

# Laverstock and Ford Communities Draft Neighbourhood Plan



## **Our Vision**

Our Parish will continue to be an outstanding place in which to live, work and study. Any future development will protect and enhance its semi-rural character, landscape, connected green spaces and access to the countryside, for the enjoyment of all

# Laverstock and Ford Communities Draft Neighbourhood Plan

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## 1 Introduction

This document presents the Neighbourhood Plan for Laverstock and Ford Communities. This plan will, alongside Wiltshire Council's Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Guidelines, guide the development and use of land in the Parish to 2036.

## 2 Background

In 2009 the Laverstock and Ford Parish Council adopted a Parish Plan which addressed a wide range of issues from land development to personal safety. The focus of this plan was on the protection and improvement of the semi-rural character of the Parish in the face of the pressures arising from significant ongoing residential development. The Localism Act of 2011 gave Parish Councils greater opportunities to influence the scale and location of development in their areas through a Neighbourhood Plan, provided that this plan is:

- consistent with national and local planning policies
- based on residents' views on key issues
- approved in a referendum of residents.

In 2017, the Parish Council decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. A steering group was set up in late 2017 consisting of community volunteers and parish councillors, and initially meeting monthly. Early tasks included agreeing a constitution, soliciting wider community views on hopes and fears for the future of the Parish and distilling these into an initial working statement of Vision, Aim and Objectives to guide the formulation of the Plan. A working group was formed to take forward the tasks of evidence gathering, further consultation and plan drafting, reporting back regularly to the steering group.

The initial outline of the plan started in January 2019 and has now progressed to this draft stage.

## 3 The Neighbourhood Plan area

The Parish occupies an arc to the north and east of Salisbury, forming a distinct transition from the conurbation of the city to the open farmland beyond. It covers an area of c 950 hectares with a population of c10,600 (2019 estimate).

It comprises four discrete communities (see Figure 1):

- the long established villages of
  - Laverstock, including part of Milford (1): 2019 estimate c2,700 residents
  - Ford (2): c500 residents)
- together with the two newer, much larger settlements at
  - Bishopdown Farm, (3a)/Hampton Park, (3b)/Riverdown Park,(3c): together c3,600 residents
  - Old Sarum, (4a)/Longhedge Village, (4b): c3,900 residents.

The latter two communities have grown substantially over the past thirty years to meet the housing requirements of the wider Salisbury area.

The Parish's location is much valued by local residents due its proximity to the countryside and yet being close to Salisbury itself. What gives the Parish its distinctive character are extensive "Green Corridors", which include agricultural and other green spaces, as illustrated in **Figure 1**.

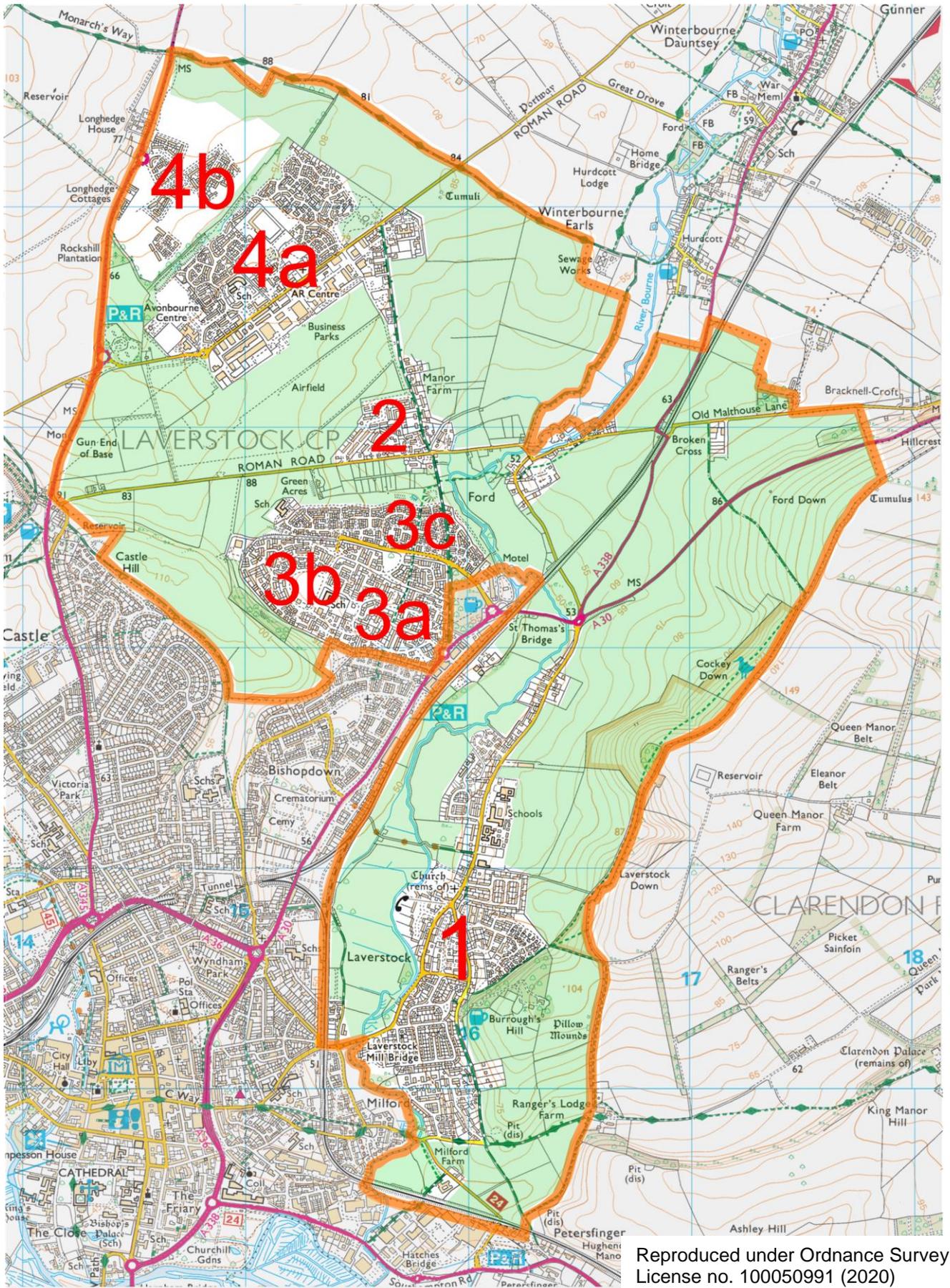


Figure 1 Laverstock and Ford Communities and its Green Corridors

At its heart is the River Bourne and its water meadows, together with a mosaic of green spaces, including:

- Cockey Down nature reserve (a SSSI)
- the River Bourne Community Farm
- Laverstock Water Meadows (owned by the Devenish Bradshaw Charity Trust and leased to the Farm), Castle Hill, Old Sarum and Longhedge Country Parks (all owned by the parish council)
- Whitebridge Spinney (also owned by the Parish Council)
- Old Sarum Airfield
- mixed agricultural land.

Together, these Green Corridors provide major benefits:

- as an attractive destination for a variety of outdoor leisure and recreation activities for both individuals and families from both the Parish itself and adjacent areas, often being crossed by public and permissive paths
- as a key part of the natural environment, supporting a wide variety of flora and fauna in both Chalk stream and Chalk downland habitats, which are a special, but increasingly fragile, feature of this part of Southern England.

## 4 Developing our Neighbourhood Plan: Approach

Our Neighbourhood Plan comprises:

- the vision of what the plan is seeking to achieve for the Parish
- an aim and set of objectives for the future development of the parish especially in relation to the use of land, which reflect the aims and aspirations of the local community
- a set of policies which are consistent with Central Government and Wiltshire Council's planning framework in line with Government guidelines.

The writing of a Neighbourhood Plan for our Parish is made more complicated by its proximity to Salisbury city, which makes it subject to strategic allocation of development sites by Wiltshire Council as part of the current Core Strategy and the recently published Local Plan Review consultation document. Under the current policy and guideline, strategic site allocations can be made which are either within or adjacent to the Salisbury Settlement Boundary. Several parts of the Parish are within this boundary (see **Figure 2**), namely the Bishopdown Farm/Hampton Park/Riverdown Park area and the Old Sarum/Longhedge Village area. If Wiltshire Council were to decide to make strategic allocations(s) there would be significant limitations on what our Neighbourhood Plan could say about them.

