

## Swindon Local Plan Review - Highworth FAQs

### **Brownfield and Alternative sites**

Before destroying an area that has already been designated for recreation by Swindon Borough Council, why do they plan to ruin this extremely well used area that is also haven for wildlife and is also vital for wellbeing and the environment. There are numerous Brownfield sites that should be used before Greenfield and Swindon Borough Council have a responsibility to use them.

What other brownfield (such as TS Tech which is up for sale), or even green field sites have been considered rather than building on recreational ground used by the whole community?

What other spaces could be used instead of this site that would offer housing opportunity but not at the detriment of this green recreational space? What other areas could Swindon Borough Council use instead of this site that would offer housing opportunity but not at the detriment of this green recreational space?

- a. There are a limited number of brownfield sites suitable for residential development in the Borough. Those that are suitable have been identified in the draft Plan such as at Kimmerfields and North Star. It is important to also maintain a portfolio of employment sites. The Plan also takes into account permitted office and commercial conversions to residential. However, the scale of growth requires the additional allocation of housing on greenfield sites. The choice of greenfield sites has been influenced by a comprehensive sustainability appraisal and availability of sites.

### **Scale of Growth**

Is Swindon using Highworth to bolster its housing quota? Has population migration been considered? Has account been taken of local job losses including Honda.

- a. The Borough has a minimum target of housing to meet which is determined by government household forecasts. The focus of development remains at Swindon particularly through the development of large urban extensions. However to meet the target and maintain supply according to Government policy, sites at Highworth and Wroughton have been considered and allocated in the Plan. The Honda Site has been sold and plans are developing for comprehensive redevelopment and job growth.

Does Highworth have adequate infrastructure (e.g., doctors, schools, road access) to support the increased population in these proposed houses and, if not, how will this be organised/arranged?

- a. In the settlement hierarchy the Borough, Highworth is identified as a primary settlement outside the Swindon Urban area having a range of facilities including a Town Centre and Secondary school. Development contributions through S106 and CIL receipts will be used to provide additional facilities where necessary. The provisions of doctors lies with the health service.

## **Type of housing**

Will 35% be allocated to affordable housing? Can we ensure it's only 2 storey homes and not townhouses at 3 stories? What are the environmental plans to make the houses meet high environmental standards?

- a. The figure will be 30% affordable housing in accordance with current and emerging policy. The types of housing will be determined at application stage and would be expected to be informed by Design Codes and consultation. The draft Plan includes polices to deliver higher environmental standards of construction.

## **Traffic Impact**

The Town is struggling with the existing road network. What is Swindon Borough Council proposing to do before increasing the number of houses & with it, extra vehicles, to enable the roads to cope? How will the already congested Cricklade road be managed with an additional 350 houses? The volume of houses being built in Blunsdon needs to be considered as part of this development as it will increase traffic from Cricklade road all the way into Blunsdon. How will the already congested Cricklade road be managed with an additional 350 houses?

- a. Transport modelling work is ongoing which will feed into consideration of measures to be determined through the Local Transport Plan. Each individual site will require a detailed Transport Assessment at the planning application stage.

## **Access**

Where will access to the development be built? Cricklade road or off the new Redlands roundabout?

- a. That will be determined at the application stage and subject to further public consultation.

## **Protection of Open Space**

How can we guarantee the planned 70% remains as protected land? Ideally becomes common land. How does Swindon Borough Council plan to protect this space for the long term and prevent any further development? Why can't our old Highworth Golf Course be this side of Swindon's 'Lydiard Park'? Can this site be given Local Green Space Designation? Before part of the old Golf Course is released for development, can the remainder of the land be registered as common land? Will the Council commit to working with the community to protect the old Golf Course as an Asset of Community Value or protect through mechanism such as Fields of Trust? The landowner could sell this land to a commercial entity, and we will be faced the same situation as the Gladman site. This could include the whole area. What guarantee will Swindon Borough Council give to ensure this will not happen?

- a. A comprehensive planning application will be required that shows how the 70% will be incorporated as strategic open space will be safeguarded for the benefit of Highworth residents. Future management arrangements will be put in place to

ensure it remains as green space. Further legal protection such as Common land or Green Space Designation is determined through legislation and subject to strict criteria.

### **Loss of Recreational Area and Wildlife**

Would the space not serve us better as a natural, wild space, perhaps with areas for specific community activities, for example a community gardening scheme, forest schools, ecological education, green gyms etc? – Can we consider this area to be a wildlife nature park, resource for education, rewilding project? What green spaces will residents of Highworth have left to use for recreation purposes? How will the damage to the environment through the loss of the mature trees, wildflowers and natural habitats be mitigated?

- a. The Local Plan includes policies to deliver a 20% net biodiversity gain as result of development through either on site provision or off-site contributions. Specifically on the Golf Course site the proposal is for the majority of the site to become a publically accessible green space with extensive tree planting and biodiversity habitats.

### **School provision**

Why can't Northview School be utilised rather than build another School on the Golf Course? The plan states that 30% would be allocated to 350 dwellings. I understand there's mention of a primary school, however is this really what we need given the closure of Northview just over ten years ago?

Do we know if the 350 dwellings make up the 30% and then the proposed school would be part of this 30% OR would this be dwelling only and then the school would eat into the remaining 70%?

- a. Northview school is an option subject to feasibility work. The policy requirement is for only 30% of the land to be developed

### **Enhanced Local Facilities**

What additional sports facilities and enhancements will be provided to Highworth by the developers? 4G football pitches?

- a. The policy includes a requirement of contributions to improve facilities at Highworth Rec. The details of which would be determined through the application in consultation.

How much would become available to spend on the current football area and rec ground? What other ideas or options are there to enhance the area for the community of Highworth and would funding be provided for that?

- a. This would be determined through the application process. The development will provide 25% CIL receipts for the Highworth Town Council. Revised Neighbourhood Plan could detail further community benefits.

Will there be extra supermarkets (whatever happened to Aldi?) as I can't see the co-op coping either.

- a. The Aldi is still planned to open. No other additional supermarkets are planned.

### **Existing Facilities**

Will the allotments or current football pitches be affected, or the road widened and losing the car park space either side of football field current entrance?

- a. Not envisaged

### **Parking Standards**

Restricting parking spaces per house doesn't result in people using public transport. It results in cars parked awkwardly all over the place, restricting access and making easy use of pavements and roads alike difficult.

- a. The Plan included revised parking standards which are more generous than previous and included EV provision.

### **Development Process**

Could Councillors please explain what Swindon Borough Council's thoughts are on the building of this land. Will they intend to get Planning Permission from their own Planning department and build on this land themselves or will they get permission then sell the land on to a builder at a great profit?

- a. To be determined.