

Coombe Bissett and Homington (CB&HNP) – Site Assessment Topic Paper

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List of Abbreviations

| Acronym | Full name |
|---------------|--|
| AECOM | Architecture, Engineering, Consulting, Operations and Maintenance Technology Corporation |
| AONB | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| CB&HNP | Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan |
| CCWWD AONB | Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| DinT | Development in Transition |
| HRA | Habitats Regulation Assessment |
| LPA | Local Planning Authority |
| NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework |
| SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| SHELAA | Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment |
| SSSI | Site of Specific Scientific Interest |

1. Document Purpose

This document seeks to assess the data collated thus far on potential sites to inform potential allocations through the Neighbourhood Plan. It is based on the following sources of information:

- The Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan (CB&HNP) Community Questionnaire (2018/9)
- The CB&HNP Call for Sites questionnaire (Nov-Dec 18)
- The AECOM¹ Site Assessment Report (Nov, 2019)

¹ [AECOM](#) are an independent company contracted to carry out technical support under the Locality Neighbourhood Plan grant programme.

It is to be read in conjunction with the (separate) document AECOM, Wiltshire Council and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CCWWD AONB, the 'AONB') views on assessed sites, which includes indicative views from Wiltshire Council and the AONB on assessed sites. This will be updated once a decision has been made on which, if any sites, to allocate after the July Community Engagement event.

2. Executive Summary

The planning policy context and the community engagement work undertaken for the CB&HNP raised a number of issues for the Plan to address:

- What sites are either available or may become available for development to deliver the new homes that are required?
- Which sites are suitable for development?
- Which suitable sites will be supported by the local community?

There are currently no strategic allocations for development in the Coombe Bissett and Homington parish by Wiltshire Council, which could change during the plan period (2019-2036²). Wiltshire Council have indicated they are keen to work with Neighbourhood Planning groups to explore an appropriate housing figure for the respective Neighbourhood Area. It is therefore important that the community explores levels of support for development and its possible location in more detail. The number of 13-15 dwellings over the plan period (to 2036) is considered in detail in the CB&HNP Housing Needs Topic Paper (June, 2020) prepared as part of the evidence base for this Plan. Feedback from Wiltshire Council on the Housing Needs Topic Paper suggests they are supportive of this housing figure for the parish in the Plan period.

The AECOM site assessment report shortlisted nine sites for assessment (see Table 1). Two sites were deemed by AECOM as 'suitable' (both are within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, CCWWD AONB, the 'AONB') and three sites are considered 'potentially suitable' for development (one outside the AONB and two within).

² NB: plan period will be determined when adopted (i.e. the year of adoption).

So far, there has been some feedback on sites from Wiltshire Council and the CCWWD AONB Management Group; this is ongoing and a more concrete verdict from these organisations will be formalised when the Steering Group have identified which sites to progress as allocated in the Plan, if any, and their associated policy conditions (see AECOM, Wiltshire Council and AONB views on assessed sites (separate document)). This Topic Paper is therefore to be used as a basis to progress discussions by the Parish Council about preferred sites for development and to present the evidence reviewed thus far to the community.

3. Summary of engagement to-date with Wiltshire Council and the AONB

Thus far, Wiltshire Council has taken a strong stance on prioritising sites outside of the AONB, following a sequential process, where land outside the AONB is considered as a first priority (responding to their interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, para 172; see Wiltshire Council and AONB views on assessed sites - separate document). Their views may require re-consideration of the two sites deemed suitable by AECOM within the AONB (see Section 8 and Table 1).

As a protected landscape of national importance, the views of the CCWWD AONB Management Group and potential impacts on the AONB are vital considerations to determine suitable sites. In email correspondence and during a meeting with the Richard Burden (Planning and Landscape, CCWWD AONB) it was made clear that they wish to consider key CB&HNP documents that support the Plan's evidence base in order to assess their impact on the AONB; namely, the site assessment report and the Design Code (both produced by AECOM). These were shared with the Mr. Burden for review.

Engagement with the AONB has revealed their priorities of addressing a shortfall of affordable housing in the AONB, considering low-rise (i.e. retirement) dwellings that have less visual impact, locating development within a settlement and not causing undue harm to biodiversity, local heritage and landscape within the area. Moreover, as a valley village the AONB argues that development which extends up towards the sides of the valleys should be avoided.

However, from the perspective of the CCWWD AONB all the sites are either within the AONB or its extended 'setting' and may have an impact on it. Mr. Burden suggested that all suitable and potentially suitable sites should be put to the community to have a fair assessment of what the community feels is appropriate to meet local housing need, given the constraints of each site. The AONB has suggested they will respond individually on more detailed proposals/design codes for each potential allocated site when feedback on community preferences has been clarified. (See AECOM, Wiltshire Council and AONB views on assessed sites for a more detailed view of the AONB on each of assessed suitable or potentially suitable sites).

4. The Purpose of Land-Use Neighbourhood Planning Policies

Land-use policies are used to determine planning applications for development proposals. They establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged in terms of their design, access and other considerations relevant to individual sites.

The purpose of these policies in a Neighbourhood Plan is either to encourage planning applications for things the local community wants to see happen or to discourage planning applications for developments that it does not want to happen. Policies must be clearly written so they can be easily applied when considering planning applications. Site constraints and opportunities for development raised in this Topic Paper (based on AECOM's report and subsequent discussions with Wiltshire Council and the CCWWD AONB) can be taken to the community for discussion as a basis for draft policies for these sites and deciding which, if any, to allocate in the Plan.³

³ See also Section 9 - Potential impacts of 'suitable' or 'potentially suitable' sites .

5. Development Constraints in the Parish

I. Settlement definitions and the settlement boundary

Coombe Bissett is defined as a 'Large Village' in the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy (2006-2026), which means that a limited amount of development is permitted, such as small housing or employment sites within the settlement boundary. Homington is classified as a 'Small Village' and does not have a settlement boundary since the Local Plan came into force in 2015 and development is extremely limited in the village.

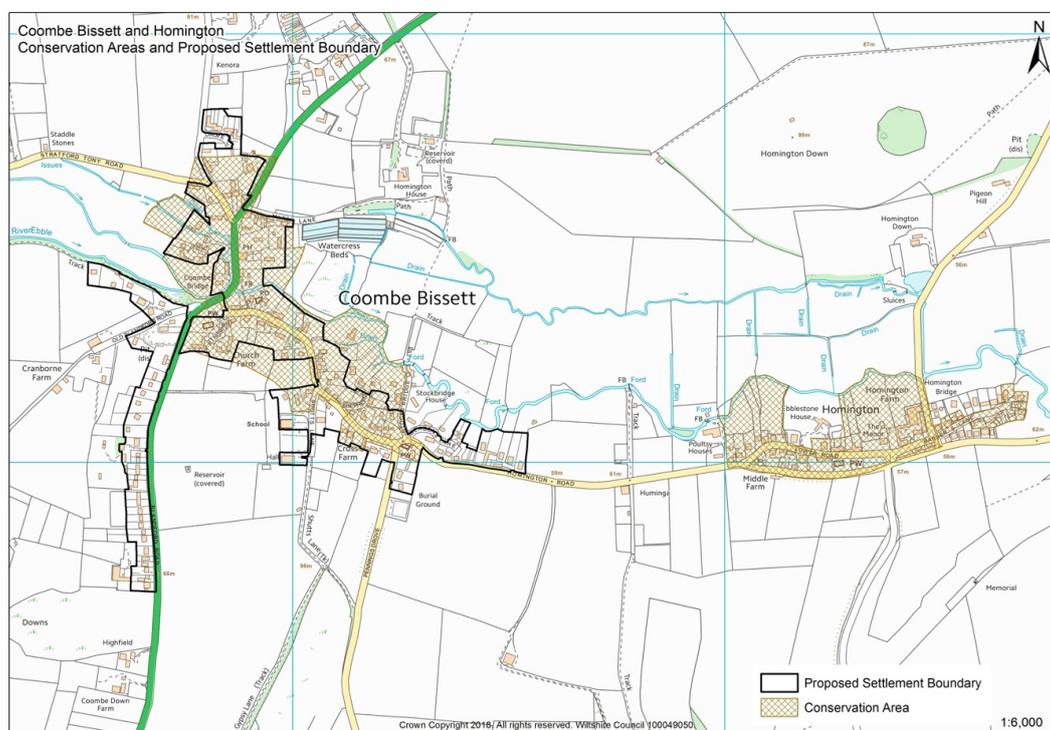


Figure 1 –The Conservation Areas in Coombe Bissett (left) and Homington (right) and the Coombe Bissett Settlement Boundary (right)