Our approach has therefore had to follow two main routes:

- formulating policies which apply to the parts of the parish broadly comprising Laverstock and Ford, which are designated as Small Villages under the current Core Strategy and which are not subject to strategic site allocation, together with limited policies applying to the whole Parish where this is allowed
- actively engaging with Wiltshire Council in the statutory consultation on the Local Plan Review, to ensure that local views are fully considered in its formulation and in any associated strategic site allocation. Our input to the consultation was formalised in a paper covering suggested guidelines acknowledged by Wiltshire Council on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and reproduced in **Appendix 1**.

In the development of the plan it is important that we recognise it must primarily address land use and directly related issues, where it can play a vital role in influencing planning bodies regarding:

- the location, scale and design of housing and commercial development

- the consequent impact of development on local infrastructure and traffic
- the development and nurturing of green infrastructure.

Hence care has been taken in the scope of objectives, policies and proposals to reflect the legal context of the plan and the limits to the authority of the Parish Council.

## 5 Developing our Neighbourhood Plan: Community Engagement

In order to ensure that our Neighbourhood Plan reflected the aim and objectives of the local communities, an extensive programme of community engagement was undertaken (details are set out in **Appendix 2**). Its primary purpose was to obtain the communities' views about key land use issues (current and future), thereby helping to ensure that the objectives and policies subsequently developed were based on their views. The information derived from this programme forms a vital part of the evidence base.

A particularly important part of this programme was a series of surveys of local residents, school students, local businesses and landowners carried out between September 2019 and January 2020, the results of which are summarised in **Appendix 3** with key points given below.

### 5.1 Residents

Residents particularly value the semi-rural character of the Parish and its green spaces. As with local businesses, they have general concern about traffic problems, which have been exacerbated by the extensive local housing development and the lack of any substantive investment in transport infrastructure. There was a strong desire to limit further large scale housing development within the Parish.

They strongly supported the following statements relating to the future development of the Parish:

- the water meadows along the River Bourne should be protected against any type of development
- the community owned green spaces, such as Castle Hill Country Park should be legally protected from future development
- Old Sarum and Longhedge should remain a separate settlement, separated from Salisbury city by the current agricultural buffer
- any development in Laverstock, Milford and Ford should be limited to infill (1 or 2 houses per site)
- any development within the parish should have low impact on the visual character of the landscape
- any development within or adjacent to the Old Sarum Airfield should not harm the historic setting of the Airfield Conservation Area
- any land already designated for development should be used in preference to developing green space
- the balance between developed land, agricultural land, and public open space should always ensure that the semi-rural character of the parish is maintained.

### 5.2 School Students

Perhaps understandably, there were a high proportion of neutral responses to many of the questions in the survey. However, amongst those expressing an opinion, it was clear that students living in the Parish liked:

- being close to Salisbury yet separate

- the proximity to the countryside and green spaces, including Old Sarum Airfield
- the location of their school.

There was a particular dislike of the traffic congestion around the school.

They rated local amenities such as bus links to the city, sports and recreational facilities, and footpath and cycle path networks as good or adequate.

Looking to the future, they were in favour of:

- protection of water meadows and community-owned spaces
- more new business premises in the Parish, in order to provide more job opportunities close to home.

### **5.3 Businesses**

The majority of local businesses responding to the survey were in general happy with their current location, but concerns were expressed with availability of skilled staff, broadband speed and the local road network.

When asked for their views on factors which they would take into account if they were looking to relocate, most of the businesses would prefer to stay locally and move to buildings already constructed (typically less than 1,000 sq. metres), rather than acquire land.

### **5.4 Landowners**

A survey carried out in January/February 2020 has revealed considerable interest by landowners throughout the Parish in development of land, primarily for housing. At least five landowners have engaged planning consultants to prepare schemes for greenfield sites ranging in size from 3 ha to 13 ha across the Parish.

## **6 Developing our Neighbourhood Plan: Vision, Aim and Objectives**

From this extensive programme of community engagement, we have developed:

- a vision for the Parish which is our long term goal and which reflects the aspirations of our community
- an aim and set of objectives to be pursued in order to achieve this goal.

### **6.1 Our Vision**

Our Parish will continue to be an outstanding place in which to live, work and study. Any future development will protect and enhance its semi-rural character, landscape, connected green spaces and access to the countryside, for the enjoyment of all.

### **6.2 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to preserve the character and sustainability of this semi-rural parish by the following objectives:

- preserve and protect the existing open spaces, landscape and heritage assets much valued by residents and visitors
- conserve and enhance the River Bourne and its environs
- protect and improve biodiversity in the Parish and respond to the climate crisis
- encourage the farming community to continue to be a significant part of the Parish economy and an important contributor to and guardian of the landscape and environment

- ensure that the community has a say in the type, location, scale and design of future housing development in the parish, whether to meet local needs or a strategic allocation under the Local Plan
- encourage business and industry to make best use of the land in the Parish set aside for this purpose to the benefit of the Parish
- seek to ensure that any future development in the Parish is supported by the implementation of a complementary and structured approach to infrastructure
- support the provision of community services and facilities which benefit the Parish, including health and wellbeing aspects
- ensure that neighbourhood plan policies, whilst protecting the setting of our schools in the wider landscape, do not unduly restrict them from continuing to provide excellent education for the young people of our Parish and the surrounding area
- support improvements to public transport and foot/cycle path links within and between the Parish and key destinations
- encourage the implementation of schemes which reduce the impact of traffic within the Parish without compromising the other objectives.

## 7 Developing our Neighbourhood Plan: the Planning Context

To achieve these objectives, a set of policies has been drawn up after careful consideration of the local planning context, including:

- an analysis of the impact of recent planning policy especially relating to housing development in the Parish
- Wiltshire Council's Housing Delivery Strategy
- local development constraints (e.g. land liable to flood, ancient monuments)
- the findings of a specially commissioned Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for a major part of the Parish.

### 7.1 Recent developments in the Parish

Over the past thirty years, there has been extensive housing development in the Parish, with the number of dwellings more than trebling from c1,250 in 1991 census to c4,150 at the end of 2019. The population has also increased by more than threefold (**Appendix 4**). This housing growth is almost entirely accounted for by a succession of strategic housing developments to meet the housing requirements of the wider Salisbury Housing Market Area:

- 1992 - 1998 : Bishopdown Farm – c330 homes
- 1993 - 2000 : Hampton Park - c500 homes
- 2007 - 2011 : Pilgrims Way, Laverstock – 125 homes
- 2008 - 2016 : Old Sarum - c810 homes
- 2015 - 2017 : Riverdown Park (Hampton Park 2) - 500 homes
- 2018 - : Longhedge Village - c500 homes to date, with further 250 approved.

However, the cumulative impact of these developments on the parish as a whole does not appear to have been explicitly taken into account at any of the key stages in the planning process, for example in the initial allocation of the sites for housing or in the subsequent decisions to approve individual developments. They have had major adverse consequences for the Parish:

#### 7.1.1 Erosion of the semi-rural character of the Parish and its landscape setting

The semi-rural character of the Parish and its distinctive older settlements are highly valued by local residents. However, between 1991 and 2019 it is estimated that housing and other

developments have taken a total of c120 hectares (c12% of the land in the parish), all on green field sites. On completion of Longhedge Village, over a fifth of the total area of the Parish is now “developed” in one form or another. The cumulative effect is to introduce an increasingly noticeable urban (or suburban) element into the character of the Parish and dilute its relationship with its rural setting: of these recent developments, Riverdown Park is perhaps the most obtrusive and least sympathetic. Their overall effect is to increase the risk of coalescence between historically distinct (and clearly defined) settlements. The village of Ford is particularly vulnerable, with its surrounding green buffer having been significantly reduced by the development of Riverdown Park. There has also been pressure to reduce this gap further as a consequence of a proposed housing development on Old Sarum Airfield. A planning application was considered inappropriate by Wiltshire Council and the Parish Council, and was refused by a Planning Inspector. In addition, despite the extensive provision of green spaces within the later developments, the reduction in undeveloped land has also brought with it a loss of wild life habitats.

Faced by these challenges to the semi-rural character of the Parish, the Parish Council has been working to protect and (where practicable) enhance its green infrastructure. To this end, they have been leading or supporting various initiatives to take key green spaces into community ownership or governance. Of these, the most notable are the River Bourne Community Farm, the 55 ha Castle Hill Country Park created alongside the recently completed Riverdown Park development and the community green spaces created as part of the Old Sarum and Longhedge Village developments. Their locations are shown in Figure 4 in Section 8.

