

Report and Update for the
Community about the Salisbury
Neighbourhood Development Plan's
Community Engagement work in
September and October 2021

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Introduction

This report has been prepared for people who live in, work in and visit Salisbury by the Vice Chair (Councillor Chris Stanway) of the Steering Group and a community member (Kate O'Connor). The Steering Group is responsible for helping Salisbury City Council complete a Salisbury Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

You can find more information about the Steering Group and the SNDP on the [Council's website](#) where there is a designated section for Neighbourhood Planning.

Background Information

In early autumn 2021 we conducted our first consultation since 2019 when detailed work first began on the Plan, which covers the parish area that Salisbury City Council is responsible for. This recent consultation was not about everything that the NDP will contain. Instead, it looked at four sites that might be allocated for potential development in the NDP by early 2022. We expect to conduct formal consultations on the NDP after the New Year which will follow nationally prescribed rules.

The four sites we asked you about are:

1. Coldharbour Lane
2. Quidhampton Quarry
3. Brown Street Car Park
4. Churchfields Trading Estate (3 sites within or next to the Estate).

Our proposals concern land for housing, the kind of housing on that land and the benefits the “community” as well as new residents should obtain from any development of that site. By July 2021 we felt we should informally assess how the community were likely to view proposals for site allocations. We did not wish to leave this until the last minute!

An NDP Site Allocation allows a community to specify how a defined site might be used if:

- The site owner decides to change the existing use and undertake detailed planning work- or to sell to someone else to do that. The owner is not obliged to change the existing use.

- The NDP completes all legally required work to prove that what is proposed can be justified.
- The community votes in favour of the NDP as a whole. The NDP will have a range of things for consideration as well as site allocations.

A Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) is a separate legal process. Not all NDP sites need one. It requires more detailed work e.g. studies about flooding, bats, etc. If Wiltshire Council, as our Planning Authority, is satisfied that our work has been satisfactory the community can formally adopt the NDO – but only after Salisbury City Council runs a one-off referendum for that site.

An adopted NDO is the equivalent of outline planning permission. Again, the site owner has more planning work ahead. However, if they do not wish to develop the site in line with the NDO they can leave it undeveloped.

We expect to be giving you more information in 2022 about the NDP and any NDO referendums (who runs them, who votes etc).

July to Now

Since July, work has continued with a variety of partners. Our four sites are different and need to be treated differently. Where we can, we will try in future to consult about each site on its own.

We will also learn lessons from this first consultation, which demonstrated the need to be specific about ideas taken from developments outside Salisbury.

We clearly worried some people that we might be considering a multi-storey building on Brown Street Car Park. Rest assured we do not - but we understand why this caused confusion and apologise for it.

Wherever possible, we will only use specific materials about the site in question. That should be easier because of the detailed work now being done.

What you told us is set out in 4 Appendices, so you can read about 1 or 4 sites.

Reading them all may help you understand what we need to consider and the wide range of opinions and ways of looking at site allocations. You will see that people commented on other things. Many worried about “overdeveloping” Salisbury.

Site allocations and NDOs - looking ahead

The Steering Group expects to decide about the site allocations soon. This involves weighing up the case for each possible allocation – pros and cons.

We have Government funding for work on NDOs for Coldharbour Lane and Brown Street Car Park and continue with work on these.

We expect a further NDO consultation about Coldharbour Lane soon.

Brown Street needs more work on potential NHS and other uses of part of the site. We will also be undertaking a focused car park study at Wiltshire Council's request.

Subject to further funding there may be scope for a third NDO for part(s) of Churchfields. In the meantime, we commissioned a draft Government funded proposed masterplan and design guide for the estate which we will discuss with Wiltshire Council and others. We also plan a specific consultation exercise with people who work on the estate or own land there to discuss this.

We are not planning an NDO for Quidhampton Quarry. The owners are entitled to make an application for planning permission with or without an NDP site allocation.