There is a settlement boundary within the Coombe Bissett central area (see Figure 1), whose purpose is to be a dividing line, or boundary between built-up areas or urban development ('the settlement') and non-urban or rural development (i.e. 'the open countryside'). The settlement boundary was recently amended to be approved by the Secretary of State⁴, together with other revised boundaries in Wiltshire, as part of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations process. Sites outside the settlement boundary can be allocated in a Neighbourhood Plan and a plan can also

⁴ The revised settlement boundaries are due for adoption by Wiltshire Council in February 2020. See: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-whsap>.

outline a moderation to, or extension of, the settlement boundary defined by the Local Planning Authority (LPA, Wiltshire Council) if there is sufficient supporting evidence and the community also endorses such an approach.⁵

Several sites outside of the settlement boundary and in the outlier areas of the Parish were not supported for development by Wiltshire Council's Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) site assessment process because they were deemed to be in the open countryside (see Figure 9).⁶

Over the current Core Strategy plan period approximately 615 new homes need to be provided within the Southern Wiltshire Community Area⁷, of which 190 should occur within the local service centre of Downton. The remaining 425 homes will be delivered within the large and small villages across the Community Area. However, in 2019 there was a shortfall of 322 dwellings in the 5-year land supply in the Southern Wiltshire Housing Market Area (HMA) (see Cabinet Briefing Note No. 19-022, August 2019)⁸.

Wiltshire Council released an additional briefing note on housing land supply (see Cabinet Briefing Note No. 20-20, June 2020)⁹ which outlines that since the Core Strategy is now more than five years old, housing requirements need to be based on a county-wide supply calculation, which gives a slightly lower housing figure for the county than the Core Strategy figure (2,024 homes vs. 2,100 per annum). However, the Council lost an appeal on how its housing supply was calculated and as a result can only demonstrate 4.62 years supply of housing on available sites¹⁰. This means that any applications adjacent to a settlement boundary may have a higher chance of being approved by planning officers. Existing constraints (AONB, flooding etc.) still apply, but such applications are looked on more 'favourably', and may be more likely to be approved.¹¹

⁵ Indeed, an extension of the settlement boundary is supported by the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy Policy (see para 4.15 of the 2015 adopted Core Strategy).

⁶ See also <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/shelaa-2017-appendix-5.14-southern-wiltshire.pdf> for more information.

⁷ Covering the parishes of Alderbury, Britford, Clarendon Park, Coombe Bissett, Downton, Firsdown, Grimstead, Landford, Laverstock, Ford and Old Sarum, Odstock, Pitton and Farley, Redlynch, West Dean, Whiteparish and Winterslow. See: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council-democracy-area-boards>.

⁸ See: <https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s171994/BriefingNote19022WiltshireHousingLandSupply.pdf> (WC Cabinet Briefing Note No. 19-022, August 2019)⁸.

⁹ See: <https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s171994/BriefingNote19022WiltshireHousingLandSupply.pdf> (WC Cabinet Briefing Note No. 19-022, August 2019)⁹.

¹⁰ See: <https://moderngov.microshadeapplications.co.uk/calnetc/documents/s2838/Briefing%20Note%2020-20%20-%205%20year%20housing%20land%20supply.pdf>.

¹¹ Wiltshire Council to confirm local relevance (see

II. The AONB

The area is predominantly within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, indicated by Figure 2. AONBs have the same level of weight in planning terms as a National Park¹².

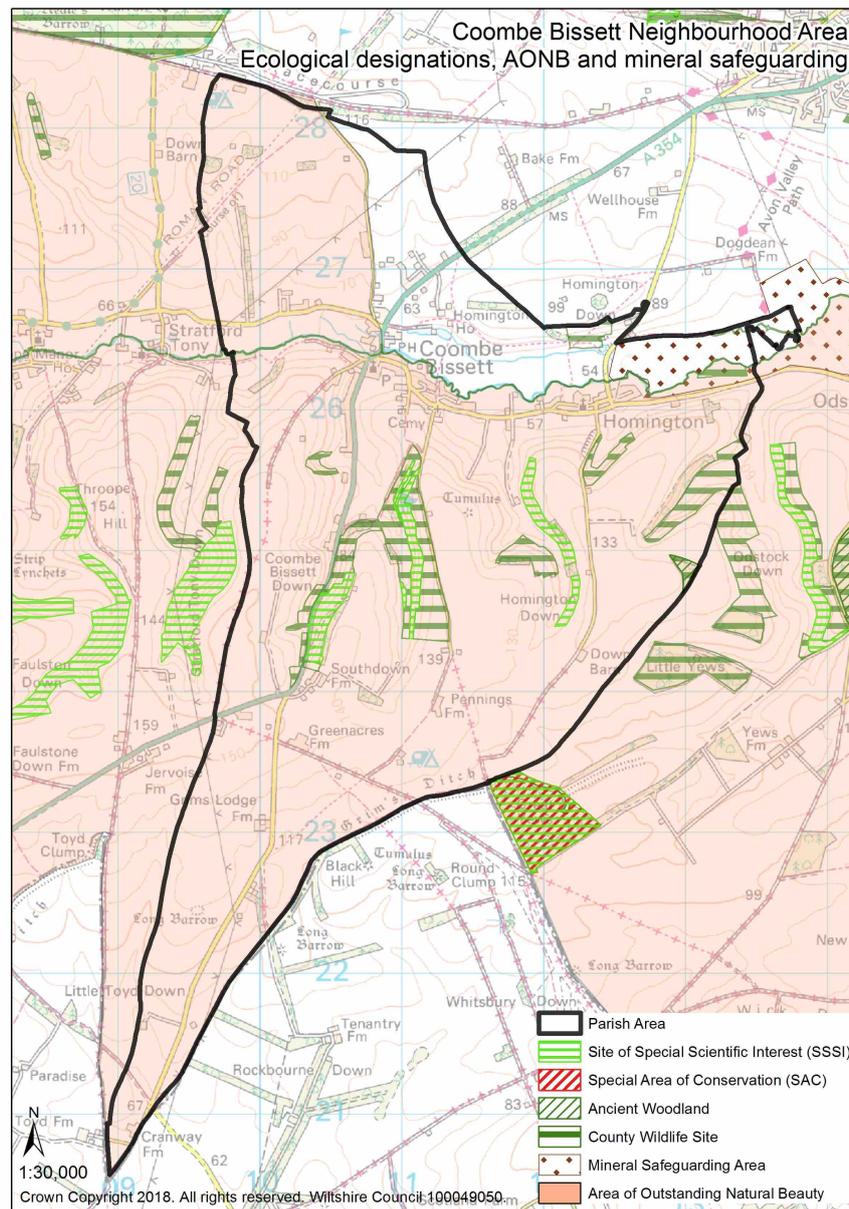


Figure 2 – Environmental constraints in the parish

Action Points to finalise potential allocations of sites).