### **7.1.2 Increasing-traffic-related problems**

These problems are manifested in:

- high volumes of vehicles (LGVs and HGVs as well as cars) on narrow country roads (often without footpaths for pedestrians)
- speeding traffic
- dangerous parking
- poor air quality, with particular problems on Church Road, Laverstock and adjacent to Bishopdown Farm (London Road).

They are a result of several factors:

- a substantial increase in traffic generated locally : it is estimated that in 2019, there were at least 7,000 more daily car trips by Parish residents than in 1991 for a variety of purposes - to work (increasingly to destinations outside Salisbury itself), to school and for shopping and leisure activities (see **Appendix 5**)
- changing patterns of service provision, including retail and health, has limited the viability of local services such as shops or surgeries in new developments, thereby contributing to traffic increases on local roads
- the increasing use of online shopping leading to more local trips by delivery vehicles
- the increasing use of key roads within the Parish as “rat runs” by vehicle users seeking to avoid congestion in and around the centre of Salisbury. The principal black spots are:
  - The Portway, Old Sarum (C56)
  - Ford Road/Roman Road, Ford (C287)
  - Church Road, Laverstock (C329)
  - Milford Mill Road, Milford (UC162902/UC152911).

### **7.1.3 Limited and/or delayed provision of local amenities and infrastructure**

This influx of new households, typically with younger families has increased the demand for a variety of local facilities, including convenience stores. However there are some major

deficiencies in their provision locally. Longhedge Village and Old Sarum have the fewest facilities, including lacking both a doctors' surgery/pharmacy and a dental practice, with only one of each located in the whole Parish. This has resulted in additional local traffic as residents are obliged to travel to other locations. This is believed to be partly due to the continuing reference to Policy S2 from the Salisbury Local Plan 2011 (saved in Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015, see p454) which states, for example: "City and town centre sites are the preferred locations for retail and leisure development proposals, where suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion are available, followed by edge of centre sites, district and local centres and only then out of centre sites in locations that are accessible by public transport" and "out of centre development allocations and proposals will be rigorously assessed to ensure that: they do not undermine the vitality and viability of the centre, deter investor confidence, lead to an unacceptable increase in vacancies, nor detrimentally affect the economies of town centres". The continuing reference to this policy is inappropriate if environmentally friendly policies and local community identity are being promoted by Wiltshire Council, and it is recommended that it should be formally excluded in the Wiltshire Council Local Plan Review.

Furthermore, the provision of simple, safe access from these new developments to and from key destinations such as Salisbury city centre, local schools and the Parish's green spaces has at best lagged well behind the arrival of new residents and more typically has not materialised.

## 7.2 Planning Context to 2036

Key considerations include:

- the longer term housing requirements (to 2036) both locally and in the wider Salisbury Housing Market Area as set out in the **Wiltshire Council Housing Delivery Strategy**
- the growing emphasis (reflected in national and local government policies) on encouraging healthy lifestyles within local communities, especially outdoor recreation and leisure activities, walking and cycling
- the increasing recognition that the natural environment must be protected and nurtured, especially to conserve local flora and fauna, as reflected in both national and local Green Infrastructure policies.

Of these considerations, by far the most important for the preparation of a sound Neighbourhood Plan are:

- the assessment of local housing need
- Wiltshire Council Housing Delivery Strategy
- development constraints
- landscape sensitivity.

These are summarised below.

### 7.2.1 Assessment of Local Housing Need

A review of available evidence on local housing need is presented in **Appendix 6**. This strongly indicates that the local need for affordable housing in the Parish is low in both absolute and relative terms. This need is being addressed by the recent (and continuing) extensive programme of house building within the Parish and the requirement of Wiltshire Council for 40% of units to be in the form of affordable housing. The S106 agreements with developers enable Wiltshire Council to give priority to local residents on the housing register for this social rented accommodation both initially and when it becomes available for re-let. Between 2009 and 2019 c700 affordable homes were built in the Parish, with an additional 100 such homes to be completed at Longhedge Village on sites already committed or with planning permission; the

majority of these are for rent. Accordingly, there is no requirement for housing development in the foreseeable future to meet local needs for affordable housing.

## 7.2.2 Wiltshire Council Housing Delivery Strategy

It is a fundamental requirement of our Parish Neighbourhood Plan that policies relating to development are consistent with the Wiltshire Council Housing Delivery Strategy for Salisbury, given that part of the Parish falls within the Salisbury Settlement Boundary.

The current Core Strategy, which covers the period 2006-2026, is based on a forecast housing requirement of 6,060 dwellings for the settlements of Salisbury/ Wilton for the plan period. The development of land in the Parish during this period will make a major contribution to this requirement, with completions, outstanding commitments and sites with planning permission accounting for c2,200 houses (almost a third of the total requirement).

The 5 year deadline for a refresh of the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy was due in mid 2020 but has suffered ongoing delays, due to a number of factors, including changes in Government 's recommended methodology for forecasting numbers of households and the impact of the Covid pandemic. As a result, we have been preparing our Neighbourhood Plan during a period of uncertainty over Wiltshire Council's Housing Delivery Strategy.

In April 2019, as part of the preparation for the updated strategy, Wiltshire Council published a Cabinet Paper <sup>1</sup> presenting 3 scenarios for the Salisbury Housing Market Area for the period 2016-36. This indicated a range of additional housing required (over and above Wiltshire Council's estimate of 4,900 already committed) between 0 and 1,748 homes.

In updating their strategy, Wiltshire Council have also been in discussion with landowners and their agents regarding the availability of sites. There is continuing pressure from developers looking to build houses on sites within the parish, as evidenced by the numerous Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) sites put forward to Wiltshire Council by the landowners or their agents, which Wiltshire Council has placed on its SHELAA database. These have also been communicated to the neighbourhood planning team by the relevant landowners or their agents. The latest October 2020 Wiltshire Council SHELAA map is reproduced in **Figure 2** and extracts of the recent assessments of the sites by Wiltshire Council relating to strategic housing allocation is given in **Appendix 7**. It should be noted that the developments at Riverdown Park (completed) and Longhedge (in progress) are still shown on the map as S69 and S1053a/b.

Prior to the publication of the updated strategy, only one additional strategic development site for the Parish was identified in the Wiltshire Council: Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Report (final version published in February 2020). This was the Yard, Hampton Park (OM003) for about 15 houses, the planning application for which has been submitted.

In January 2021, Wiltshire Council published draft proposals for its emerging Local Plan (which is the Core Strategy refresh)<sup>2</sup> alongside a timetable for consultation with various groups, including local councils, in the period January to March 2021. This Plan includes a continuation of the existing strategy for the Salisbury Housing Market Area, with a slightly reduced housing

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<sup>1</sup>Wiltshire Local Plan Review Strategy Update Appendix 5, 30 April 2019

<https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s160876/Appendix 5 Salisbury HMA.pdf>