We aim for the Steering Group, subject to Covid, to complete and approve a draft NDP in early 2022. The Group will then table the NDP and supporting papers to Salisbury City Council.

The City Council will be asked in 2022 to approve a "Regulation 14" consultation lasting 6 weeks. Regulation 14 means that the City Council consults everyone who lives, works, and carries on business here about the draft NDP and its supporting papers. There will be discussions with other interested parties as well.

NDOs go through a similar process.

We will make public what we are doing at all key stages.

Quidhampton Quarry Event 3rd November 2021

You may know that we held a "one-off" event after extensive leafleting of roads near Quidhampton Quarry. There was a good and lively turnout. Visitors met members of the Steering Group, councillors and the site owners' planning and transport consultant. This was led by a ward councillor.

The owners' consultants have been given access to all written comments and will respond to the Steering Group about these at the proper time.

Discussion ranged from building designs to making the site and planned paths fully accessible for people with disabilities.

There was particular interest in road access and sustainable transport.

Thank you to those that came to face-to-face events, gave written or verbal feedback, completed a survey.

Appendix 1

Coldharbour Lane

75.32% supported this in the online survey – it was most favoured of the 4 sites consulted upon. 154 made comments. We took a closer look at 93 supportive comments and 35 specific objections.

A substantial number like or love the proposed use of the space given that it is brownfield, where it is located and PROVIDING it is truly affordable AND remains affordable.

“Great to see 100% affordable housing and for older people who cannot afford to rent and run elsewhere. A nice location too.”

“I like this proposal and think it could form a lovely community.”

We had many practical comments/observations about the specific things that should be considered such as greening the site, carparking and other practical matters.

We have shared all comments, supportive or not, with the architect and the housing team working on what might be built and why. We have been closely involved in their key meetings and this will continue. All comments help.

Anyone reading the full report on the online survey will see that there are Salisbury concerns about:

1. What sort of housing is needed and if it is needed at all?
2. “Overdevelopment” in favour of older people and uncertainty about how to best tackle that. That applies even where people otherwise think development of affordable housing for older people is a good use of this site. It also applies to every site we asked about.

The NDP is paying particular attention to all this (although it is about much more than sites and housing).

Two people commented on assumed poor quality of design and complained about planning jargon being used. Our initial sketches were prepared for preliminary use with a range of people including people who currently live in a similar development. However, sketches and plans used in a next round of community engagement will be much more explicit about what might be built on Coldharbour Lane to ensure a “Salisbury” development. We will avoid jargon where we can.

6 comments focused on risks of flooding, contamination and the belief that the site should be green space in future. The site can only be developed if proposals demonstrate that flooding and contamination matters will be properly dealt with. That appears possible. It is unlikely though that the site owner/any future site owner would agree to decontaminate the site for a dedicated green space. The Neighbourhood Development Plan would also find it difficult or impossible to justify proposing such a policy given close access to existing green spaces.

8 comments outline concerns about Salisbury infrastructure, roads/traffic and parking generally or specifically. Detailed work is under way to ensure that this potential development addresses the local aspects of such concerns. We have also paid close attention to the needs of future residents on such a development for affordable/sustainable transport and parking arrangements.

Remaining adverse comments focus overwhelmingly on convictions that:

1. Salisbury is over developed,
2. There is too much housing for older, richer people,
3. We do not require more housing,
4. If we require more housing there is already plenty for older people - younger people must be given absolute priority,
5. There is not enough space at this location and similar.

Most people attending a face-to-face event also favoured the potential use of Coldharbour Lane for 100% affordable housing for older people. Written and verbal comments were remarkably like those provided via the online survey. There were similar concerns about development and so on. Also, similar differences of opinion.

We had helpful comments from people with sentimental connections to the gasholders site or a particular fondness for this part of Salisbury.

We think it will be possible to satisfy people in the NDP that there is a real need for affordable accommodation of a good standard for older people in Salisbury. Also, that this site is suitable for that purpose.

The whole Plan must convince an independent examiner as well!

