

**Semington Neighbourhood Planning**  
**Steering Group Meeting 4      January 5<sup>th</sup> 2022**  
**1930 to 2130      by Zoom**



**AGENDA**

- 1 Welcome and apologies
- 2 Recording any declarations of interest in relation to the agenda
- 3 Approving the minutes of meeting 3 on 7<sup>th</sup> December – Paper 4.1
- 4 Matters arising from the minutes and update on activities – Paper 4.1  
updating the critical friends list
- 5 Election for meetings 5 to 10 of the chair, the agenda/minutes secretary and the lead on community communications
- 6 Developing plans for the first community consultation on March 5<sup>th</sup> – Paper 4.2
  - [i] agreeing the overall plan for the day
  - [ii] considering how to feature the 7 issues (set out in Paper 3.2 for the December meeting)
  - [iii] allocating tasks
  - [iv] confirming the draft vision / objectives statements
- 7 Approving the updated *Thinking about Semington* text – Paper 4.3
- 8 Discussing whether the Semington plan should include the allocation of land for development
- 9 Noting the date of the next steering group meeting: February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Business to include:
  - [i] update on plans for the March 5<sup>th</sup> consultation

## SNPSG Paper 4.1      Minutes and update on activities

- 3.1 Those steering group members present: Sheralyn Milburn SM, Bill Scott BS, Peter Smith PS, and Hugh Turnbull HT. Katie Lea KL (Place Studios) also attended.

Apologies were received from Vicky Bodman.

Peter Smith welcomed members to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves to Katie Lea from Place Studios.

- 3.2 The minutes of steering group meeting 2 on 9<sup>th</sup> November were approved, and the updated information set out in the minutes was noted.
- 3.3 There were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.
- 3.4 PS updated the critical friends list and noted that not everyone who had been invited had responded despite follow-up calls. Currently, ten villagers have agreed to work with us.
- 3.5 Katie Lea introduced herself and Place Studios and the range of activities that they do, confirming that they continued to work with several Wiltshire towns and village on neighbourhood and community planning. There are 5 members of the Place Studios team, and we are likely to work with all of them over the neighbourhood planning period. KL said that the role that Place Studios can most effectively play in supporting our work is to help us encourage and facilitate community engagement in order to establish a sound evidence base for the plan, and that there were a range of 'toolkits' to do this. It is likely that the Place Studios team will interact with the steering group through a mix of in-person and zoom meetings.

KL noted that one of the wider contexts for our work is that Wiltshire Council's development of its Local Plan is running behind schedule with a draft Plan now only scheduled for publication in the Autumn of 2022. This means that how our neighbourhood plan will have to fit with the Local Plan will not be clear until then. Another context is that the government is still thinking about its proposals for legislation about national planning.

- 3.6 [i] There was a detailed discussion of Paper 3.2 produced by the working group on the issues of importance to the community, and the identity of community groups. This confirmed the consultations that had already taken place during the past two years prior to the decision to develop a neighbourhood plan. KL noted that this was an excellent start to data gathering.

It was agreed that the March consultation event needed to be promoted to the community as a launch event for the neighbourhood plan, and that there should be appropriate information about this sent round beforehand (parish magazine, website, Facebook, etc). People need to be able to see how their ideas have already informed the process, and to have the opportunity to provide feedback about what is important to them about where they live and about the wider parish. Being able to comment on a vision, objectives and outline policy ideas will be a crucial part of this.

In order to ensure that all this is effectively done, appropriate methods will need to be used during the event to engage everyone. Following contact with SM, PS and possibly others about a revision of the ideas in Paper 3.2, KL will bring proposals to the next steering group meeting on the aims, objectives, methods and structure of the March consultation. **Action KL On the agenda.**

After the March consultation, there will be the need to gather evidence from the community in order to develop appropriate policies.