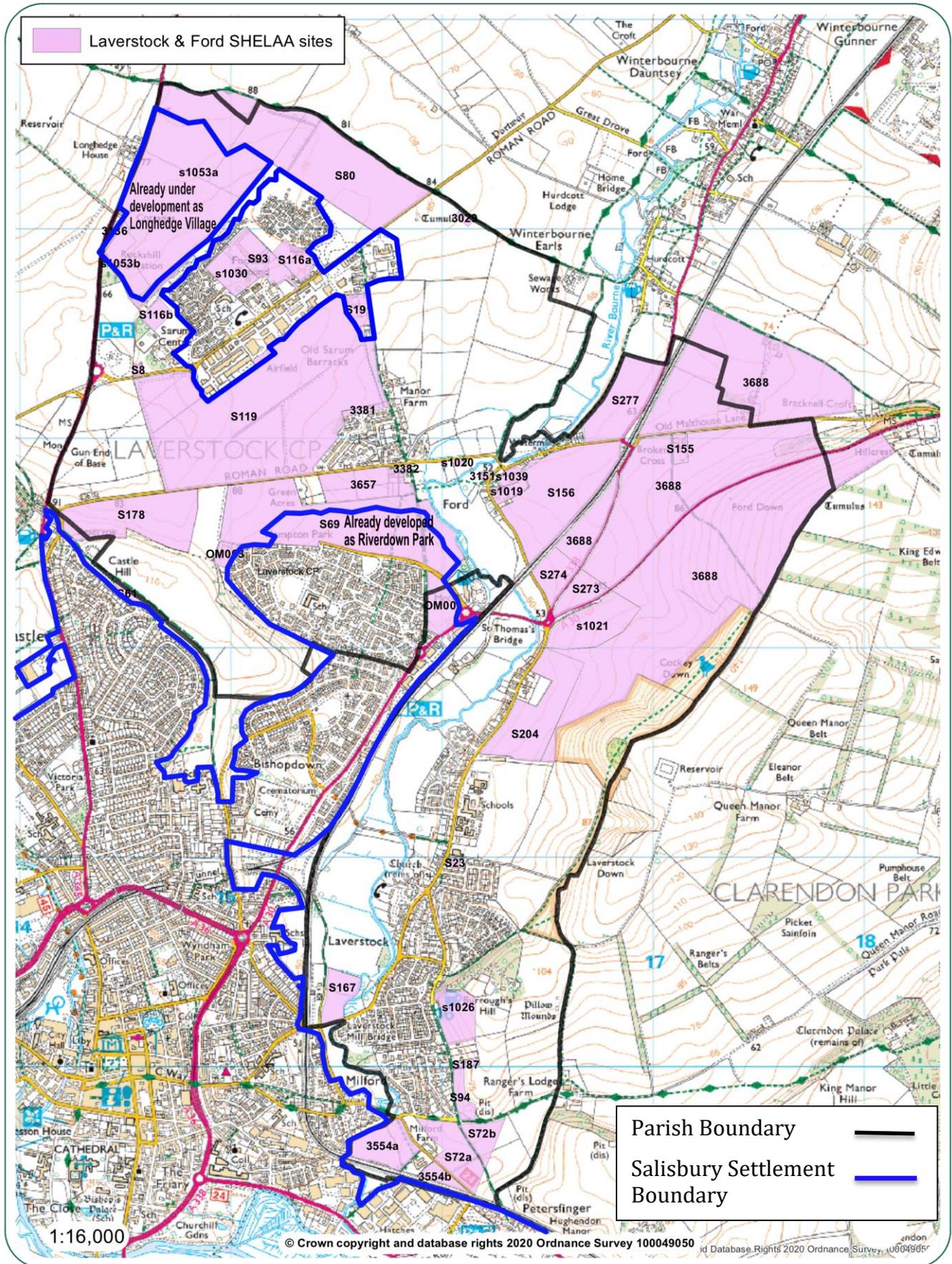
<sup>2</sup> Wiltshire Council Consultation to inform the Local Plan Review: Planning for Salisbury, January 2021

[https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/5642/Planning-for-Salisbury/pdf/WLP\\_Principal\\_Settlement\\_Planning\\_for\\_Salisbury\\_FINAL\\_14-01-2021\\_.pdf](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/5642/Planning-for-Salisbury/pdf/WLP_Principal_Settlement_Planning_for_Salisbury_FINAL_14-01-2021_.pdf)

requirement of 5,240 homes for Salisbury (excluding Wilton) for the plan period (2016-2036). Allowing for houses already completed or in the pipeline, this leaves a requirement of 940 homes to be accommodated on other sites.

To meet their housing target Wiltshire Council have identified three further SHELAA sites within or adjacent to the Salisbury settlement boundary for strategic development, one of which (Land to the North East of Old Sarum - SHELAA site 80) is in our Parish. On this site, a development of 275 homes is proposed. This site was rejected by WC in their previous evaluation of sites published in February 2020 (referenced above) due to numerous moderate adverse impacts (see **Appendix 7** for details). These included the adverse effect on the landscape which was also classified as being of High/Medium sensitivity in the recent assessment carried out for the Parish Council (see Section 7.2.4 and Appendix 9). The problematic nature of this site for large scale development was highlighted by the Parish Council in its pre-consultation submission to Wiltshire Council in June 2020 (**Appendix 1**).

It appears that the potential long term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on future working arrangements and city centres has not been taken into account in formulating the latest published Wiltshire Council proposals for strategic development. This could be expected to reduce the requirement for business premises, particularly offices and shops, as identified in the Central Government paper “Government response to the local housing needs proposals in ‘Changes to the Local Planning System’”, published on its website on Dec 16 2020. Redevelopment of existing business premises in and around Salisbury for residential use could reduce the need for green field sites. Furthermore, land already allocated for future commercial use within the current Old Sarum boundary, and currently unused, could clearly be considered for redesignation to residential use. Adding to this case is the apparent decision in the latest Wiltshire Council proposals not to pursue the change of use of large parts of the Churchfields commercial quarter, which would reduce the future need for new business sites in the area.



**Figure 2 Wiltshire Council 2020 SHELAA Map**

### 7.2.3 Development Constraints

There are a number of practical, regulatory and policy constraints limiting development across the parish. The most significant are:

- liability to flooding from the River Bourne, which runs the length of the parish from north to south
- proximity to Sites of Special Scientific Interest, which are Cockey Down and the River Bourne, which is also part of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation [UK0013016](#)
- the conservation area designation on Old Sarum Airfield and several buildings associated with its former use as a military airfield dating back to World War 1
- proximity to Old Sarum scheduled monument and visibility from both Old Sarum and Figsbury Ring scheduled monuments
- heritage assets across the parish dating back to at least the bronze age and relating to all subsequent periods. Of particular note are the mediaeval pottery kiln sites near Milford
- potential odour issues associated with the Hurdcott sewage treatment site adjacent to the northern boundary of the parish
- habitat designations by Wiltshire Council covering:
  - a strategic nature area spanning the western boundary of the parish
  - County Wildlife Sites on the chalk downs ridge north and south of Cockey Down SSSI.

Additional information and mapping of these constraints is provided in **Appendix 8**.

