Representations to the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan II

October 2026

Regulation 16 Consultation Period: 13th December 2024 to 7th February 2025

Second Regulation 16 Consultation Period: 9th October 2025 to 20th November 2025

Introduction:

The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 seeks to update the currently adopted Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2026. The review aims to update policies to meet new national and development plan requirements using recent evidence.

Highworth Town Council undertook a pre-submission consultation on the draft Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 between 11th May to 24th June 2024, in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. This was followed by Regulation 16 consultation undertaken by Swindon Borough Council between 13th December 2024 to 7th February 2025. A draft version of the plan was shared with residents, businesses and stakeholders and representations were invited.

Following submission to the independent examiner, it was advised a Modification Statement should have been submitted as part of the Regulation 14 consultation and was necessary to undertake a further Regulation 14 consultation to meet this requirement.

The additional Regulation 14 consultation was conducted on 26th June 2025 to 10th August for comments on the Modification Statement and further comments on the Regulation 14 Highworth Neighbourhood Plan. Previous responses were preserved and carried forward to this stage.

A second Regulation 16 consultation was undertaken by Swindon Borough Council on the 9th October 2025 to 20th November 2025. This document provides a summary of all representations received from both Regulation 16 Consultation Stages.

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Received comments

National Highways
Dear Forward Planning team

Thank you for providing National Highways with the opportunity to comment on the submission draft of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2. National Highways is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network (SRN) which in this case comprises the A419 trunk road which passes to the west of Highworth and provides a key strategic north-south link through the Swindon Borough area. It is recognised that the A419 experiences congestion during peak periods particularly at a number of key junctions along the route including at Blunsdon.

We note that the current consultation reflects a full review of the previous plan made in 2017, and will cover the period 2021-2036. The plan only seeks to allocate one site for housing development under policy 1 – this is the site at Crane Furlong which is subject to a current planning application and has been rolled forward from the previous plan. Any further potential allocations will be considered through the emerging Swindon Borough Council Local Plan process. National Highways will be looking to work with the Council as its develops it's transport evidence base in support of the Plan, and the identification of necessary infrastructure and funding strategies to enable planned growth.

Otherwise we consider that the Plan's proposed policies are unlikely to result in development which will adversely impact the safe and efficient operation of the trunk road and we therefore have no specific comments to make. However, noting the constraints which exist along the A419 corridor, it will be necessary for any major development which may come forward within the Plan area and which has the potential to impact on the A419 and its associated junctions, to be supported by a transport assessment in line with the requirements of DfT Circular 01/2022 "The strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development" and the National Planning Policy Framework. Any impacts on the SRN which are considered severe or unacceptable in capacity or safety terms will require mitigation in line with current policy.

These comments do not prejudice any future responses National Highways may make on site specific applications as they come forward through the planning process, which will be considered by us on their merits under the prevailing policy at the time.

Kind regards

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Thank you for your email. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have no comments to make on the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 Regulation 16 consultation.

Kind regards

Historic England
Thank you for your Regulation 14 consultation on the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2.
There are no matters of detail upon which we wish to comment other than Policy 1.
We were consulted recently by Swindon Council on the associated SEA Screening. In our response (attached for information) our attention focused on Policy 1, in particular the intention to roll forward the site allocation in the current Plan for Crane Furlong. We highlighted that while the allocation may be unchanged the context within which the site was originally assessed as part of the previous SEA may have altered.
To ensure that a full SEA is not required with the second iteration of the Plan, and to demonstrate the ongoing acceptability of the site allocation in terms of conformity with overarching policy for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, we have recommended that a review of the site's context be undertaken, particularly from a heritage perspective. Swindon Council may have already been in contact with you on this matter and action put into effect to

address the issue we identified.
Otherwise, we would want only to congratulate your community on its Plan and in maintaining its enthusiasm for and commitment to the existence of up to date planning policies relevant to matters affecting your area.
Kind regards

Natural England (full letter appended)
Dear
Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 - Regulation 16 Consultation
Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 19 December 2024.
Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.
Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.
Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan. However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and to the following information.
Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further information on protected species and development is included in Natural England's Standing Advice on protected species .
Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice.
We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is necessary.
Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If an Strategic Environmental Assessment is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Yours sincerely

Defence Infrastructure Organisation (full letter appended)

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is understood that Swindon Borough Council are undertaking a Regulation 15 consultation regarding the proposed Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2.