[ii] Following a brief discussion of the ideal length for a vision and objectives statement, it was agreed that HT and BS will work on a draft. This will be sent to KL for comment and then (perhaps in a revised form) be circulated to the steering group for feedback. Following this, a draft will be produced for discussion at the January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting with a view to its approval for use at the March consultation event. **Action HT & BS Completed; a draft was circulated to Place Studios on December 13<sup>th</sup>, and to the steering group on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is on the agenda.**

There was a discussion about the role of projects in neighbourhood planning. KL noted that more recent made plans tended to have projects associated with them. These tended to be concerned with matters which were not necessarily central to land use, but which were nonetheless of importance to communities. By contrast, policies *have* to be land use focused. Identifying projects can provide a focus for the use of community infrastructure levy and/or Section 106 agreement monies.

Whether we ought to allocate land for development as part of the plan will be discussed at the next meeting.

- 3.7 BS confirmed that feedback from parish councillors and critical friends has been requested (and some received) on the paper *Thinking about Semington: how shall we describe the parish?* and that more was expected before Christmas. Steering group members were also encouraged to provide further feedback. The document will be revised for approval at the next meeting prior to its use in the March community consultation. **Action All + BS** All suggestions have either been incorporated (see red text) or listed at the end of the document for consideration. NB, typographical issues have just been resolved.

KL recommended the [Know Your Place](#) website for maps.

- 3.8 An updated budget based on the data provided by Place Studios was confirmed. The budget will be reported to the Parish Council. **Action PS** Completed.

It is anticipated that confirmation of our 2021/22 funding from the funder, Locality, will be confirmed within the next few days. A bid for 2022/23 funding can be made when the new tax year begins in April 2022. Confirmation was received on December 13<sup>th</sup> of the award of £1580. VB is working to ensure that all necessary paperwork will be completed.

- 3.9 It was agreed to move the date of the community consultation back a number of weeks to allow more time for planning and preparation. Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturday March 12<sup>th</sup> were suggested and Gerald Taylor will be approached about availability. **Action PS**. Completed. Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup> has been confirmed and the village hall booked.

The next steering group meeting is on January 5<sup>th</sup> 2022 (1930 in the village hall). Business will include:

- i Confirming the draft vision / objectives document
- ii. Approving the *Thinking about Semington* text
- iii Updating plans for the first community consultation in March
- iv Discussing whether the plan should include the allocation of land for development.

*Drafted December 8<sup>th</sup> 2021*

**Semington Parish NP - Consultation Event**  
***OUTLINE AND PRACTICALITIES NOTE Version 1***

Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup> | 10:00 to 15:00 | *Semington Village Hall*

**Aims:**

- To launch the NP preparation process with the community
- To share back draft vision and objectives
- To gather more input from the community on specific issues / topic areas

***Promotion/Advertising***

***Suggestions (but over to the SG for detail and action):***

- Facebook
- Posters
- Social Media
- Parish Council Website
- Parish Newsletter? School Newsletter
- Email?

***Components (First stab – offers welcomed!)***

***Main content:***

- A ‘Welcome’ board (all boards are A1) with basic information about the Plan, issues, how to contribute etc\*.
- A large (A0) map of the Parish in the centre of room – we can annotate this with some emerging points linked to the vision / objectives / policy areas
- Vision board\*
- Objectives board\*
- Topic Boards (as prepared by the Steering Group based on the work done to date by the consultation group)
- All boards to have ways for people to leave comments (post-it notes)
- Next steps / time line

\*initial drafts of these boards follow at the end of this note.

***Other things:***

- Possible to get kids (primary and secondary) to contribute at all? We could prepare a simple activity and ask the school if they can complete it with children in Key Stage 2 (year 3 and up). The outputs could then be displayed at the drop-in session (and that could be advertised via the school newsletter encouraging parents to come....