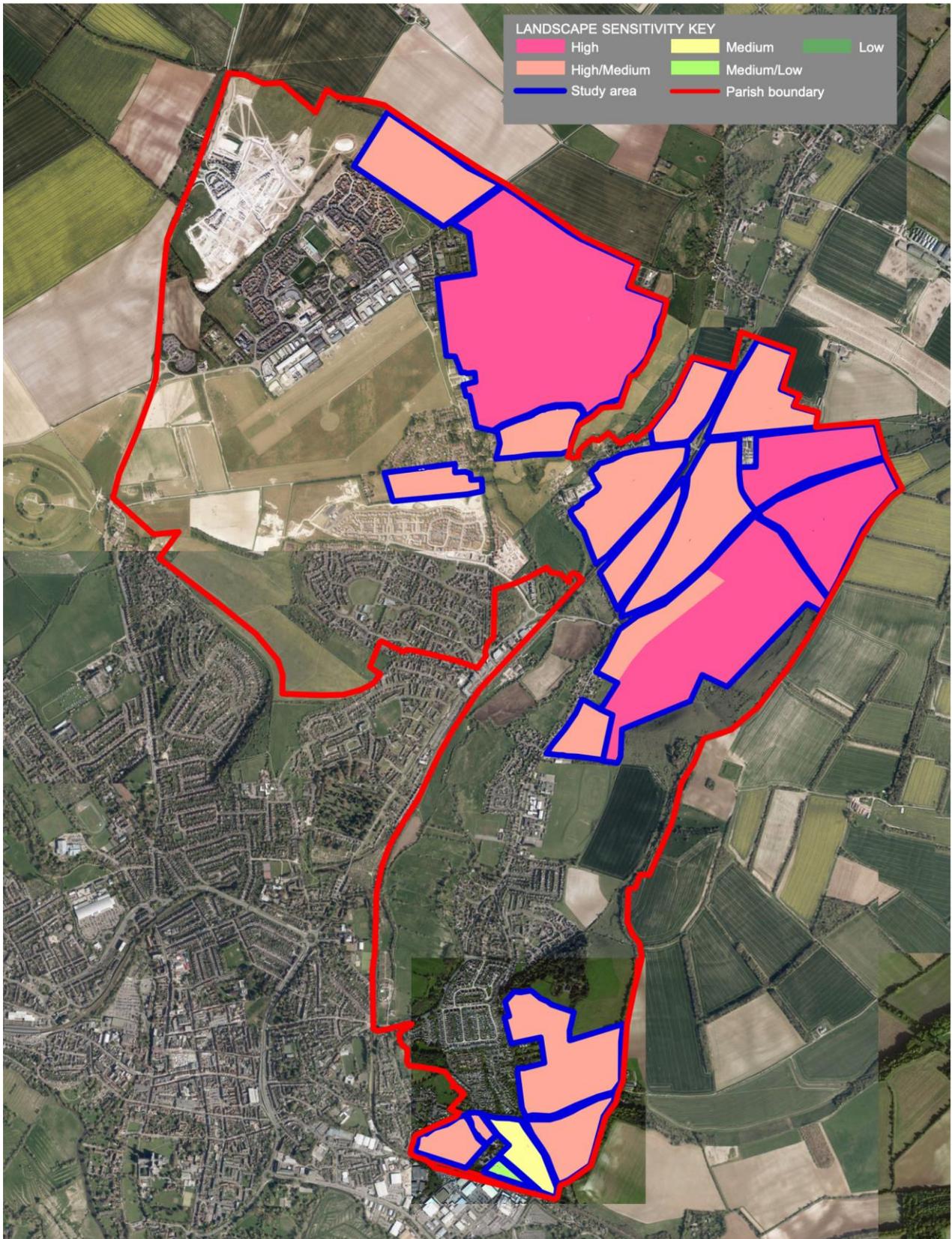
### 7.2.4 Landscape Sensitivity

Building on the high value our communities place on the semi rural character of the parish, a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment was carried out by Helen Palmer of Landshape in March-May 2020. It covers most of the undeveloped land in the parish with the exception of Old Sarum Airfield, which is currently covered by its own Core Policy 25 and has recently been subject to a planning appeal inspector's report, and land around Old Sarum ancient monument, which Historic England and Wiltshire Council consider inappropriate for development on heritage grounds. An executive summary of the results of this assessment is presented in **Appendix 9**, with the full document available on the Parish Neighbourhood Plan website [www.lfcnp.co.uk](http://www.lfcnp.co.uk). The assessment includes mapping of the levels of visual sensitivity to development in the areas covered by the study, summarised in **Figure 3**.

The key results of this assessment are as follows:

- almost all the land on which development would have limited impact on the landscape has been developed already
- the majority of the land covered by the study is assessed as High or Medium/High in terms of the impact of development on the visual character of the landscape (see **Figure 3**) and development on these areas would not be recommended
- for the higher elevations on the eastern side of the parish (notably Ford Down, Cockey Down, and Laverstock Down, including Burroughs Hill), this sensitivity is driven by the high level of visibility from both inside and outside the parish, including Old Sarum Scheduled monument and residential areas to the north and east of the centre of Salisbury
- for the lower elevations to the north of the parish, which are mainly agricultural land, this sensitivity is largely driven by their visibility from the approach to Salisbury on the A30 and from key viewpoints, including the Scheduled Monuments of Old Sarum and Figsbury Ring and from Cockey Down and Castle Hill Country Park. In view of the sensitivity of the landscape, great care would need to be taken to mitigate the impact of any development,

including limiting the scale, restricting the height of buildings and provision of extensive screening.



**Figure 3 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Mapping**

## 8 Our Neighbourhood Plan: Policies

We do not feel that it is appropriate to put forward a set of sites for future housing development within the Parish over and above those which are committed for development, for the following reasons:

- Laverstock and Ford are classified as small villages, limited to infill development only, unless there is a clearly identified and supported exceptional local need
- there is no evidence of a requirement for additional housing in the Parish to meet local needs which cannot be met by developments which have been recently completed or are committed
- between 2016 and 2021, c1,050 houses will have been completed in the parish on two strategic sites - Hampton Park 2 (now called Riverdown Park) and Longhedge Village. This new housing would represent a fifth of the total requirement of 5,240 homes for Salisbury for the plan period 2016-2036
- a persuasive case for further strategic housing allocation on greenfield land within the Parish has not been made.

Accordingly, we consider that it is more appropriate and timely to put forward a set of policies and criteria which:

- would guide future development of land within the Parish with particular reference to location, scale and design
- achieve our objectives, while taking full account of the local planning context, in particular the national and local planning policy framework.

### 8.1 Issues to be Addressed

These policies seek to address the following key issues:

- **Development:** how can the Plan protect the semi-rural character of the Parish and its distinctive settlement pattern, especially while contributing to the long term requirements which may be identified by Wiltshire Council for housing and commercial properties within the Salisbury HMA?
- **Green Infrastructure:** how can the Plan help nurture the Parish's natural environment and protect the landscape much valued by our residents?
- **Movement:**
  - how can the Plan help improve pedestrian/cycle access to green spaces for leisure /recreation activities and to the city centre, schools and employment areas?
  - how can the Plan help ameliorate/resolve local traffic problems?
- **Amenities and infrastructure:** How can the Plan help ensure that the local amenities and infrastructure would be provided on an appropriate scale and in a timely way if Wiltshire Council were to approve sites for housing development within the Parish?

### 8.2 Assumptions

In developing policies, we have made the following assumptions with respect to the contents of the emerging Wiltshire Council Local Plan:

- **Assumption 1.** There will still be a policy which addresses Small Villages and identifies the limit of development within such villages to infill only as stated in the Core Policy 2 in the current Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- **Assumption 2.** The villages of both Ford and Laverstock will continue to be defined as small villages.

- **Assumption 3.** The Salisbury Settlement Boundary will not change from that approved earlier in 2020.
- **Assumption 4.** No strategic development will be allocated / permitted which is not adjacent to the Salisbury Settlement Boundary.
- **Assumption 5.** There will be a policy, replacing current Core Policy 51, which addresses Landscape and in particular the need for proposals to demonstrate that the following have been conserved and where possible enhanced:
  - The locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape setting.
  - The separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe.

These assumptions are consistent with Wiltshire Council's existing Core Strategy and, based on discussions with Spatial Planning, with the core policies likely to form part of the emerging updated Local Plan. We have explicitly stated these assumptions in order to ensure that our plan does not go out of date when this new Local Plan is published.

## 8.3 Policies

### 8.3.1 Policy 1: Protect the distinctive settlement pattern of the parish

Specific settlement policies:

- 1) Old Sarum and Longhedge Villages  
Maintain the existing Green Space Buffer separating these settlements from the northern edge of the main Salisbury Settlement Boundary. In this Green Space Buffer, new buildings should not be constructed which, individually or cumulatively, would lead to the coalescence of Old Sarum and Longhedge villages with Salisbury city 'proper'.
- 2) Laverstock  
Development to be limited to infill only (maximum of 2 dwellings). For the purposes of this policy the term 'infill' is taken to mean the filling of a small gap within the village in an otherwise built-up frontage, usually consisting of frontage plots only and surrounded on at least two sides by developed sites and normally capable or large enough for not more than two dwellings
- 3) Ford
  - a) The village should remain a discrete settlement:
    - separated from the current Salisbury Settlement Boundary to the south by the existing Green Space Buffer. No new development should take place in this Green Space Buffer
    - separated from the current Salisbury Settlement Boundary to the north (Old Sarum and Longhedge) by the Old Sarum Airfield Conservation Area. This is covered by current Core Policy 25 and in point 4 below
  - b) Development should not extend the village and should be limited to infill only (maximum of 2 dwellings as detailed for Laverstock).
- 4) Bishopdown Farm/Hampton Park/Riverdown Park  
Situated within the Salisbury Settlement Boundary, the Bishopdown Farm/Hampton Park/Riverdown Park community is part of the Principal Settlement of Salisbury. In accordance with Core Policy 2 of Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within and adjacent to the Settlement Boundary. However, Castle Hill Country Park is adjacent to but outside the Salisbury Settlement Boundary around the undeveloped outer perimeter of this community. Consequently, in accordance with Core Policy 2 development beyond the Country Park would not be permitted, other than in the (exceptional) circumstances as permitted by other policies within the Core Strategy.
- 5) Old Sarum Airfield