¹² For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonbs-designation-and-management> and <http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/>.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019) and other relevant legislation state very clearly that planning should not only to protect but *enhance* the AONB. The NPPF states that:

*“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; **allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value**, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and **enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure**; and plan for the **enhancement of natural capital** at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries. (Para 171).*

*“Great weight should be given to **conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty** in National Parks, the Broads and **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. **The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage** are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. **The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development**¹³ other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- a) **the need for the development**, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) **the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and***
- c) **any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.**” (Para 172).*

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act states that public bodies have a duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB - this can be on a more discretionary basis than prescriptive (i.e. the Local Planning Authority, LPA, in this case Wiltshire Council) can

¹³ Typically this is for applications over 10 dwellings as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act, however the NPPF does not indicate a figure for major development and states that what constitutes major development “is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined (see NPPF, 2019, para 55).

ascertain their own interpretation of how this applied in practice. On the AONB, the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy states:

*“Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), New Forest National Park (NFNP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they **have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas.** Proposals for development **outside of an AONB that is sufficiently prominent** (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the area’s special qualities (as set out in the relevant management plan), must also **demonstrate that it would not adversely affect its setting.**” (Policy 51, Landscape).*

The AONB’s current Management Plan (2019-2024) sets out particular positions on a number of development impacts in the area, including housing, lighting, energy and the scale of development¹⁴. There are also several position statements that elaborate on these points in more detail.¹⁵

In engagement with the CB&HNP steering group on potential sites to-date, Wiltshire Council has taken a strong stance on prioritising development outside of the AONB so that sites are assessed on a sequential basis to respond to the NPPF (para 172).¹⁶

¹⁴ Available from: <https://cranbornechase.org.uk/publications/aonb-management-plan/>

¹⁵ Available from <http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/publications/planning-related-publications/>

¹⁶ See Section 9 Potential impacts of ‘suitable’ or ‘potentially suitable’ sites and AECOM, Wiltshire Council and AONB views on assessed sites (separate document) on how these concerns might be addressed.

III. Flooding

The propensity of some areas of the Parish to flood from both groundwater and river flooding is a key consideration in assessing the suitability and scale of potential development sites¹⁷. The middle section of the Coombe Bissett settlement boundary is within a Flood Zone 3 area¹⁸, and local experiences indicate that there have been several severe instances of flooding, resulting in the A354 becoming impassable. There are several images of the impact of flooding on the Parish website.¹⁹

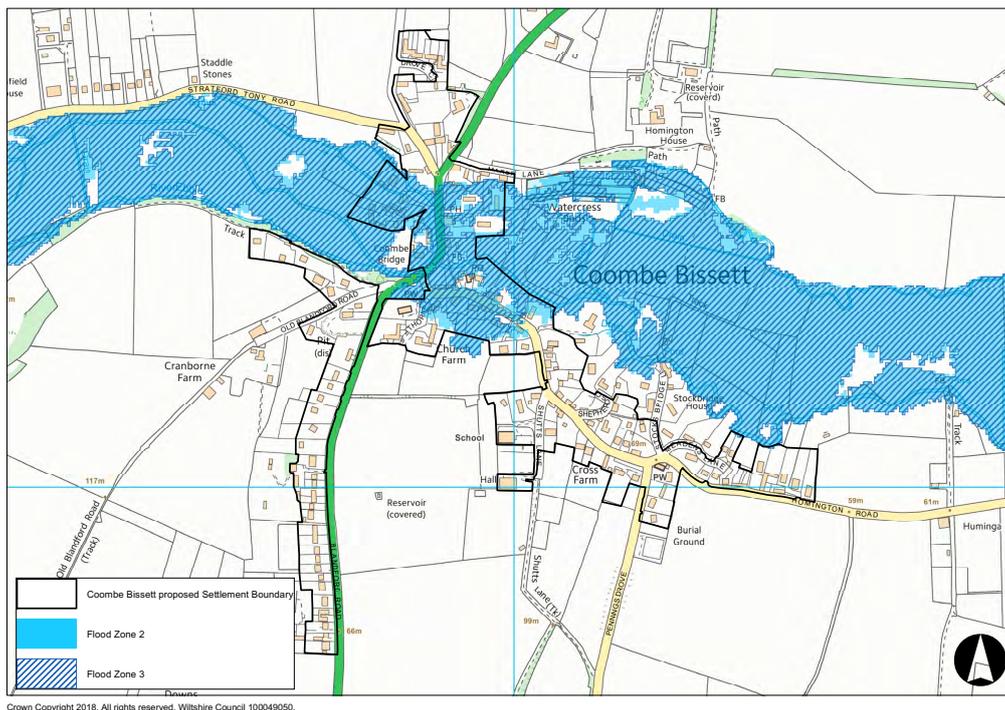
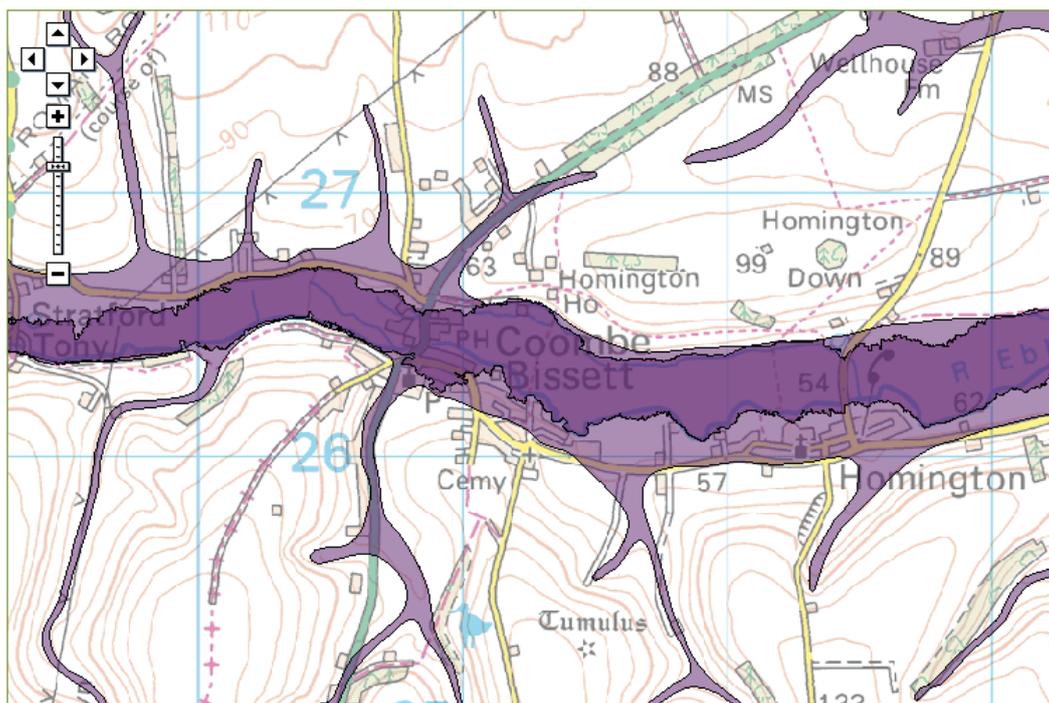


Figure 3 – Flood Zone and proximity to the settlement boundary Source: Wiltshire Council)

¹⁷ See Figure 3 and Figure 4.