**ACTION: Content – A1 boards**

Following the next SG meeting, a draft of all boards should be produced

***Practicalities***

***Initials allocated, where relevant, for who does***

***People***

- Katie Lea from Place Studio
- Members of the Steering Group – rotate or there for the whole session?
- Set up time – Place team will arrive at 9.00am
- Signs up outside? Place have an Aboard...

***Layout***

- Map in the centre of the room
- Reception / Welcome table & Information (ask people to sign in?)
- A1 Boards around the room on easels

*Materials etc. (where bold Place Studio can provide)*

- Bunting?
  - **Easels**
  - **Printed Material (as above)**
  - **Easels**
  - Kids materials / fun stuff for them to be able to do and contribute
  - **Post-its**
  - **Pens: large marker and ballpoint**
  - **Blutac, tape, string etc.**
  - **Badges**
  - **Camera**
  - And .....?
- 
- Arrange refreshments

## **Board 1 Draft**

### **Welcome!**

#### **Introduction to the Semington Neighbourhood Plan**

- Neighbourhood planning is a powerful tool that gives communities statutory powers to shape how their communities develop, and address local issues and aspirations.
- When complete, the Semington Neighbourhood Plan will be used by Wiltshire Council when deciding on planning applications in our Parish.
- The Semington Neighbourhood Plan will be a document that sets out planning policies for the whole of our parish – but it can't go beyond our Parish boundary!
  
- The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by Steering Group of local people on behalf of the Parish Council.

#### **Today**

- Early consultation and work by the Steering Group suggested some of the key issues for our local community.
- Today, we want to talk to you about how our Neighbourhood Plan can build on your feedback to date.
- We drafted an overall Vision Statement and Objectives for the Plan
- We've also made a start of thinking what topics the plan could address and what sort of policies our plan could include.

*Please have a look around, ask any questions, and be sure to let us have your views on what has been done so far – it is all in draft – your input and views are important.*

*Thank you!*

## **Board 2: DRAFT Vision Statement**

- Our Neighbourhood Plan needs a Vision Statement at the beginning, to help set the scene.
- The vision is meant to be an aspirational glimpse of the future and a statement to guide future policy and projects.
- This is the draft Vision Statement (below) developed by the Steering Group based on research, and consultation done so far.
- We've included a mini-vision so we can quickly get our message across. It looks ahead to 2036 as that is the date up to which our Neighbourhood Plan will cover (same as the Wiltshire Local Plan)

### **Mini-Vision**

It's 2036. Semington is a great place to live, with its character and rural surroundings preserved. Small scale and sympathetic development has met a local need for housing and employment. Community life is flourishing, with facilities and services maintained or improved and precious buildings, landscape and wildlife protected.

### *Vision*

The distinctive rural setting of Semington parish provides a wildlife-rich buffer between neighbouring settlements in West Wiltshire. The Kennet and Avon Canal and Semington Brook wildlife corridors and the biodiversity within them are key elements in this. In 2036, the integrity of this buffer will continue to be maintained as an asset for both people and nature.

Any development of the settlements of Semington, Little Marsh and Littleton will be responsive to the economic, environmental and social needs of the people living and working here. There will be minimal housing development, all within walking distance of a range of community facilities and built to the highest environmental standards, in sympathy with the existing settlements and with minimum impact on landscape settings, ecology and heritage. New housing will reflect the prime need for affordable homes and for people wishing to downsize.

The significant landscape perspectives within the parish along the Kennet and Avon and the Brook, towards the iconic Roundway Down, and through the fields to Hilperton will be protected. Green space, natural features and heritage sites will be protected and maintained, and infrastructure changes will have minimal impact on the actively rural character of the parish. The use and generation of renewable energy will increase and our community carbon footprint will be reduced.

In 2036, Semington will remain a place where people can move around easily and safely. Its many footpaths will have been improved, with easier access for older people and those with disabilities. Cycling access to local towns will be upgraded. The old A350 road lengths will remain restricted routes.