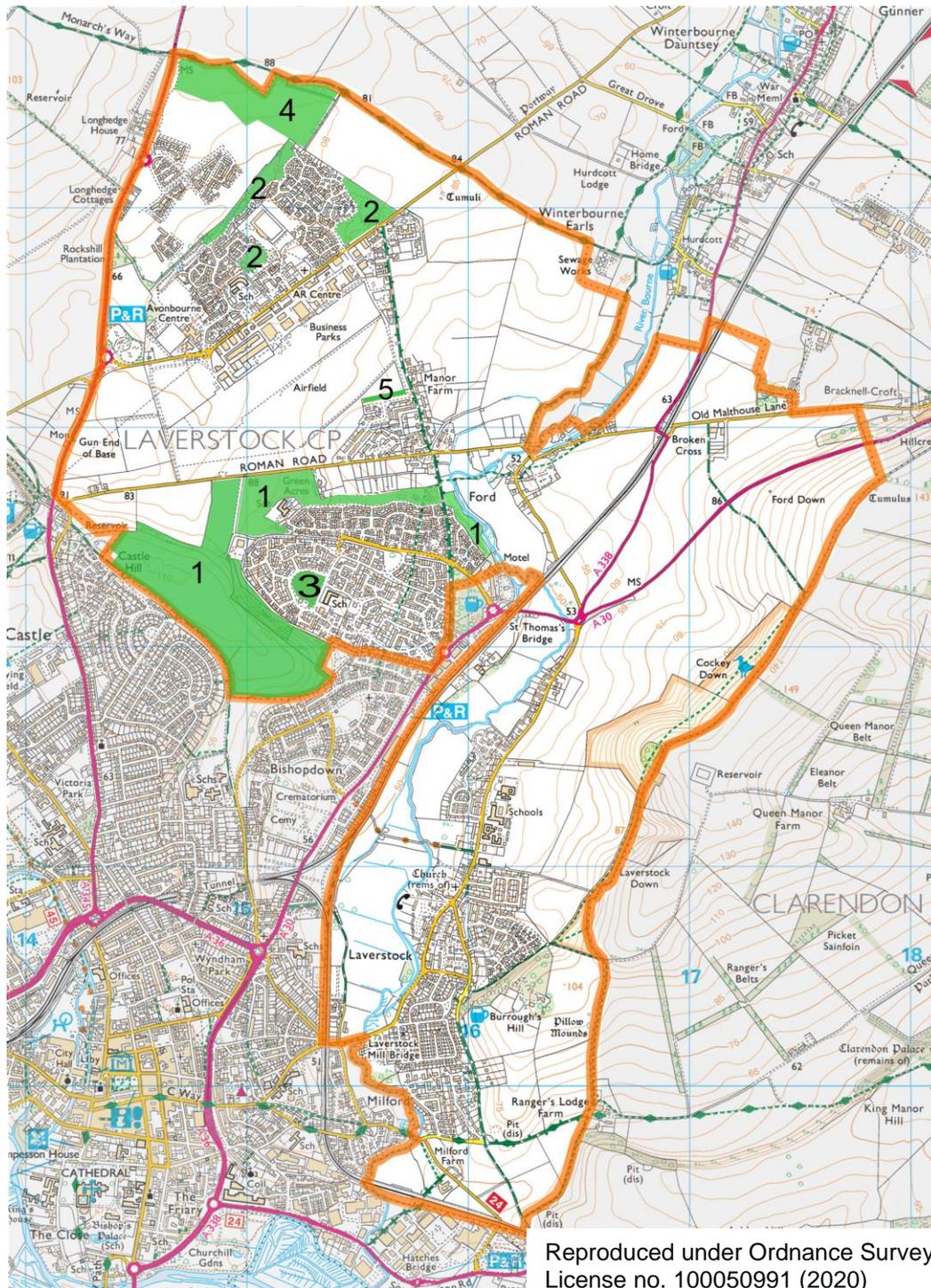
An approved Management Plan for the Conservation Area should be in place before consideration is given to any future development within the Area which is covered currently by Core Policy 25. Development should only be carried out in the Conservation Area if it:

- a) provides a long-term proactive strategy that enhances the historic setting of the Airfield Conservation Area and does not detract from its heritage significance when viewed from Old Sarum and Figsbury Ring Scheduled Monuments
  - b) does not cause the flying activity to cease and provides a legal agreement for reasonable controls over flying activity in the interests of the amenity of local residents
  - c) provides public access and benefits to the residents of the communities within the whole parish
  - d) delivers a high-quality strategic landscape improvement to mitigate the visual impact of existing intrusive buildings when viewed from within the Conservation Area, from the Scheduled Monuments at Old Sarum and Figsbury Ring, and from other key viewpoints contained in our Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
  - e) maintains a Green Space Buffer to the north and west of the existing village of Ford.
- Any future development in the Airfield Conservation Area should be cognizant of the policy for Ford remaining as a discrete settlement.

### **8.3.2 Policy 2: Protect and nurture the distinctive landscape character and wildlife habitats**

- 1) Development should maintain and wherever possible enhance the visual character of the landscape when viewed from both inside and outside the Parish
- 2) There should be a presumption against development on land classified as High or Medium/High in the Landscape Impact Sensitivity Assessment, including (but not restricted to) land adjacent to Cockey Down SSSI
- 3) Any proposed development of more than two dwellings should be accompanied by a visual impact assessment
- 4) Any development should provide an overall improvement to wild life habitats. To this end, development should:
  - a) be supported by an ecological assessment of the proposed development demonstrating this net gain
  - b) avoid any disruption to the green corridors within the Parish, particularly either side of the River Bourne, along Ford Down/Cockey Down/Laverstock Down, and around Ford, including the Bat corridor along Green Lane
  - c) replace any loss in hedgerows and woodland with at least the equivalent area planted with native species in an equivalent location
- 5) The Parish Council will seek to increase the number of community/charity owned or controlled green spaces, with particular focus on those which:
  - a) form part of the water meadows along the River Bourne
  - b) maintain green corridors through the Parish
  - c) are particularly valuable as wildlife habitats
  - d) are particularly important landscape views
  - e) can also support the aims of Policy 4
- 6) This Neighbourhood Plan designates the following areas shown in the indicative map in **Figure 4** as Local Green Spaces as supported by responses to the residents' questionnaire and agreed with the appropriate landowner:
  - a) Castle Hill Country Park (1)
  - b) Old Sarum Community Green Spaces (3 areas) (2)
  - c) Hampton Park Green (3)
  - d) Longhedge Village Community Green Space (4)
  - e) Ford Green on Manor Farm Road (5)

See **Appendix 10** for details of each area.