¹⁸ Flood Zone 2: land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding
Flood Zone 3: land which has a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding and/or land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

¹⁹ See <http://www.coombebissett.com/flooding-feb-1990.html>, <http://www.coombebissett.com/floods-2014.html> and <http://www.coombebissett.com/floods-2015.html> Additional images are being collated as part of the evidence base for CB&HNP.



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Figure 4 – Extended flood risk (light purple areas are where the Environment Agency issues flood alerts and the darker purple area where flood warnings are issued) (Source: Environment Agency, 2018)

Within the Parish there have been instances where the River Ebbel has broken its banks (notably in the floods of 1990 and 2014). However, river (fluvial) flooding (indicated by Figure 3) does not consider the impact of chalk springs (linked to the area's geology)²⁰ which exacerbate and lead to unpredictable instances of flooding in the Parish during periods of high groundwater levels. These springs are not considered by Wiltshire Council as a material consideration that may prevent development from taking place in the same way river flooding is.²¹ CB&HNP should seek to ensure that both river levels and springs should be fully considered when determining any potential and suitable site allocations within a water management policy.

Given the extent of the settlement boundary and its overlay with river flood risk areas (see Figure 3), this calls into question the settlement boundary's suitability to direct development

²⁰ See Hughes et al (2011) Flood risk from groundwater: examples from a Chalk catchment in southern England, Journal of Flood Risk Management. Pp.1-13. Further potential local evidence base on springs, i.e. this may include asking the community to map their experience of springs in the parish at the Community Feedback Day.

²¹ Potentially because there are technologies that can help mitigate the impact of groundwater flooding impacts, see: https://geosmartinfo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/LA-Guidance-SuDS/England/Wiltshire_council_Appendix_4_Developers_Guidance_Note.pdf

(particularly around the mid-section). There is a need to carefully consider other suitable sites outside of the river flood risk zone weighed up with other material considerations, such as the AONB (see Table 2).

IV. Heritage and the Conservation Area

There are two Conservation Areas within the Parish, which seek to retain and enhance the historic character of the area (see Figure 1). The Design Guide commissioned by the Steering Group and produced by AECOM sets out the overall important and unique characteristics of the Parish, which can mitigate the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal for the Parish to help protect historic and local character (AECOM, 2019²²). The Design Guide will inform specific policies on design and local character which all new development must adhere to if the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted.²³

6. Summarising development preferences in the Community Questionnaire

The 2018 CB&HNP Community Questionnaire asked local residents about their development preferences in the Parish, including areas where people might support development and where they thought it was least appropriate.

The results of Question 9a indicated that people had strong views on whether development should be allowed outside of the settlement boundary; 55% (i.e. those answering not at all likely

²² Available on the Parish website.

²³ NB: the AECOM Design Guide indicates a need for development to be in keeping with extant designs and character. This may contradict the potential provision for 1-bedroom dwellings indicated by AECOM's Housing Need Assessment, and suggested by further analysis of the housing need data from the Community Questionnaire (see Housing Need Topic Paper, October 2019). The design of 1-bedroom dwellings would need to be sensitively planned for. Specific design codes for proposed allocated sites could be appended to the Plan to set out a community agreed vision for these sites.

or unlikely) responded that they did *not* support development outside the settlement boundary (with many strongly against it, 47%), whereas 33% (i.e. answering very likely or would likely) did support it. There was a view by some respondents in the Community Questionnaire that development should avoid connecting the two villages. Further engagement with the community can test whether the community would support development exclusively within the settlement boundary based on the sites to be put forward for community feedback, or whether any potential allocations might provoke a review of the current settlement boundary.

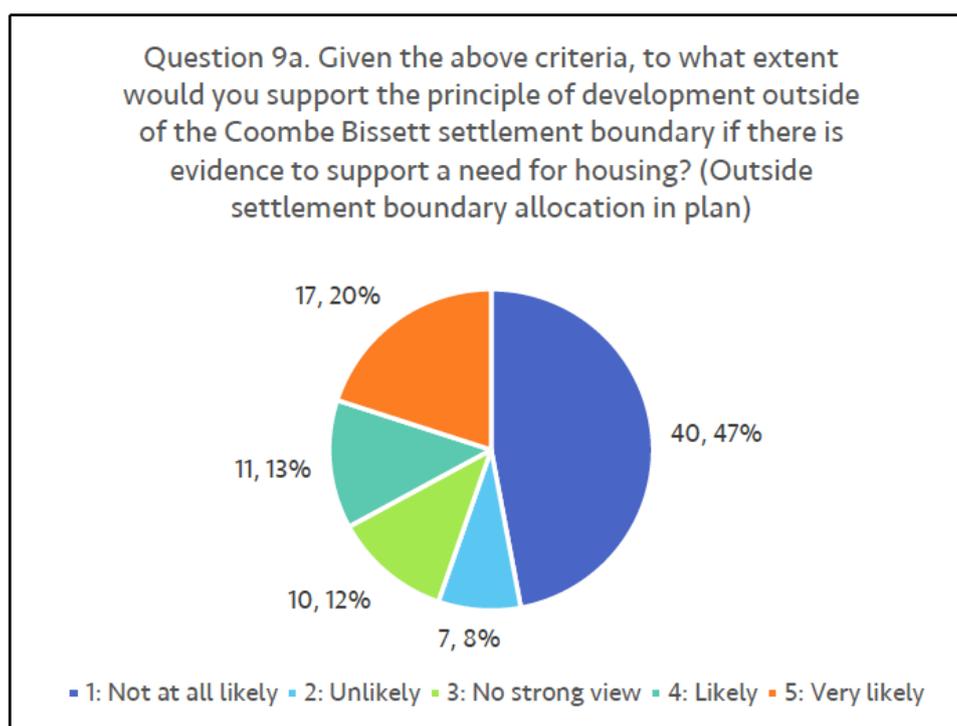


Figure 5 – Question 9a, support for development outside the settlement boundary (2018 Community Questionnaire)

The Community Questionnaire also asked the community whether they supported rural exception sites for affordable housing (i.e. permitted sites outside of a settlement boundary that meet unmet affordable housing needs). Responses to Qu.9b indicated that most people had strong views on rural exception sites, with 53% (i.e. those answering not at all likely or unlikely) responding that they did not support them (with many strongly against them, 46%), whereas 26% (i.e. answering very likely or would likely) supported them. However, given the relatively low demand for affordable housing²⁴ and that recently completed affordable dwellings in Coombe

²⁴ See CB&HNP Housing Need Topic Paper, October 2019 and the Community Questionnaire Full Report, April 2019.