By 2036, the parish's play areas will be enhanced, the tennis court remain freely open to residents and visitors, the football pitch stay in use and the allotments will be flourishing,

The parish will continue to welcome a wide range of small businesses from farming (which underpins our actively rural character) to light engineering and services. There will be more home working through enhanced IT infrastructure. Existing community facilities – including the pub, church, school, village hall and post office – will be maintained and where possible enhanced.

The wide range of social groups in the parish will continue to build its community spirit, assisted by effective communications, both electronic and magazine-based.

### **Board 3: DRAFT Objectives**

- An Objective should only say what it is you wish to achieve, not the way to achieve it.
- Our policies and projects will need to link back to and deliver the objectives
- We will keep developing the Vision, and Objectives, and the policies and projects, regularly checking back from one to the other, as we prepare the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### *Objectives*


1. To maintain the parish's wildlife-rich open countryside and support farming and other businesses that determine and protect the unique setting, character and identity of Semington.
2. To provide the housing the community wants and needs in developments of modest size in the locations it approves and in a range of housing tenures and types, to meet the needs of young people, growing families and older residents.
3. To ensure any development is low carbon, built to a high quality and a locally distinctive design, to maintain the essential character of the settlements.
4. To encourage the development of custom and self-build new housing to support the needs of the community.
5. To celebrate and protect the parish's significant landscapes, wildlife habitats, biodiversity, green space and cultural artifacts.
6. To retain and enhance the rights of way network and local green spaces in the parish that are of significant community value.
7. To enhance the recreational, sporting and leisure facilities in the parish, especially for all ages.
8. To sustain and encourage a broad range of community facilities and business.
9. To improve broadband and phone connectivity, retain the post office, and enable communications within the parish providing for all age groups.
10. To protect and improve the leisure, education, employment and service facilities within the parish.



**Board 4: DRAFT Vision Statement and Objectives**

What do you think?  
Are we on the right track?  
Place a dot along the line, and / or add a comment on a post-it note

Yes Not sure No



Land Use Issue	Are these the things that matter?
Housing & Development	Affordable housing, market housing, settlement boundary, heritage, building design, allocation sites, village character
Green Buffer & Environment	Green space between Semington, Trowbridge and Melksham, canal, Brook/streams, flood prevention, landscape, sewerage/drainage, rural setting
Recreation & Well-being	Play areas, allotments, rights of way, recreation/sports facilities, landscape
Communications	Broadband speed/reliability, post office
Sustainability	Biodiversity, carbon footprint, climate change, wildlife corridors, renewable energy, recycling
Business & Employment	Actively rural mindset, canal, garage, pub, farming, Turnpike business park, ILC, care home, florist, homeworkers
Transport & Traffic	Bus provision, cycle routes, traffic issues, parking, pedestrian safety, location and style of signs, bus gate

## Section 2 Introduction to Semington

### 2.1 Semington

*“Under elms near Semington the threshing-machine boomed, its unchanging note mingled with a hiss at the addition of each sheaf. Otherwise the earth was the rooks’, heaven was the larks’, and I rode easily on along the good level road somewhere in between the two”.*<sup>1</sup>

Semington is a *large village*<sup>2</sup> within the Melksham Community Area and lies between Melksham and Trowbridge in the heart of West Wiltshire. The parish comprises Semington village and the settlements of Little Marsh and Littleton with other houses and farms dotted across the area. The village High Street was previously the route of the A350 but is now a no-through road except for cyclists, buses and emergency vehicles. The village is surrounded by low intensity agricultural land, mainly on flood plains and mostly set to open pasture. The Kennet and Avon Canal, and Semington Brook are important features of the village and there are many footpaths, bridleways and byways in and around the parish. The village has many active clubs and societies, businesses and farms as well as a busy village hall, active church, popular school and welcoming pub. Semington Parish Council meets monthly and aims to support the life of the community and encourage the ongoing evolution of the character of the village, in line with its published Framework.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.2 A Brief History of Semington