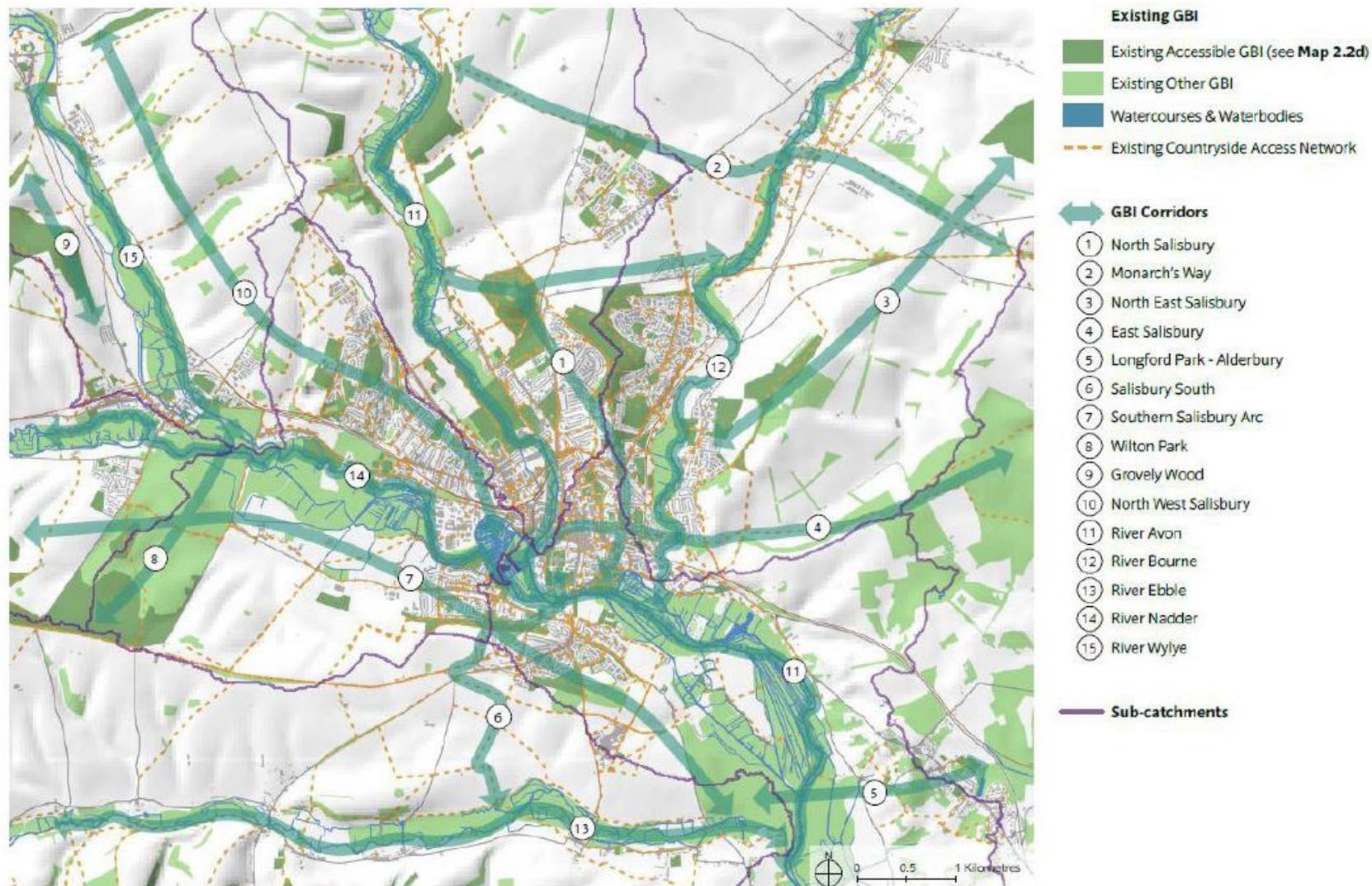


**Figure 4 Designated Local Green Spaces**

- 7) The Parish Council welcomes the inclusion of a multifunctional “Local Green Blue Infrastructure Network in Wiltshire Council’s proposed Emerging Spatial Strategy (reproduced in **Figure 5**), which it is hoped will help protect and promote biodiversity and wildlife habitats and improve public access to (and enjoyment of) green spaces. To these ends, the Council will work with Wiltshire Council, local landowners and other agencies to strengthen this network in the Parish, especially those Corridors numbered 1 (North Salisbury), 2 (Monarch’s Way), 3 (north East Salisbury), 4 (East Salisbury) and 12 (River Bourne) in **Figure 5**.

**Figure 5** Reproduced from Wiltshire Council document Planning for Salisbury January 2021- contained as Fig 7

Figure 7 Map showing Salisbury Green and Blue Infrastructure Network and improvement corridors (numbered). (These are draft plans from the emerging Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and may change)



### **8.3.3 Policy 3: The design of future housing development - whether in the form of a single dwelling or larger scale - must aim to improve the quality of the built environment of the Parish, help to address the climate emergency and maintain or enhance its semi-rural character.**

Any development proposal should follow the general principles set out in the National Design Guide 2019, the requirements of the Wiltshire Core Strategy/Local Plan and the further specific detail set out in the Laverstock and Ford Parish Design Guide 2020 (**Appendix 11**).

As recommended by the National Design Guide 2019, for any substantive housing development proposal, consultation should take place with the community prior to submission for planning approval, with the Parish Council as a primary point of contact.

The design of new housing development has the potential to deliver significant long term improvements to residents' health and wellbeing in a variety of ways. There is a particular opportunity to accelerate moves towards the use of "clean" energy, thereby reducing harmful emissions and improving local air quality, moves which received strong support from local residents, as indicated in the recent survey. To this end, any proposal for significant housing development should include:

- a specific assessment of its impact on air quality, including (but not restricted) to the effect of local traffic generated by the development
- proposed measures to facilitate household use of "clean" energy, for example:
  - provision of charging points for electric vehicles for each home, thereby encouraging the switch to electric vehicles
  - provision of "clean" energy generating systems such as solar panels and heating systems such as heat pumps
- a layout and infrastructure which would give residents easy, safe access to local pedestrian/cycle networks and to public transport, in order to help reduce vehicle usage.

### **8.3.4 Policy 4: Seek to develop a comprehensive, attractive network of footpaths and cycleways within the Parish**

The Parish Council has been successfully promoting improvements to the local network of footpaths and cycleways for many years, working with Wiltshire Council and local landowners. The further development of this network can make a significant contribution towards:

- reducing the use of cars for journeys to work and school, and hence the reducing congestion, pollution and danger to children walking and cycling to school
- improving residents' and visitors' enjoyment of the green spaces within the Parish
- improving physical fitness and health.

Priority should be given to:

- improving access from Old Sarum and Longhedge villages and Bishopdown Farm/ Hampton Park /Riverdown Park to:
  - the city centre (as recommended in the Salisbury Transport Strategy, 2018 refresh)
  - the green spaces of the parish, including the River Bourne, the Community Farm, Cockey Down and Castle Hill Country Park
  - Laverstock schools site
- improving access between Old Sarum Country Park and Longhedge Community Open Space, and to give safe pedestrian and cycle access to Monarch's Way
- improving the cycle lanes on Church Road to overcome the problem of parked cars, preferably by the provision of an off road route
- identifying and implementing a safe route for that part of the proposed Salisbury to Stonehenge cycle route which lies within the parish.

The Parish Council will support initiatives to establish and extend public access to (and along) the local Green Blue Infrastructure Network and will work with Wiltshire Council, landowners and other agencies to this end.

In making decisions on routes, high priority should be given, wherever practicable, to minimising proximity to roads where air quality is poor.

Complementary to schemes undertaken by the Parish and Wiltshire Council, the granting of planning permission for any site in excess of 50 dwellings should be contingent on implementing agreed schemes to improve access to green spaces.

### **8.3.5 Policy 5: Seek improvements to infrastructure and amenities appropriate to the scale of specific future housing development**

Any new development should be required to provide the appropriate supporting infrastructure and amenities prior to, or in phases during, the new development, and not following completion.

Any proposed development adjacent to or dependent on the following roads should be contingent on providing agreed improvements to the local highways network aimed at increasing pedestrian safety and reducing traffic speed, noise and pollution:

- The Portway, Old Sarum (C56)
- Ford Road/Roman Road, Ford (C287)
- Church Road, Laverstock (C329)
- Milford Mill Road, Milford (UC162902/UC152911).

The Parish Council will direct any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funds to whatever local infrastructure is appropriate at the time.

### **8.3.6 Policy 6: Support general infrastructure improvements for the benefit of all communities, businesses and other organisations in the Parish**

The Parish Council will work with Wiltshire Council and other agencies to secure improvements to local infrastructure, facilities and amenities for the benefit of Parish residents and businesses, including:

- local road system improvement
- full fibre broadband connectivity
- improvements to bus services (e.g. additional/extended routes, increased frequency of services).

## **9 Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

Subject to approval by Parish residents, Wiltshire Council and Central Government, the policies set out in our Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the planning regulations to which any future development in the Parish is required to conform. Accordingly, as the local planning authority, Wiltshire Council has the prime responsibility for ensuring implementation of these policies. However, the Parish Council has also key role to play. To help ensure any future development is in line with these policies, the Parish Council will:

- work proactively through discussions with developers on development proposals prior to any formal application for planning permission
- make appropriate representations to Wiltshire Council in response to any relevant planning application.

Furthermore, should funds become available from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the Parish Council will seek to direct these monies towards improving local infrastructure and

amenities, with priority to be given to investment in the community or communities most directly affected by the development.

The Parish Council will regularly monitor conformance of planning applications to the policies of this plan and progress towards the plan's objectives, and will report at the Annual Parish Meeting. It will also take steps to ensure a full review and appropriate update of the Neighbourhood Plan on a five yearly cycle, with the first such review taking place in **2026** or following any update to the Wiltshire Council Local Plan or national planning policy (whichever is the sooner).

## **10 Glossary of terms**

### **Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing is defined as social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing. It is provided to meet the needs of people who cannot afford housing through the open market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Social rents are determined nationally, affordable rents are 80% of the market rent in that area, and intermediate housing allows people to part buy their home. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

### **Brownfield Site**

Land which has previously been used for housing or industrial purposes and has become available for redevelopment. Government guidance is that brownfield development should be preferred to greenfield when available.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.

### **Conservation Area**

An area selected under Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of 'special architectural or historical interest' the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Old Sarum Airfield is the only conservation area within the parish and was so designated in 2007.

### **Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy is the main part of Wiltshire Council's current Local Plan. It sets out the vision, spatial strategy and core policies for the spatial development of the county.

### **County Wildlife Site (CWS)**

County Wildlife Sites are areas of land important for their wildlife and can be on public and private land. CWS recognition is non-statutory, but is recognition of a site's high value for biodiversity. These sites generally complement statutory protection provided by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by acting as buffer zones, wildlife corridors and raising the profile of specific wildlife sites. They are also seen as providing protection for species which would not otherwise be protected by law in the United Kingdom. Whilst there is no legislative protection provided by a County Wildlife Site designation, planning permission for work that would have an injurious or

adverse effect on sites is usually not granted. There is a designated County Wildlife Sites in the parish, adjacent to the Cockey Down SSSI.