Appendix 2 Churchfields Estate

56.9% of people completing the online survey supported this proposal and it was 2nd in popularity terms. 144 offered comments and we looked closely at 82 in favour and 62 concerned/opposed.

A distinct majority expressed favourable opinions such as:

“The Engine Shed is a good idea for development.”

“A good opportunity to upgrade Churchfields for both business workers and residents.”

“It might help to reduce traffic pollution.”

“Opportunity to ‘green’ the site.”

This was tempered by caution about possible contamination of the Old Engine Shed, potential river pollution and increased flooding risks. Much more information was asked for, with a query about whether Wiltshire Council has alternative suggestions.

There was distinct weariness with “yet another plan which will never come to fruition” and “Churchfields has been promised regeneration for a MANY A YEAR”.

Specific issues were flagged:

“Expectation of working from home is not a healthy social policy.”

“Poor access to amenities e.g., surgeries.”

Job creation needed before ... new housing.”

It is the case that redevelopment of Churchfields has been considered for some years and is covered by **the Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted in 2015**. That allocated Churchfields as a mixed-use development site for 1,100 dwellings with 5 hectares for employment. **The Central Area Framework (CAF) approved by Wiltshire Council in 2020** suggested a shift in priorities.

The forthcoming **Local Plan Review** which included a round of county wide consultation between January and March 2021 requires Wiltshire Council to confirm a strategy for Churchfields together with more detailed plans. They will need to consult further on this at key stages. We hope that the strategy and plans will complement the work of the CAF, encourage regeneration beyond the city centre and help satisfy community aspirations for this key area. We hope that the masterplan and design guide will do the same.

Appendix 3

Quidhampton Quarry

52.3% of people completing the online survey supported this proposal. It was 3rd in popularity terms. 172 offered comments. We looked closely at 90 in favour and 82 concerned/opposed.

- “This is a good proposal to provide extra housing in a wasted site, close to facilities, yet will not spoil the landscape surrounding Salisbury.”
- “With care given to landscaping and affordable housing it would be an asset for the city.”
- “Please make sure the estate has good links by bus and for walking and cycling. Very exciting if it is pulled off correctly.”

Not all responding were residents of the Salisbury Neighbourhood Development Plan area - we found their input helpful, though. We appreciate that for Wilton and Quidhampton Parish Councils this site will be - and is - of interest.

Many neither supported nor opposed development of the site. Support was usually conditional, e.g. only IF all housing was to be truly affordable. Detailed work continues to establish whether the Steering Group can support an allocation of the site. If we support it, it will be because Salisbury will gain affordable housing on a brownfield site and a development likely to meet other aspirations for specific benefits.

Observations were made about things that should be considered whether people were for or against the proposal. Concerns included infrastructure, traffic, overdevelopment in general, and cynicism about “affordable” housing often being no such thing for people needing to rent or buy.

There were numerous comments in favour of using brownfield sites, NOT greenfield sites, throughout this community engagement, in the online survey as a whole and for this site. Again, not all agree. There was confusion over whether this is brownfield (it is, in planning terms and practice). We are sorry this was unclear.

Some commented about the perceived quality of layout, design, and facilities.

Also important was how Salisbury and Wilton affect each other. Will developing this site improve or worsen that? How might this affect people in Quidhampton Parish? Co-location with Bemerton Heath was most critical.

People made comments about the planning history of the site, how the site should be used as a result or as a better alternative to other possibilities in Salisbury.

We are sharing all comments/observations with Wiltshire Council as Planning Authority, and with Wilton and Quidhampton Parish Councils. We have already copied in the owners of the site and their planning/other consultants.

Some points such as limited access have been known about for years and have been kept in mind when working on the emerging NDP. We will only support this site allocation when we are satisfied that there is a realistic possibility of that being dealt with. We think this might be possible. Every comment helps. Thank you.

What are important are the planning rules that Wiltshire Council and the Neighbourhood Development Plan must both consider. We may not rule out all development, especially prior to specific proposals being taken through the planning system. At that point specific claims e.g., poor design or the wrong kind of housing can be considered if there is supporting evidence to back the claims.