Semington is an old settlement and people have lived here since at least the 12th century. Earlier habitation in the area is indicated by the discovery of Romano-British pottery fragments near Whaddon and the evidence of Bronze Age settlements in fields adjacent to St George’s Road discovered by a 2021 archaeological survey. The early history of Semington is closely bound up with the ancient manor (and nearby modern parish) of Steeple Ashton and was once part of the Whorwellsdown Hundred. The land belonged to Romsey Abbey prior to the Dissolution when it was acquired by Sir Thomas Seymour who forfeited it to the Crown in 1549 when he was executed for treason. In 1894, Semington and Littleton, together with nearby Whaddon were brought together as a new civil parish, with Whaddon subsequently being transferred to Hilperton parish.

#### Illustrate with old maps

The parish sits in the valley of Semington Brook, which rises on Salisbury Plain and joins the River Avon at Whaddon. The Brook has been the northern boundary of the parish for centuries and formed part of the southern border of the Forests of Chippenham and Melksham that date from 1228. Melksham Forest covered a 33 square mile area stretching from Calne in the north-east to Semington in the south-west, and during the 13th century, King John hunted in the Forest. The settlements around Melksham were then mainly made up of small farm groupings, and Semington village is still surrounded by farmland and some of its farmhouses date from the 1500s. The large open fields in Semington were extensively enclosed by the end of the 16th century and by 1813 only two small open areas remained. The most prominent landowner in Semington after enclosure was the Duke of Somerset when arable farming constituted around 16% of the land. Pasture and meadow primarily for sheep farming, which had been increasing in the area from the late Middle Ages, was the pre-eminent type of farming in Semington itself.

During the Second World War, Semington lay on an important anti-invasion line of defence. An anti-tank trench was dug around the south of the village, starting at Semington Brook to the east and ending at the canal to the west. Concrete bollards and pillboxes were also built and the remains of a few of these are still visible. Evacuees from London arrived to be lodged with local families and go to school. Nearby Melksham camp accommodated both British and American Air Force personnel and aircraft and gliders operated from Keevil airfield. Semington had its own Home Guard unit.

A prominent parish feature is the Kennet and Avon Canal. This was begun in 1794 in order to provide a navigable link between Newbury and Bath. The section from Foxhangers (below Devizes) to Bath, including the construction of a wharf at Semington, was completed by 1804 and the canal was opened throughout its

<sup>1</sup> Edward Thomas was commissioned to take a bicycle ride from London to the Quantocks, and to write a book about it. The book: *“In Pursuit of Spring”* was published in April 1914. In Chapter VI, after leaving Trowbridge, Thomas passes the Lion and Fiddle at Hilperton and then wrote the passage quoted.

<sup>2</sup> In the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy (p. 43) Large Villages are defined as settlements with a limited range of employment, services and facilities. The Holt Neighbourhood Plan suggests that, typically, a large village will have a combination of a population of 1000 plus, with local employment, a shop, a PO, a primary school, church(es), a village hall, pub(s), a mobile library, reasonable transport links, some leisure and recreational facilities, and developable land. **Many, but by no means all, of these are features of Semington which does not feel like a large village to those who live there.**

<sup>3</sup> semington.org.uk/parish-council/framework-themes .

length in 1810. Its main traffic was coal. The Wilts and Berks Canal, completed in 1810, began at a junction with the Kennet and Avon at Semington and was a route to Abingdon via Melksham and Swindon. When the Wilts, Somerset and Weymouth Railway opened in 1848, traffic on the canals began to terminally decline. Although the station on the Devizes to Trowbridge branch line was called Semington Halt, the line of the railway has always been north of the parish. The route was lost in the 1960s Beeching cuts.