Bissett were not inhabited by local residents, the need for rural exception sites is considered minimal for the Parish.²⁵

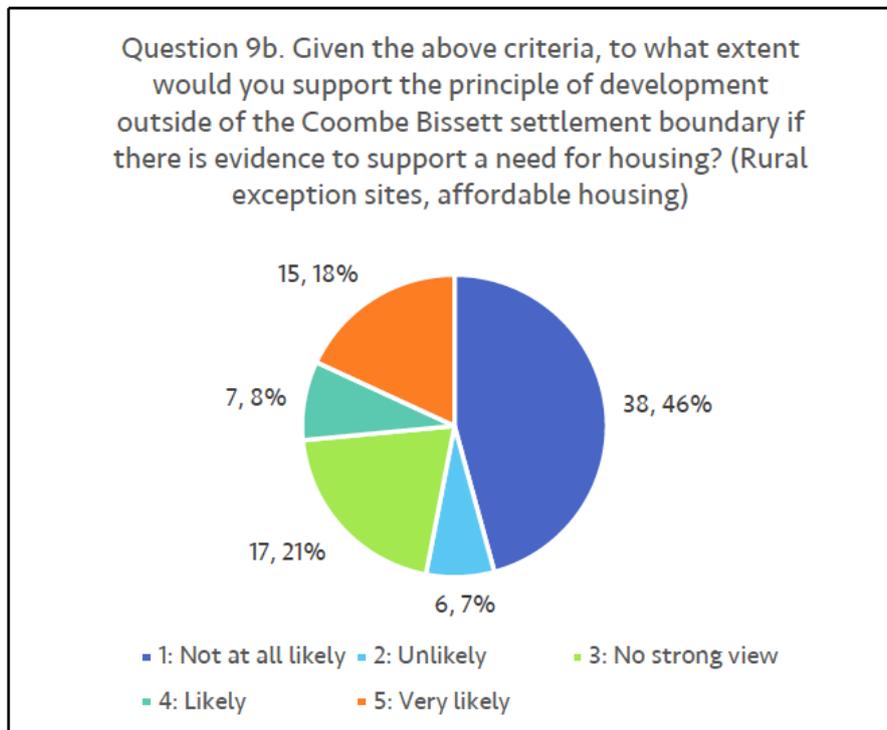


Figure 6 – Question 9b, support for rural exception sites (2018 Community Questionnaire)

In response to Question 8a, 25 sites were suggested by the community in the Community Questionnaire as potential sites for development. However, while some sites were favoured by the community AECOM deemed not all of these were suitable for assessment (e.g. West of Drove Lane, North of Stratford Tony Road)²⁶.

Responses to Question 8a showed that there was support from the community for the development at the Old Vicarage (10 responses); this site also received a favourable assessment by AECOM for development due to its location within the settlement boundary (see Table 2 – Summary of site-specific issues).

²⁵ Therefore, here there is a contrast between the AONB Management Group’s priority for affordable dwellings to be built in the CCWWD AONB and local need for affordable housing. See the CB&HNP Housing Need Topic Paper for more information.

²⁶ See Section 7 - Methodology for selection of sites which indicates how the sites proposed by the community were screened in/out of the site assessment process.

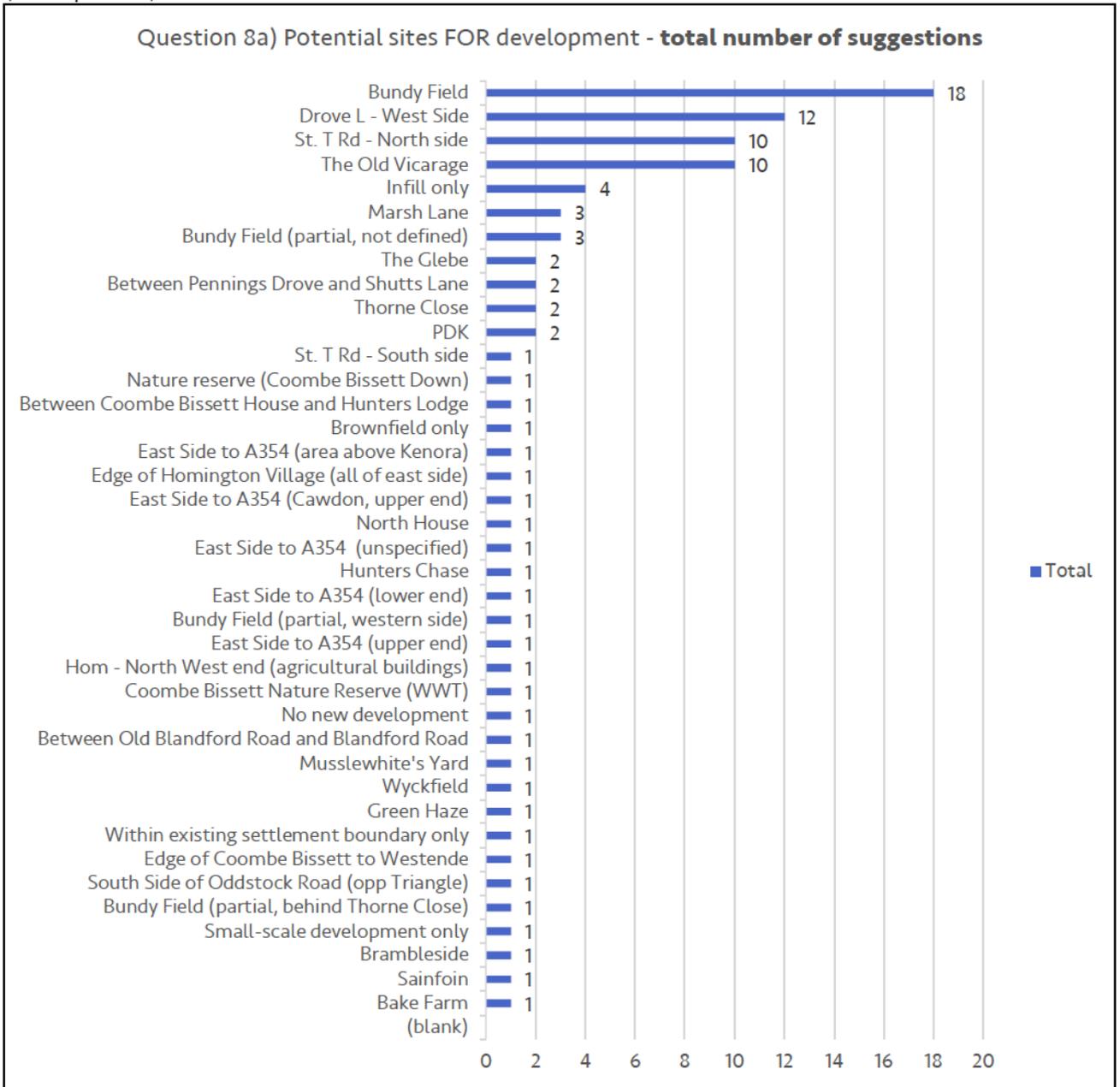


Figure 7 – Sites supported for development (2018 Community Questionnaire)

There was some support for development on the Bundy Field (or sections of it – see Figure 7 and Figure 8) which also reflects AECOM’s suggestion in the Site Assessment report that the Western side of the Bundy Field may be potentially suitable but has ‘minor’ constraints that would need to be addressed prior to development.²⁷

²⁷ See Section 9 - Potential impacts of ‘suitable’ or ‘potentially suitable’ sites . See also the AECOM Site Assessment report, available on the parish website.

However, the Community Questionnaire highlighted different views within the community as to whether the Bundy Field should be developed, with a higher percentage believing that it should not be developed (35, or 60%) than those believing it should be (23, or 40%).