The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 sets out the vision for the future of the area and a number of planning policies which, if made by Swindon Borough Council, will form part of the Development Plan.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Safeguarding Team represents the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as a statutory consultee in the UK planning system to ensure designated zones around key operational defence sites such as aerodromes, explosives storage sites, air weapon ranges, and technical sites are not adversely affected by development outside the MOD estate.

For clarity, this response relates to MOD Safeguarding concerns only and should be read in conjunction with any other submissions that might be provided by other MOD sites or departments.

Paragraph 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) requires that planning policies and decisions take into account defence requirements by 'ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.' Statutory consultation of the MOD occurs as a result of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives
storage areas) Direction 2002 (DfT/ODPM Circular 01/2003) and the location data and criteria set out on safeguarding maps issued to Local Planning Authorities by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in accordance with the provisions of that Direction.

Copies of these relevant plans, in both GIS shapefile and .pdf format are issued to Local Planning Authorities by MHCLG. An assurance review was conducted by the MOD in 2023 which confirmed that, at that time, Local Planning Authorities held the most recent relevant safeguarding data. Any subsequent updates to those plans were then issued by MHCLG. If there is a requirement for replacement data, a request can be made through the above email address.

The review, or drafting, of planning policy provides an opportunity to guide developers and to make them aware of constraints that might be applied to a given development as a result of the requirement to ensure defence capability and operations are not adversely affected by that development.

The area covered by the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 will both contain and be washed over by safeguarding zones that are designated to preserve the operation and capability of defence assets and sites including RAF Brize Norton and RAF Fairford.

To illustrate the various issues that might be fundamental to MOD assessments, a brief summary of safeguarding zone types is provided below. Depending on the statutory safeguarding zone within which a site allocation or proposed development falls, different considerations will apply.

The airspace above and surrounding aerodromes is safeguarded to ensure that development does not form a physical obstruction to the safe operation of aircraft using that aerodrome. The height, massing, and location of development relative to safeguarded aerodromes are factors of particular concern.

Birdstrike safeguarding zones with a radius of 12.87km are designated around certain military aerodromes and marked on safeguarding maps with a heavy dotted line. Aircraft within these zones are most likely to be approaching or departing aerodromes and would be at critical stages of flight. Within these statutory consultation zones the creation or enhancement of environments attractive to those large and flocking bird species that pose a hazard to aviation safety can have a significant effect. This can include:

- the landscaping schemes associated with developments including the provision of green/brown roofs, or roof gardens and/or
- the creation of new waterbodies such as reservoirs, wetlands, ponds and/or attenuation basins and other elements associated with sustainable drainage systems.

With regard to the Regulation 15 consultation document, the MOD have the following comments:

Policy 12: Biodiversity and nature recovery

The MOD request that; when drafting policy and guidance which addresses biodiversity, ecology,

and Biodiversity Net Gain; Swindon Borough Council bear in mind that some forms of environmental improvement or enhancement may not be compatible with aviation safety. Enhancements that require or result in the introduction of tall structures (whether temporarily or permanently), or where plants or trees are planted may degrade aviation safety, either by introducing physical obstacles to aircraft, or by degrading or compromising the operation and capability of safeguarded technical assets. Where enhancements include ground works that might result in open water (whether temporarily or permanently), the introduction or plant/tree species that bear berries or fruit, or the introduction of tree species that provide dense canopy, and the enhanced site is within 12.87km of an MOD aerodrome, it is possible that bird strike risk can be introduced or exacerbated to the detriment of aviation safety. In summary, where off-site provision is to provide BNG, the locations of both the host development and any other site should both/all be assessed against statutory safeguarding zones and the MOD should be consulted where any element falls within the marked statutory safeguarding zone.