#### **Illustrate with canal photos**

In 2002, a book called *Semington Past and Present* was produced by the Semington History Project Group, and edited by Gabrielle and Doug Firmager. Copies are available from the Post Office in the Village Hall. An extended history of the parish can be found on the Wiltshire Community History pages of the Wiltshire Council website.<sup>4</sup>

### **2.3 The Parish today**

Around one thousand people live, work and go to school in the Parish of Semington. Semington is linked by road and rights of way to the nearby towns of Bradford on Avon to the west, Devizes to the east, Melksham to the north, and Trowbridge to the southwest. These towns are important to Semington as centres of employment, commerce, transport, secondary schooling, further education, health care and leisure. Although well connected to these towns, the village is separate, and both geographically and culturally distinct from them all.

#### **Illustrate with west wilts map**

The character of Semington is actively rural. In and around the parish, there are five working farms and several other agricultural small holdings, with much of the land being used for non-intensive pasture. The village, which lies to the south of the Kennet and Avon canal, was once dominated by the A350 running through its heart, but the opening of a bypass in 2004 provided a welcome respite, and since then the village has been actively rebuilding its rural character. The High Street is increasingly the heart and hub of the village; the place where people gather at the village hall, the pub or around the Christmas tree. The architecture of the High Street, with its attractive blend of old farmworkers' cottages, grander houses and the 18<sup>th</sup> century pub, is a key element of the rural character of the village. There are 33 listed buildings in the parish.

Semington is well connected, with the A361 and A350 providing road and rural bus network links to neighbouring towns and further afield. Like many Wiltshire villages, it has multiple rural rights of way. The byway to the west and the old road to the north provide cycle, equestrian and pedestrian access to Trowbridge (via Hilperton) and Melksham respectively. The canal and its towpath also offer pedestrian and cycle access to Trowbridge, Devizes and beyond, as well as to multiple footpaths and minor roads for circular walks and cycle rides.

#### **Illustrate with village images**

The community of Semington is active, with over 20 clubs and other groups covering a wide range of interests. There are also multiple small businesses, from farms to garages and narrow boat servicing, to the small businesses at the Turnpike. A wide range of community institutions including the primary school, the Independent Living Centre, the church, our sports facilities, the village hall and the Somerset Arms and the crematorium actively support the community and bring in visitors.

The parish is fortunate to have several buildings and structures of significant historical interest, including the 14<sup>th</sup> century St George's church<sup>5</sup>, the Victorian Poor Law workhouse,<sup>6</sup> the Brunel aqueduct on the canal, multiple pill boxes and other WW2 relics, Georgian and earlier stone houses, many of which are located in the village. There are others in the surrounding countryside including the 18<sup>th</sup> century Littleton Mill which was burnt down in 1802 during a protest against the introduction of gig and shearing frames. The parish has a number of notable houses built in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The village school began in 1859 but now has modern buildings. The village hall, built in 1933 and recently refurbished, is at the heart of the village, both geographically and socially.

The relatively light agricultural use of the farmland around Semington, with much of it set to grazing and grass cropping, together with the dew ponds and the water courses of the canal and brook, provide attractive habitats for wild flora and fauna. Deer, foxes, badgers, hares and rabbits are complemented by herons, kingfishers, kites, kestrels, sparrow hawk, ravens and buzzards, great crested newts, and a number of bat and owl species. Water voles and even otters have been seen in the brook, as well as less welcome mink. The canal is well stocked and

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<sup>4</sup> [history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getcom2.php?id=198](http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getcom2.php?id=198)

<sup>5</sup> [historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1262412](http://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1262412)

<sup>6</sup> [workhouses.org.uk/Melksham](http://workhouses.org.uk/Melksham)

draws people from afar to fish, while Semington Brook hosts a wide range of smaller fish and the occasional trout. Wildflowers are found throughout the area and ancient hedgerows are evidenced by the variety of species they host.

