infrastructure List](#) and the timely release of funding to implement these local priorities. Other public and private sources of funding may be available to contribute to the local priorities listed.

- 13.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored to ensure that the policies within it are effective in delivering the Chippenham community's aspirations and safeguarding those aspects which are most valued. Monitoring will include reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of policies and whether the Plan is delivering sustainable development.
- 13.2 The Town Council will investigate an appropriate governance process for monitoring and review of whether the Neighbourhood Plan objectives are being met and its policies are being adhered to.



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