The Crane Furlong site allocated in the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 Regulation 15 document fall within the RAF Fairford statutory safeguarding zones. Development of or exceeding 91.4m in height above ground level and/or development that might result in the creation of attractant environments for large and flocking bird species hazardous to aviation, including the potential for an environment attractive to hazardous bird species to be formed temporarily will trigger statutory consultation requirement.

I trust this clearly explains our position on this update. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to consider these points further

Yours sincerely

DIO Assistant Safeguarding Manager

NHS Property Services

NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB thank Swindon Borough Council for the opportunity to comment on the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2. We have reviewed the Draft Plan and confirm that the ICB have no comments to make at this time.

Thames Water (full letter appended)

Dear Sir/Madam,
Thank you for allowing Thames Water Utilities Ltd (Thames Water) to comment upon the above. As you will be aware, Thames Water are the statutory water supply and sewerage undertaker for the Swindon Borough and are hence a "specific consultation body" in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.
We have the following comments on the consultation in relation to our water supply and sewerage undertakings:
Policy 1 – Water Supply and Sewerage/Wastewater Infrastructure
We support the reference in Policy 1 D to the need for adequate water and wastewater infrastructure provision as it is in line with our previous representations.
A key sustainability objective for the preparation of Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans should be for new development to be co-ordinated with the infrastructure it demands and to take into account the capacity of existing infrastructure. Paragraph 20 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024, states: "Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for… infrastructure for waste management, water supply, wastewater…"
Paragraph 11 states: "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:
a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects"
Paragraph 28 relates to non-strategic policies and states: "Non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure…"
Paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF goes on to state: "Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary…."
Paragraph 27 states: "Once the matters which require collaboration have been identified, strategic policy-making authorities should make sure that their plan policies align as fully as possible with those of other bodies where a strategic relationship exists on these matters, and take into account the relevant investment plans of infrastructure providers, unless there is a clear justification to the contrary. In particular their plans should ensure that:
a) a consistent approach is taken to planning the delivery of major infrastructure, such as major transport services/projects, utilities, waste, minerals……"
The web based National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) includes a section on 'water supply, wastewater and water quality' and sets out that Local Plans should be the focus for ensuring that investment plans of water and sewerage/wastewater companies align with development needs. The introduction to this section also sets out that "Adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development" (Paragraph: 001, Reference ID: 34-001-20140306).
Thames Water therefore recommends that developers engage with them at the earliest opportunity (in line with paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF) to establish the following:

- The developments demand for water supply infrastructure;
- The developments demand for Sewage/Wastewater Treatment and network infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met; and
- The surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site and can it be met.