There are a number of significant landscape perspectives within the parish. The most prominent lie along the Kennet and Avon canal in each direction including not only the waterway itself but also the many bridges, buildings and other canal infrastructure. In addition, there is the brook as it meanders its way through the parish from Littleton towards the Avon. There are extensive and unencumbered views to the east from the southern end of the High Street across the parish with the iconic Roundway Down in the background, and to the west of the village where the fields run out towards Hilperton giving open views alongside the canal. The images on the parish council website show all these features.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.4 Housing Development in the Village

Up to the end of the Second World War, most housing in the village was concentrated along the High Street from its junction with Pound Lane up to the Kennet and Avon canal, and along Church Street. Other significant properties were near the old turnpike where the A361 and the old A350 now cross, and along St George's Road at the workhouse complex. Between 1801 and 1841 the population of the parish increased from 265 to 570 people, although numbers were swelled by the people who moved to the Melksham Union workhouse which had been opened in 1839. The population of the parish was in the range 400 to 500 from the 1841 census to that of 1931. Numbers then gradually increased to 930 in 2011, and the 2021 national census showed that xxxx.

### Illustrate with housing layout maps

Council housing was added along Pound Lane after the war, with the period from the 1960s to the millennium seeing further housing development along there and along St George's Road and Church Street. Recent times have seen further building along St George's Road and at the Turnpike. Most of these developments have been small scale and have included affordable housing. They have also had the support of the parish council and villagers in response to evidence of housing need, particularly through the 2014 rural housing needs survey carried out by Wiltshire Council.<sup>8</sup> There have also been attempts by property developers to build relatively large numbers of houses outside the village settlement boundary.<sup>9</sup> That these were unsuccessful is a tribute to the determination of villagers to retain influence over how, and at what pace, their village develops. As we plan for the future there is a broadly-shared view that our priority ought to be to maintain Semington's identity and rural feel by protecting its green spaces, wildlife and environment for the physical and mental well-being of those who live and work here.

## 2.5 The Planning Context for Semington

This Plan has been prepared with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 as well as guidance set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance 2019.<sup>10</sup>

As well as having regard to national policies and guidance, the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy/Local Plan. The Wiltshire Core Strategy was adopted in January 2015. The Core Strategy was prepared containing policies and principles on how the county will develop through to 2026. The situation is changing, however, because Wiltshire Council is currently reviewing the Core Strategy and it will then become the Wiltshire Local Plan. A review is required because the Government encourages local planning authorities to revisit their Local Plans every five years. Wiltshire Council formally consulted on the draft new Local Plan in 2021, and a new Local Plan is expected to be in place in 2024.

The draft plan published in 2021 gives Semington a new build allocation of 25 dwellings in the period 2016 to 2036. At the time of writing, one house has been built, 25 are being completed, and there is full planning permission for a further 26.

In August 2020 the government published its 'Planning for the Future' White Paper, though none of its recommendations have yet become enshrined in legislation or guidance.

This draft: 23 12 2021

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<sup>7</sup> semington.org.uk

<sup>8</sup> A 2021 housing needs survey by Wiltshire Council showed that xxxx

<sup>9</sup> For example, in 2016, proposals came forward to construct over 150 new dwellings which would have increased the housing stock by over 35%.

<sup>10</sup> <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk>

### Points made but unincorporated (as yet)

- section 2.5 is quite jarring, switching from easy, flowing sentences to more bureaucratic references to government and council documents. It almost reads like it should be a first paragraph on the entire document, rather than tucked away at the end of the section on the history of Semington

- I think it would be useful to give (if possible and known) quantitative about Semington today, for example

+ breakdown of residents of school/working/retired age

+ (general) location of and mode of transport to places of education and employment (and, conversely for people educated/employed in Semington, information about where they come from, and how they travel in)

+ evidence of participation in civic events (e.g., local and national elections, neighbourhood watch, parish magazine)

- A section on current utility provision (gas, sewage/drainage, street lighting, broadband, mobile, public transport, health, etc) might be relevant