Sites the community felt should *not* be developed are listed below:

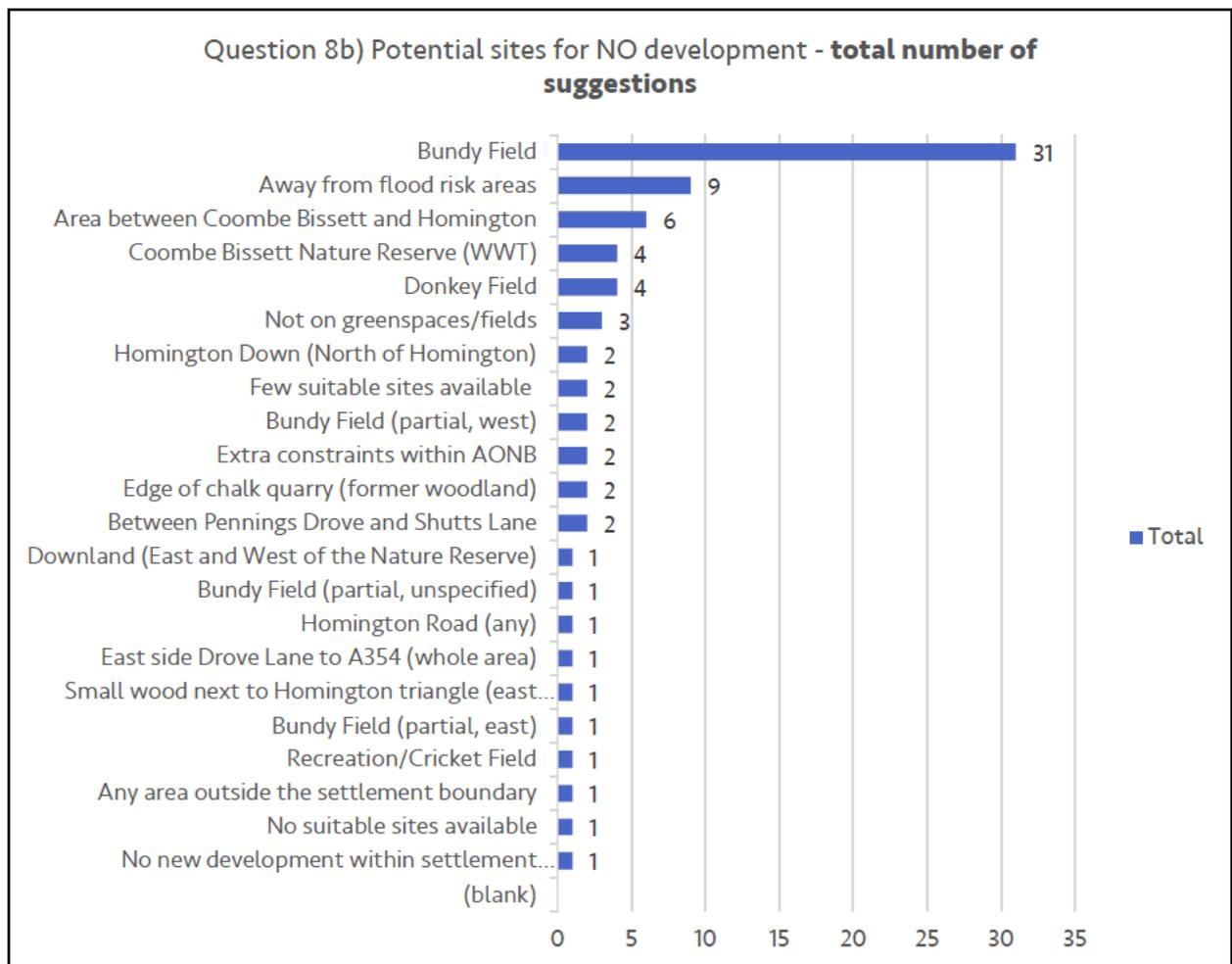


Figure 8 – Sites not supported for development (2018 Community Questionnaire)

Some of these sites/areas qualify for allocation as Local Green Spaces (see CB&HNP Local Green Spaces Topic Paper) and other areas are already protected from development, e.g. the Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve owned by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust which is a Special Area of Scientific Interest (SSSI) as well as a County Wildlife Site (although the latter doesn't have any statutory protection).²⁸

²⁸ See also the Environment and Landscape Character Topic Paper for more information on views and environmental context.

7. Methodology for selection of sites

Potential sites were identified through the Wiltshire Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA, Figure 9), a CB&HNP Call for Sites (November - December, 2018) and the Community Questionnaire (2018).

In total, seven sites were considered from the SHELAA, three from the Call for Sites and 25 sites were suggested in the Community Questionnaire. Some of these sites were mentioned in more than one of these sources, totalling 28 unique sites considered. A list of sites identified by the Community Questionnaire was shared with the Parish Council and the community in March 2019 when the preliminary results of the questionnaire were disseminated.

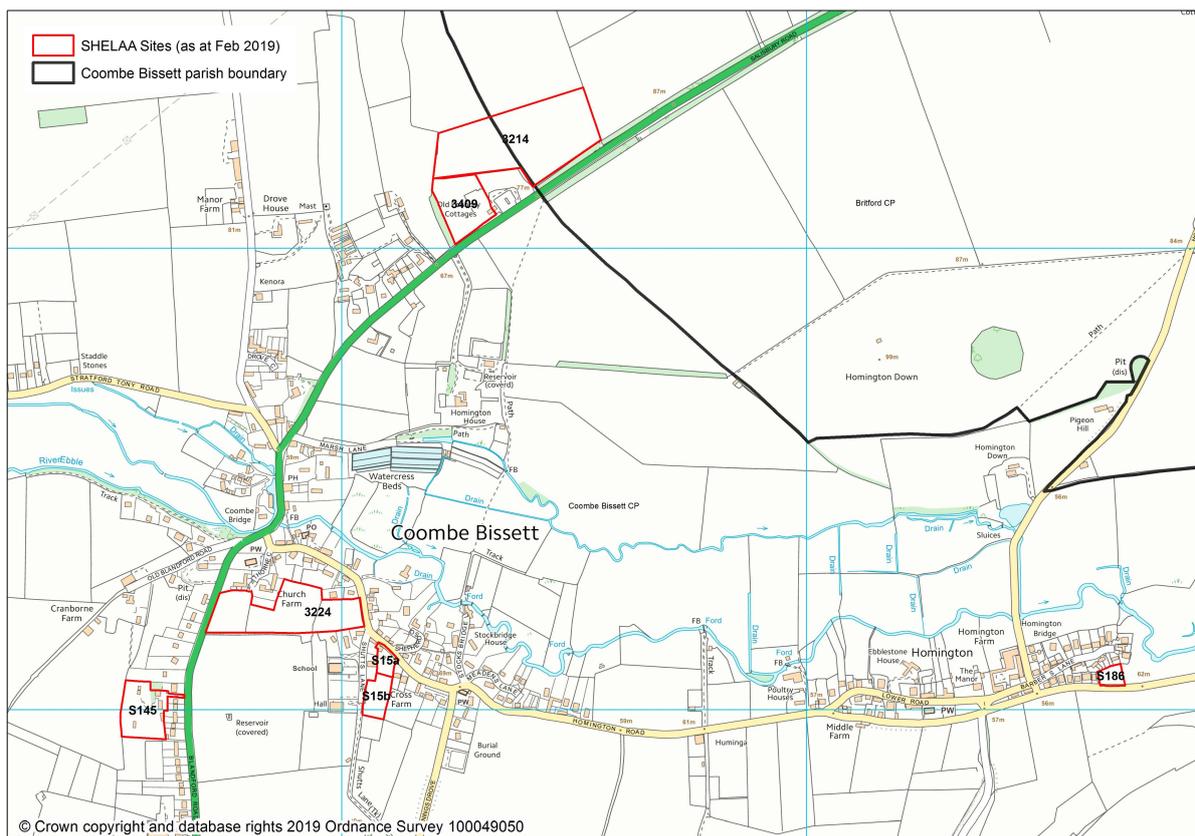


Figure 9 – Sites assessed as part of the Wiltshire Council SHELAA process (Wiltshire Council)

The following standard criteria used by AECOM for defining sites for assessment were applied:

- Remove all generic suggestions i.e. brownfield only
- Sites with a capacity of over 5 dwellings (4 was also deemed acceptable), with the rationale being that smaller developments less than this can be covered by generic Neighbourhood Plan policies, rather than specific site allocations²⁹
- Land that is available, i.e. the landowner wishes it to be developed within the plan period
- Include sites assessed through the SHELAA process
- Exclude sites within the rural hinterland (unless a SHELAA site)

Nine sites that fit this criteria were assessed by AECOM (see Table 1 and Figure 10).