Thames Water offer a free Pre-Planning service which confirms if capacity exists to serve the development or if upgrades are required for potable water, waste water and surface water requirements. Details on Thames Water's free pre planning service are available at:
https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Water-and-wastewater-capacity
In light of the above comments and Government guidance we support Policy 1 D.
Water Efficiency
We also support Policy 1 E as it is in line with our previous representations.
The Environment Agency has designated the Thames Water region to be "seriously water stressed" which reflects the extent to which available water resources are used. Future pressures on water resources will continue to increase and key factors are population growth and climate change.
Water conservation and climate change is a vitally important issue to the water industry. Not only is it expected to have an impact on the availability of raw water for treatment but also the demand from customers for potable (drinking) water. Therefore, Thames Water support the mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day (105 litres per head per day plus an allowance of 5 litres per head per day for gardens) as set out in the NPPG (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 56-014-20150327) and support the inclusion of this requirement in the Policy.
Thames Water promote water efficiency and have a number of water efficiency campaigns which aim to encourage their customers to save water at local levels. Further details are available on the our website via the following link:
https://www.thameswater.co.uk/Be-water-smart
It is our understanding that the water efficiency standards of 105 litres per person per day is only applied through the building regulations where there is a planning condition requiring this standard (as set out at paragraph 2.8 of Part G2 of the Building Regulations). As the Thames Water area is defined as water stressed it is considered that such a condition should be attached as standard to all planning approvals for new residential development in order to help ensure that the standard is effectively delivered through the building regulations.
Within Part G of Building Regulations, the 110 litres/person/day level can be achieved through either the 'Calculation Method' or the 'Fittings Approach' (Table 2.2). The Fittings Approach provides clear flow-rate and volume performance metrics for each water using device / fitting in new dwellings. Thames Water considers the Fittings Approach, as outlined in Table 2.2 of Part G, increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in the new dwelling. Insight from our smart water metering programme shows that household built to the 110 litres/person/day level using the Calculation Method, did not achieve the intended water performance levels.
We therefore support Policy 1 E in relation to water efficiency.
Comments in Relation to Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems
The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that a sequential approach should be used by local planning authorities in areas known to be at risk from forms of flooding other than from river and sea, which includes "Flooding from Sewers".
Flood risk sustainability objectives and policies should also make reference to 'sewer flooding' and an acceptance that flooding can occur away from the flood plain as a result of development where off site sewerage infrastructure and capacity is not in place ahead of development.
With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, watercourses or surface water sewer. It is important to reduce the quantity of surface water entering the sewerage system in order to maximise the capacity for foul sewage to reduce the risk of sewer flooding.
Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SuDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change.

SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to: improve water quality; provide opportunities for water efficiency; provide enhanced landscape and visual features; support wildlife; and provide amenity and recreational benefits.
With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request that the following paragraph should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan "It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding."
Also to mitigate flood risk both on and off-site: "surface water drainage system discharge rates should be restricted to the equivalent Greenfield Qbar runoff rate or as close as practically possible, but never greater than 2 litres per second per hectare (2l/s/Ha)." in line with CIRIA guidance.
Site Allocations
The information contained within the Neighbourhood Plan will be of significant value to Thames Water as we prepare for the provision of future wastewater and water supply infrastructure.
The attached table provides Thames Water's site specific comments from desktop assessments on water supply, sewerage/waste water network and waste water treatment infrastructure in relation to the proposed sites, but more detailed modelling may be required to refine the requirements.
We recommend Developers contact Thames Water to discuss their development proposals by using our pre app service via the following link:
https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Water-and-wastewater-capacity
It should be noted that in the event of an upgrade to our sewerage network assets being required, up to three years lead in time is usual to enable for the planning and delivery of the upgrade. As a developer has the automatic right to connect to our sewer network under the Water Industry Act we may also request a drainage planning condition if a network upgrade is required to ensure the infrastructure is in place ahead of occupation of the development. This will avoid adverse environmental impacts such as sewer flooding and / or water pollution.
We recommend developers attach the information we provide to their planning applications so that the Council and the wider public are assured wastewater and water supply matters for the development are being addressed.
Specific Comments on Housing Allocation at Crane Furlong which is adjacent to Highworth STW
We made representations on this site in the original Neighbourhood Plan as the site adjoins the Thames Water Highworth Sewage Treatment Works (STW) site. Given the proximity of this site, located just to the south east of Highworth STW, we set out that an odour impact study needs to be undertaken and submitted by the applicant as part of their planning application submission and this was supported by the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Neighbourhood Plan review.
An application was submitted in 2019 with an odour impact assessment and is still under consideration by Swindon Council (Ref: S/OUT/19/1195). The odour impact assessment shows that odour mitigation is required at Highworth STW to make the site deliverable, and a S106 legal agreement will be required to ensure this is delivered. The S106 is under consideration.
We trust the above is satisfactory, but please do not hesitate to contact on the above number if you have any queries.
Yours faithfully