To sum up, both councils must respect planning law and rules. Both must focus on the actual evidence for and against a site or indeed a particular development.

The dedicated session, primarily for residents of Bemerton Heath, on 3rd November explored up-to-date ideas about the Quarry. The owners' planning consultants were able to talk through what they are doing. Comments about that and/or the whole NDP process have been especially helpful.

People attending any face-to-face event were curious about the detail, sometimes for/against or open to persuasion. The same applied in the online survey.

Those who were enthusiastic particularly liked the potential for an exciting new "green" development that would be "different" AND have affordable housing for younger people.

Appendix 4

Brown Street Car Park

61.9% of people completing the online survey did NOT support this proposal. 168 offered comments which we have considered carefully.

We recognise that more than 20 were particularly worried about what sort of designs might be proposed. Or that we might consider a wholly inappropriate development in a valued part of the city centre. We confirm that we would NOT support a development breaching the fine views of the Cathedral or one that did not respect the historic Chequers where the car park is located.

A Neighbourhood Development Order should increase the potential for some fine master planning of the site and encourage excellence in design and respect for the site's location and surroundings.

The CAF (2020) identified this car park as suitable for development.

The loss of any car parking from Salisbury or this specific car park was the single most important issue for many. Claims were made that we do not have ENOUGH car parking, or we have FAR TOO MUCH.

Where people thought that this car park could be redeveloped, they advised us to consider amongst other things:

1. Opening the privately owned New Street Car Park 24/7 - it's a convenient and central location.
2. Refurbishing, possibly staffing, Culver Street Car Park, which has access from the ring road and providing much needed electric vehicle charging there.
3. Making Culver Street much more acceptable to users – although not all agreed that this was possible or indeed necessary.
4. Improving the Park and Ride – longer opening hours were often mentioned as key.
5. More active travel options (cycling, walking, bus combinations).
6. Electric Park and Ride buses helping to reduce pollution and noise.
7. Clarifying car parking intentions for the Central Car Park, probably upgrading some or all of it.
8. The need for an agreed car parking strategy.

Parking issues revolved around convenience, safety, ease of shopping, location for this side of the city, lighting levels, overdue improvements for walking and cycling, overdue improvements for bus services, HGVs.

There was a strong emphasis on good parking provision (especially for the disabled) for new occupants of any kind.

“We need parking in the city” or “Are cars really more important?” There is no agreement, yet. This will be a key issue for further work.

Face-to-face or in the online survey, what many wanted was to see brownfield, not greenfield, sites developed, especially where there are services and facilities that people need and where there is employment. Brown Street was a classic site.

“This wouldn’t ruin the countryside as it’s in town already.”

It was also thought to be an ambitious development that might be beyond our reach. There could be no guarantee that NHS services would in fact be located here, that housing would remain affordable, or that a development would be cared for over time. Design also featured here, as did a fully green building.

However, there WERE some very positive responses if the community secured NHS services and affordable (for younger people) housing.

“What’s not to like about some decent NHS/GP facilities where patients might like them to be. Or even the GPs?”

Many were strongly attracted by greening the site and reducing the amount of car parking, traffic, and pollution identified with both. This links to improving the attractiveness of Salisbury to visitors and younger people (especially if combined with central affordable housing).

However, some worried that this might be greenwashing or that more green space may NOT be needed after all.

Those who favoured making this part of Salisbury greener thought it would help with sustainability and improved mental wellbeing. It would be attractive to younger people, existing residents and visitors.

“A potentially stunning environmentally friendly building.”

What are we going to do now with everyone’s comments and suggestions?

Our plan is to share and discuss all this with the people currently working with the Steering Group on its draft NDP.

We believe that even if Salisbury allocates the site and voters say yes, Brown Street Car Park will be a car park until mid-2024.



There is time to work through managing car parking and transport options. There is more to do on all aspects of any future redevelopment.