Selected sites were then assessed according to the following categories:

- Availability – if the site is available for development
- Suitability – if, when assessed against policy restrictions (such as designations, protected areas, existing planning policy), physical problems (such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution or contamination), potential impacts (including effect upon landscape features and conservation) and environmental conditions (which would be experienced by prospective residents), it is a suitable location for development
- Achievability - if there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site, this being a judgement about its economic viability

²⁹ NB: The Wiltshire Council Core Strategy clearly states that on sites of 5 or more, developers will be expected to make a contribution towards affordable housing provision (mix and tenure will be negotiated on a site-by-site basis); this is much more stringent than the national standard of sites over 10 dwellings. The Core Strategy also indicates that affordable dwellings should be dispersed throughout a development and indistinguishable from other dwellings.

8. Summarising the AECOM Site Assessment Report

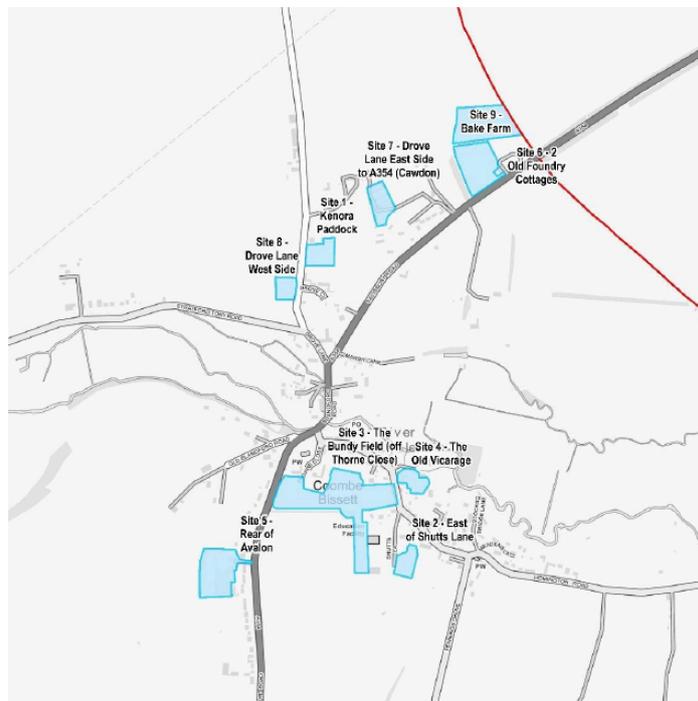


Figure 10 – Sites assessed in the AECOM Site Assessment

Table 1, below sets out the list of sites assessed by AECOM. This table shows:

- A higher density figure for potential development (proposed by AECOM using a standardised methodology)
- A figure based on current development suggestions by the landowner or land agent
- A figure which the Parish Council believes is the optimum number for potential development on the sites

The AECOM high-density figure is based on a national working guide³⁰, which is a purely theoretical figure - not one which Wiltshire Council or the CB&HNP would necessarily use and is therefore divorced from a sensible scale of development in a rural parish. A more detailed assessment of development potential on each site within their specific constraints (defined in

³⁰ These criteria are provided by Government guidance on undertaking assessments of housing sites, based primarily on the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (Housing and Economic Assessment of Land Availability) published in 2014 with ongoing updates, which contains guidance on the assessment of land availability and the production of a SHELAA as part of a local authority's evidence base for a Local Plan.

Table 2) and community support for development on these sites is required (pending further discussions with the AONB and Wiltshire Council on their development potential).

AECOM have clarified they are unable to provide an exact split of Site 3 (The Bundy Field) and Site 5 (Rear of Avalon) (hectares and indicative number of dwellings) for suitable parcels of land due to the complexity of addressing the constraints indicated in their report; understanding this split would require a more detailed technical appraisal on a site-by-site basis. The Parish Council can determine the acceptable level of development on each site, together with the community (an indicative preference of the Parish Council is set out below).

Table 1– Summary of AECOM Site Assessment - List of sites assessed, size, capacity and status

| Site No./Name | Size in hectares | AECOM Indicative number of dwellings (c.30 per ha) or provisional estimate | Landowners' suggestion for development | Parish Council Proposed Maximum Development Potential | AECOM Status |
|---|------------------|--|--|---|---|
| 4.The Old Vicarage | 0.35 | 9 | 5 ³¹ | 4 | Suitable |
| 5.Rear of Avalon - Eastern half of site | 0.55* | 20* | N/A | 6 | Suitable |
| 1.Kenora Paddock | 0.52 | 12 | N/A | 6 | Potentially suitable - some constraints |
| 2.East of Shutts Lane | 0.45 | 20 | 9 | 5 | Potentially suitable - some constraints |
| 3.The Bundy Field (off Thorne Close) - Western half of site | 1.33* | 44* | Min 8-10. Originally proposed 17 ³² | 6 | Potentially suitable - some constraints |
| 3.The Bundy Field (off Thorne Close) - Eastern half of site | 1.33* | 44* | N/A | 0 | Not suitable |
| 5.Rear of Avalon - Western half of site | 0.55* | 20* | N/A | 0 | Not suitable |

³¹ This is the number currently being marketed by Savills as a potential development opportunity, see <https://search.savills.com/property-detail/gbsarssas180118> (last accessed 1.7.20). Previous applications on the site sought an additional three dwellings on the site, see: <https://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/PlanningGIS/LLPG/AddressSearch/13420645,1> (S/2012/1269 and S/2009/1694). The 2012 application has now lapsed since it is outside of the 3-year period within which development should be initiated. See: https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/How_long_does_planning_permission_last

³² See landowner summary of potential benefits, under the landowner additional documents available under evidence section in the site section on the parish website. This includes adjustments to this figure depending on whether retirement accommodation is provided for and the impact this may have on affordable housing provision.

| | | | | | |
|--|------|----|-----|---|--------------|
| 6. 2 Old Foundry Cottages | 1.25 | 30 | N/A | 0 | Not suitable |
| 7. Drove Lane East Side to A354 (Cawdon) | 0.58 | 13 | N/A | 0 | Not suitable |
| 8. Drove Lane West Side | 0.27 | 7 | N/A | 0 | Not suitable |
| 9. Bake Farm | 1.49 | 35 | N/A | 0 | Not suitable |

* Estimated size and number as AECOM not able to provide split between east and west