### **Designated local green spaces**

Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. The National Planning Policy Framework (qv) sets out the following criteria that green space must meet in order to be designated as “Local green Space”:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- 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
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

### **Green Blue Infrastructure Network**

Green infrastructure is a term which covers a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees. Blue infrastructure refers to water bodies such as rivers, streams, ponds and canals. Wiltshire Council are aiming to develop a network of green and blue spaces and corridors in order to support access to nature and healthy lifestyles and provide high quality landscapes and beautiful places for people to live, work and visit. For more information, see Wiltshire Council document “Towards a Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire”, January 2021:

<https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s186739/Appendix%20for%20Update%20on%20Councils%20Response%20to%20the%20Climate%20Emergency.pdf>

### **Greenfield site**

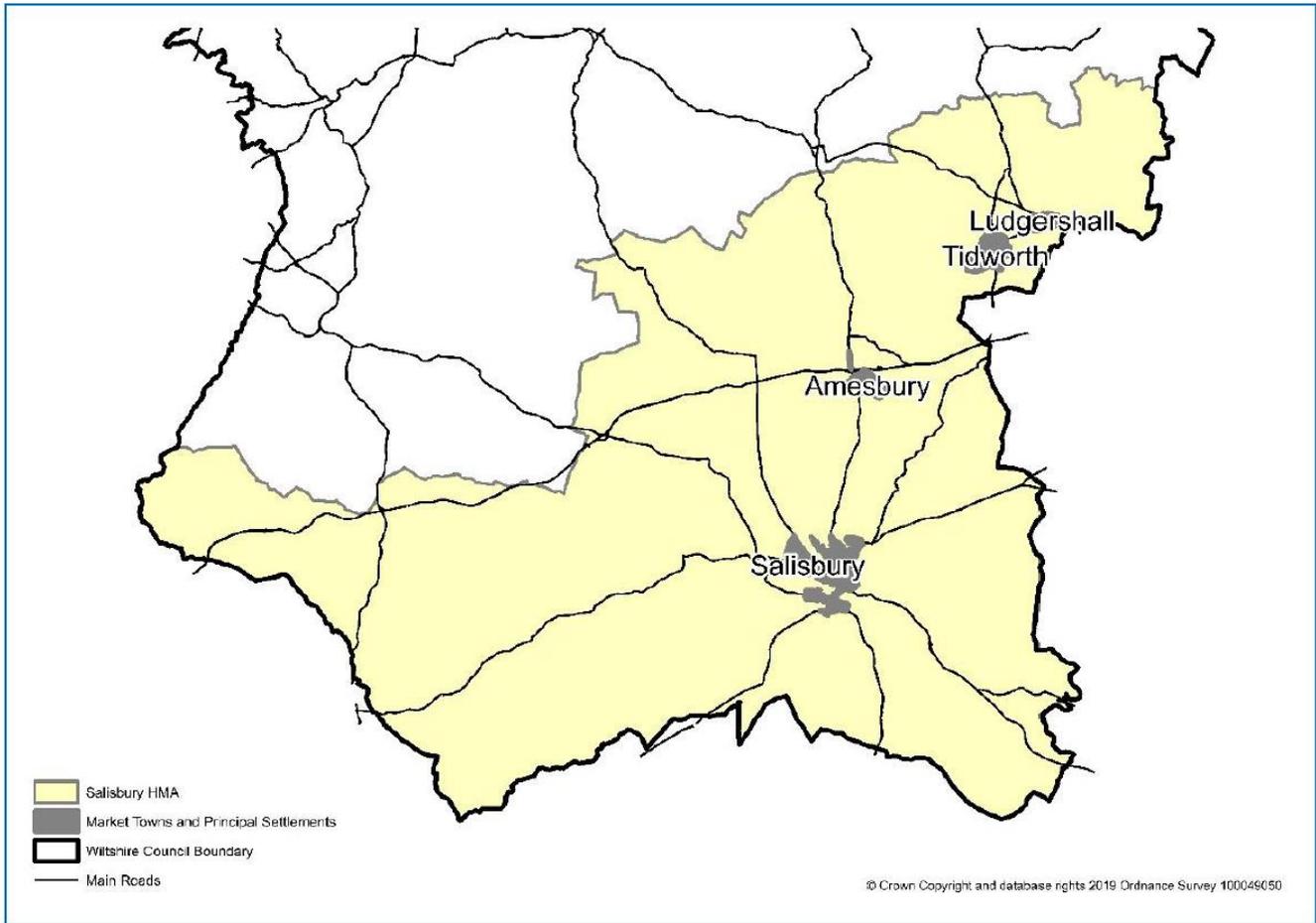
Land that has not previously been used for urban development. It is usually land last used for agriculture and located next to or outside existing built-up areas.

### **Housing Delivery Strategy**

The Housing Delivery Strategy is a key part of Wiltshire Council’s Core Strategy and aims to provide sufficient housing to meet the forecast local housing requirements over the period of the Local Plan. This forecast needs to be consistent with the central government methodology for calculating housing needs.

**Housing Market Area (HMA)** A Housing Market Area is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. It might be the case that Housing Market Areas overlap. Wiltshire Council have defined three HMAs covering the whole of the local authority, of

which Salisbury is one:



### **Infill**

Infill is the filling of a gap between existing buildings normally capable of taking no more than two houses. Infill development must be consistent with the policies set out in the Plan.

### **Landscape Sensitivity**

Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value.

### **Local plan**

The Local Plan is a key component of the planning system. It is a plan for development in the local area and is drawn up by the local planning authority (in our case Wiltshire Council) in consultation with the community. The Local Plan identifies where future development should take place to meet local needs for homes, businesses, shops and other services, plus the infrastructure to support them. It also decides which areas should be protected from development because they are important to local people or have environmental or heritage qualities that need safeguarding. Planning applications need to be in line with the Local Plan otherwise they are unlikely to receive planning permission. The Local Plan is subject to review every five years.

### **National Design Guide**

The National Design Guide is a document produced by Central Government which sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and aims to demonstrate what good design means in practice. It is primarily for:

- local authority planning officers, who prepare local planning policy and guidance and assess the quality of planning applications;
- councillors, who make planning decisions;
- applicants and their design teams, who prepare applications for planning permission; and
- people in local communities and their representatives.

Complementary to the National Design Guide, a parish design guide has been produced to provide more specific guidance for housing development in the parish.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

### **Parish Council**

A parish council is a civil local authority in England and is the lowest tier of local government. They are elected corporate bodies and are responsible for areas known as civil parishes, serving in total 16 million people. A parish council may decide to call itself a Town Council (if the parish covers a town), Village Council, Community Council, Neighbourhood Council, or if the parish has city status, the parish council may call itself a City Council. However the powers and duties of the parish council are the same whatever name it carries.

### **Scheduled monument**

A scheduled monument is a nationally important archaeological site or historic building, given protection against unauthorised change. The protection provided to scheduled monuments is given under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. There are two scheduled monuments within the parish.

### **Section 106 agreement**

Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements (based on that section of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) are private agreements made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. Planning Obligations are used for three purposes:

- Prescribe the nature of development (for example, requiring a given portion of housing is affordable)
- Compensate for loss or damage created by a development (for example, loss of open space)
- Mitigate a development's impact (for example, through increased public transport provision).

S106 agreements are often referred to as 'developer contributions' along with highway contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

### **Settlement boundary**

This is the boundary marked on a map, which defines the limit of the built-up area of a town or village. It is Wiltshire Council policy that new development would only be permitted on sites within or adjacent to the settlement boundary.

### **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a formal conservation designation by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Usually, it describes an area which is of particular interest to science due to the rare species of fauna or flora it contains - or even important geological or physiological features that may lie in its boundaries. There are two SSSIs within the parish: the River Bourne and Cockey Down.

### **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are protected areas designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (for England). They contain habitat types and species considered to be most in need of conservation. The River Avon system and lower Avon Valley contain some of the most rare or threatened species and habitats in Europe and are protected as Natura 2000 sites. The River Avon and its main tributaries, of which the River Bourne is one) are designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

### **Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).**

This is an assessment, which Wiltshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority, is required to undertake of all sites put forward by landowners or their agents for possible development for housing or business enterprises following a 'Call for Sites'. This forms part of the planning process to ensure that there is an adequate supply of land to meet the future housing needs defined in the Housing Delivery Strategy. As of October 2020, there were 33 SHELAA sites as yet undeveloped within the parish.

### **Wiltshire Council**

In 2009 the districts of Salisbury, West Wiltshire, Kennet and North Wiltshire were merged into the Unitary Authority of Wiltshire Council which, together with the Unitary Authority of Swindon, now comprises the upper tier of local government for the County of Wiltshire.

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