SBC Planning

Objection – Policy 10 Local Green Space
Highworth is a principal rural settlement to the north of Swindon. As such Highworth will, through the Swindon Local Plan and future iterations of Swindon's Local Plan(s), need to provide for a reasonable level of housing growth appropriate to the scale of the settlement.
The designation of the northern part of the old golf course as Local Green Space in Policy 10 of the draft Neighbourhood Plan is not appropriate as it severely limits potential options for the growth of Highworth. Growth options need to be tested through the due planning process – in this case through the Local Plan. A Local Green Space designation would severely prejudice future development options which may enable Highworth's future growth to be met in a sustainable manner. To allocate land as a Local Green Space in advance of testing those strategic options renders the allocation premature. The extant Swindon Borough Local Plan does not support the allocation of the site as Local Green Space.
There are three criteria for a Local Green Space designation mentioned in the NPPF Paragraph 106

• proximity to the community;
• special in character and
• local in scale.

Whilst the northern part of the former golf course site is close to the existing urban area, it is not sufficiently special in character to be upgraded to a Local Green Space allocation from Open Space – its current designation. It is also beyond 'local in scale' as it is considered to be an extensive tract of land that, if allocated, would likely cater for 'more than local' recreational opportunities.
Swindon Borough Council as Local Planning Authority therefore objects to Policy 10 insofar as it relates to the Local Green Space allocation at the former Highworth Golf Course, and considers that the designation remains as open space. The proposed designation as Local Green Space is premature in advance of the Local Plan Review, potentially prejudicing the consideration of sustainable development options at Highworth.
This debate is for the Local Plan, and not for a Neighbourhood Plan which must be in accord with it.

SBC Property Assets

Objection to Policy 10
On 17 July 2024 Cabinet considered a report on the former Highworth golf and agreed to consider 3 options for the future use of the site which are;

• Modifying the site to provide a country park setting;
• As a housing scheme with 400 residential units with 50% affordable housing provision, with the remainder of the site modified to provide a country park setting;
• As a housing scheme of 700 residential units with 50% affordable housing provision, with the remainder of the site modified to provide a country park setting.

This work is still ongoing and a report will go to cabinet later this year for a decision on which option is to be pursued. Two of the options involve developing the site for a housing scheme, of either 400 residential units with 50% affordable provision, or 700 residential units with 50% affordable provision. Therefore as site owner the Council object to any designation of the site as Local Green Space whilst it is considering the potential development of the site for a housing scheme.

Dear Sir / Madam,
HIGHWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2
We write on behalf of our client, Bewley, in respect of the current consultation on the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 2 (NP2) 16 Consultation Version.
Our client has land interests in the Neighbourhood Plan area, in particular Land at Wrag Barn Golf Course, which was the subject of an appeal following refusal of a full planning permission for 33 dwellings (S/21/0015).
Our comments and/or objections are set out below and are in the order in which they appear in the Neighbourhood Plan.
POLICY 1 – HOUSING PROVISION AND MIX
Part I of Policy 1 sets out that "Land at Crane Furlong, as shown in Figure 3, is allocated for residential development and should take account of the guidance in Appendix 1 of this plan".
Supporting paragraph 51 notes that the site is subject to a live planning application (ref. S/OUT/19/1195 for up to 57 dwellings), with supporting paragraph 43 noting the site was allocated for a minimum of 42 dwellings in the NP1.
Land at Crane Furlong is the only allocation that the NP2 proposes and is carried forward from the existing Neighbourhood Plan 1 (NP1). Supporting paragraph 49 sets out "The qualifying body sought advice from Swindon Borough Council regarding its housing need requirement for the Neighbourhood Area. The Swindon Borough Local Plan was adopted in 2015 and a new Plan is being reviewed and at Regulation 18 stage. The Local Plan and its housing requirements are now out of date. The Borough was unable to supply a new housing requirement for Highworth. As such, no new land will be allocated and the existing Neighbourhood Plan 1 allocation will be rolled forward in the Neighbourhood Plan 2".
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However, prior to the abandonment of the Local Plan Review July 2021, draft Policy SP2 set out the Spatial Strategy for the plan; this identified that sufficient land would need to be allocated to deliver at least 21,100 homes over the plan period 2018-2036. The strategy identifies that outside of Swindon and the Strategic Allocations development will be located primarily at Highworth and Wroughton which are the most accessible rural settlements and maintain the largest range of facilities.
Specifically at Highworth, the following Local Housing Allocations were identified;
–
Land east of Roundhills Mead – 250 homes;
–
Land at Shrivenham Road – 200;
–
Redlands Park, Phase 2 – 41;
–
Land west of Lechlade Road – 25; and
–
Land at Highworth Golf Club – 350.
TOTAL – 866 homes.
Of the total (minimum) housing requirement of 21,100 homes, the above represents circa 4.1%. In January 2022, following the Regulation 19 consultation, Councillors decided to remove the proposed Highworth Golf Course allocation from the revised draft plan.
Further to abandoning the previous local plan review process, Swindon are now embarking upon production of a new regulation 18 draft local plan to 2042, as supporting paragraph 49 of the NP2 acknowledges.
The First Draft of the Swindon Local Housing Needs Assessment (from November 2023) explains that the Local Housing Need figure for Swindon (calculated using the standard methodology and with a 2022 base date) is 999 homes per annum. The New Local Plan is intended to cover the period 2023 to 2042 and, at 999 homes per annum, this would equate to a total minimum plan period requirement of 18,981.
The 2024 based LHN figure is slightly higher, at 1,005 homes. Over a 19 year plan period this equates to 19,095 homes.
The new revised standard method figure (as recently published by the government in December