The CB&HNP Housing Need Topic Paper sets out a working figure of 13-15 dwellings over the plan period, up to 2036 which has been reviewed and agreed by Wiltshire Council. Therefore, not all suitable and potential sites need to be allocated in the Plan, rather the most suitable, sustainable and those supported by the community. A further screening of sites will be conducted by Wiltshire Council, which may lead to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (see section **Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 2 – Summary of site-specific issues (based on AECOM report) for suitable (green, left hand column) or potentially suitable sites (coral, left hand column)

| Site Name | Land Type | Built-up Area | AONB | Landscape Sensitivity | Agricultural Ground Loss | Conservation Area | Flood Zone | Biodiversity Loss |
|---|------------|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Sites deemed 'suitable' by AECOM | | | | | | | | |
| The Old Vicarage | Mixture | Within – also in settlement boundary | Within | Medium | No Loss | Yes | Zone 1 | Medium |
| Rear of Avalon - Eastern half of site | Mixture | Within | Within | Low | No Loss | No | Zone 1 | Low |
| Sites deemed 'potentially suitable' by AECOM | | | | | | | | |
| Kenora Paddock | Greenfield | Adjacent | Adjacent | Medium | Some Loss | No | Zone 1 | Medium ³³ |
| East of Shutts Lane | Greenfield | Adjacent | Within | Medium | Some Loss | No, but land directly to the north is | Zone 1 | Medium |
| The Bundy Field (off Thorne Close) - Western half of site | Greenfield | Adjacent | Within | Medium | Some Loss | No, but land on Eastern half of the site is; also land to the North of the Western side is | Zone 1, section in Zone 3 | Medium |

Legend:

Light green – low risk of adverse impact or net enhancement

Yellow – moderate risk

Pink - higher risk of adverse impact

³³ TBC depending agricultural grade of land. The criteria of landscape sensitivity and biodiversity loss have the same results and could be combined, however further review by the community may lead to different classifications of risk against these categories.

9. Potential impacts of 'suitable' or 'potentially suitable' sites

A more detailed assessment of the issues identified in Table 2 can be found in the AECOM Site Assessment report. See also AECOM, Wiltshire Council and AONB views on assessed sites (separate document) which reviews a summary of the recommendations from the Site Assessment report and any associated issues with potential allocations, together with available information obtained through engagement with Wiltshire Council or the AONB.

10. Site Specific issues and potential policy criteria

Set out below are suggested ways to address the key issues raised in AECOM's site assessment report (outlined in Table 2 – Summary of site-specific issues). These issues need to be further considered to determine specific allocations both by the Parish Council, the community and other important stakeholders such as Wiltshire Council and the AONB to determine which sites are most suitable for allocation³⁴.

Site specific policies should:

- Provide a figure for acceptable levels of development (i.e. housing)
- Consider whether particular types of housing (i.e. number of bedrooms) should be delivered on the site or follow AECOM's split of bedroom size³⁵
- Resolve access issues (e.g. Rear of Avalon, The Old Vicarage, The Bundy Field, East Shutts Lane)

³⁴ For more information on site-specific comments from Wiltshire Council and the AONB see Wiltshire Council and AONB views on assessed sites (separate document).

³⁵ See AECOM Housing Need Assessment and CB&HNP Housing Need Topic Paper, available on the parish website.

- Resolve any loss of employment or potential substitution of such uses in the parish (e.g. Rear of Avalon)
- Resolve site-specific flood risk issues (if these can be mitigated) (e.g. Bundy Field)
- Determine how the loss of any quality grade agricultural land could be mitigated (e.g. Kenora Paddock, Bundy Field, East Shutts Lane)
- Understand whether any sites could meet a modest demand for self-build within the Parish

General policies that affect potential development must:

- Take into consideration the impact of springs and groundwater flooding as well as river flood risk
- Address potential landscape impacts on the AONB and include mitigation enhancement measures, including materials and roof lines (in conjunction with design/landscape policies); consider the AONB's position statements³⁶
- Take a clear position on whether Coombe Bissett and Homington should be geographically separated in the future (i.e. avoiding development between the two villages)

11. Conclusion

The sites deemed suitable or potentially suitable for development should be reviewed by the community and prioritised against existing constraints and site-specific preferences identified for these sites (if any). Landowners should be informed of the results of the site assessment for their site and re-confirm the site's availability. Moreover, the AONB Management Group should provide further comment on the detailed site designs for those prioritised for development when these have progressed further.

³⁶ See AECOM Design Guide, available on the parish website.

Since there are no current strategic allocations for additional housing in the plan period by Wiltshire Council, the potential to phase development over time - within and between sites - so that the village can absorb new people and adapt local facilities accordingly should be explored, if appropriate.

Any potential allocations suggested in the Plan could trigger a discussion with Wiltshire Council regarding the suitability of the existing settlement boundary, should this be deemed appropriate. Depending on the comments of the AONB Management Group and community feedback, the CB&HNP may wish to consider only one 'suitable' site allocation and create enabling policies for other potential sites (however, both allocations or generic policies will still be influenced by the AONB Management Group's views and other relevant considerations on the suitability of some sites over others).

12. Action Points to finalise potential allocations of sites

- i. Set a date for the Community Feedback Day and agree which sites will be put forward for assessment (i.e. suitable and potentially suitable). This will be an online consultation between 6th – 19th July to share the current evidence base and run a survey to clarify the community's position on key topics, including the allocation of potential sites and local preferences on the location of accommodation suitable for older people (indicated as optional by AECOM but with a clear need for suitable accommodation for downsizing within the parish) i.e. proximity to amenities.
- ii. Review sites within context of landscape sensitivity referring to the Chalke Valley Landscape Characterisation (2018) and refer to the Landscape and Vistas Topic Paper.
- iii. Consider a viability assessment using the Locality guidance³⁷.
- iv. Assess the demand for self-build plots on sites considered for development.
- v. Clarify the AONB Management Group's position on suitable or potentially suitable sites.
- vi. Understand the ramifications of a shortfall in the 5-year land supply for CB&H.

³⁷ <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/Locality-Viability-Toolkit-final-1.pdf>

- vii. Understand how Wiltshire Council applied the sequential AONB argument to the SHLEAA sites and the settlement review process (i.e. if there are any lessons to apply in the site selection for CB&HNP).
- viii. Wiltshire Council to carry out Highways access assessment on relevant sites and ascertain whether access issues could be improved with site specific measures (i.e. a roundabout near Avalon site. See AECOM, Wiltshire Council and AONB views on assessed sites (separate document).
- ix. Determine whether an agricultural survey is required at this stage for Kenora Paddock and if the developer is prepared to incur the cost.
- x. Decide if there is a need for reserve sites (i.e. alternative sites if allocated sites are not developed in the plan period), if appropriate.
- xi. Determine whether any potential allocations might trigger a review of the settlement boundary.

13. Subsequent assessment of Plan policies

Some Neighbourhood Plans must be formally assessed to ensure they will have no significant environmental effects. This is done using a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Given the many nature conservation and heritage assets and buildings in the Parish, Wiltshire Council may require an SEA alongside the Neighbourhood Plan (depending on an initial screening of the Plan's objectives and policy ideas). The SEA is an additional framework to assess the emerging policies of the CB&HNP and would inform the final choice and wording of the land use policies so the Neighbourhood Plan can avoid or minimise its impacts on the local area.

A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is a requirement of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended in 2012) – (known as 'the Habitats Regulations').³⁸ The assessment focuses on the likely significant effects of qualifying plans or programmes on the nature conservation interests of European-protected areas. It also seeks to establish whether or not there will be any adverse effects on the ecological integrity of these European sites as a result

³⁸ This transposed the requirements of the European Directives for the protection of wild birds and flora and fauna (92/43/EEC) into UK law.

of those plans or programmes. An HRA will be conducted during the 6-week Reg 14 consultation period (when the Draft Plan is consulted on locally prior to Submission to Wiltshire Council).