2024) is 1,205 homes. Over a 19 year plan period, this equates to a total need for 22,895 homes. Assuming that the percentage attributed to Highworth (4.1%) in the abandoned local plan review is applied to the new LHN figure, based on the revised standard methodology and plan period, Highworth would have a requirement of 939 homes.

Whilst it is accepted that the emerging Local Plan will have a requirement to allocate sufficient sites at Highworth to meet its identified need, taking into account the removal of Highworth Golf Course, and the scenario testing set out above, any residual need outside of the emerging Local Plan is unlikely to be met at Highworth as the NP2 does not allocate sufficient sites. Furthermore, whilst the NP2 recognises the removal of the Redlands allocation from the NP1 (considering this delivered as it has been built out), the NP2 fails to identify other existing commitments in Highworth where planning permissions have already been granted or built out.

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In addition, paragraph 14(b) of the NPPF states that for the neighbourhood plan to ensure that development which is in conflict does not come forward it needs "policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement". The wording of paragraph 14(b) points out that allocations are to meet not retrospectively 'have met' housing need. As mentioned above, the only allocation within the NP2 is subject to live planning application S/OUT/19/1195 which is 'pending S106 completion'. Therefore, once permission is granted following agreement of the S106, the NP2 will not have any new uncommitted or unconsented sites for future development, and as such it is not considered that the draft Plan accords with national policies to significantly boost housing supply.

Our client's site is readily available and deliverable as a site appropriate for further consideration. This is supported and reflective of the lack of technical constraints to the development of the land.

The site is free from any 'in principle' constraints that would deem it unsuitable for residential development. The site is not susceptible to flooding, with suitable drainage measures to be implemented. There are no known archaeological constraints, nor does the site comprise agricultural land. The site is currently accessed via the existing golf club driveway (access road) from a simple T junction from Shrivenham Road. The junction benefits from very good carriageway visibility.

The site is located outside the Highworth settlement boundary immediately adjacent to Land at Shrivenham Road for 60 dwellings (ref. S/OUT/20/1046 and S/RES/24/0519). Beyond this, the constructed Persimmon Homes development (Wrag View) comprising 50 dwellings (ref. S/16/1781) and similarly on the opposite side of Shrivenham Road 250 dwellings have been granted (refs S/OUT/20/0422 and S/RES/22/1681). In the context of these developments, the site would not appear as an anomalous development divorced from the edge of the built form of the town and would contribute to the sustainable development objectives of the development plan and the Framework, providing sustainable methods of transport and satisfactory access to services and facilities in Highworth.

POLICY 4 – TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND ACCOMMODATION

Table 7 of the NP2 sets out the existing visitor attractions in the Highworth Neighbourhood Area. Wrag Barn Golf and Country Club has been identified as an attraction within the countryside. Policy 4 states that "Proposals for the provision of new or extended visitor attractions including cafes, pubs and restaurants (sui generis), and other enhancements to the visitor experience of Highworth will be supported".

Since the Wrag Barn Golf club was first established, the need to diversify the business has been pertinent, in order to secure additional sources of income to help support the wider club facilities. In this regard, the club has expanded its ability to host corporate and private functions within the terms of the existing planning permissions for the site. This has proved vital to the business. As set out under the previous application submitted on site (ref. S/21/0015), the proposed development of the academy golf course will therefore help to aid the viability of the golf club and revenue generated from the sale of the land will help support the improvement of existing facilities, including but not limited to car park surfacing, new course drainage, new course irrigation and the installation of top golf.

POLICY 7 – DESIGN

Part G of Policy 4 sets out that "Major development proposals will be expected to undertake design review by means of referral to the Swindon Design Review Panel and the published

Planning Protocol of Highworth Town Council".
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In principle this is considered sensible, but we are unclear on the mechanisms or approach to such reviews given the lack of clarity in policy wording and supporting text. Given our comments on the housing requirement and spatial strategy above, it is considered that a significant number of major residential developments will need to be allocated and we do not envisage that all schemes of more than 10 dwellings will need to go through this process. Indeed, if this were to be the case, this would have significant resource implications and likely lead to delay in the delivery of sites. The requirement should therefore be applied flexibly and agreed through the pre-application advice process with Swindon Borough Council as opposed to through the NP2.
POLICY 12 – BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY
The proposed wording of the policy sets out at part C "Applicants for development where biodiversity Net Gain is a requirement should provide evidence in planning applications that the following has been investigated and, where necessary, will be implemented:
(ii) Where Biodiversity Net Gain cannot be delivered on site, Applicants must work with Swindon Borough Council to identify ways that it can be delivered off-site in the Highworth Neighbourhood Area
(iii) Where off-site Biodiversity Net Gain is proposed, this should be focused on the Nature Recovery Areas shown in Figure 20.
(v) Only where off-site biodiversity can be proven not be to deliverable within the Neighbourhood Plan Area can out of Neighbourhood Plan Area biodiversity improvements be considered".
The BNG Hierarchy sets out that if developers cannot achieve all of their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market. If developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government.
At present, the draft policy wording and supporting paragraphs does not acknowledge a delivery of both on and off site provision, or the limitation on development delivery if sufficient mitigation initiatives are not available with the Neighbourhood Plan Area. We therefore are of the opinion that the proposed policy wording should be revised to better reflect national guidance.
CONFORMITY WITH BASIC CONDITIONS
Having set out the above specific policy comments, we therefore assess the Plan against the "basic conditions" (see paragraph 8 (2) of Schedule 4B of the TCPA 1990). In light of the commentary provided above, we would contest whether the Neighbourhood Plan as currently drafted accords with basic condition a) which requires it to have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. As shown in our commentary above it is currently clear that the Plan will not accord with national policies to significantly boost housing supply.
SUMMARY
We trust that the examiner will consider the above comments in the Examination of the Plan and we look forward to continuing to engage with this process.
Should you require any clarification of the comments made or wish to discuss in further detail please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Dear Sirs or Madam,

REPRESENTATIONS TO REGULATION 15 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION ON HIGHWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

Claremont Planning has been instructed by Landhold Capital to submit representations to the current consultation on the emerging Highworth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 ('NDP2').

Landhold Capital has been promoting land for development at Pentylands Lane/Crane Furlong, Highworth for considerable years, and supports its continued allocation given the land was previously allocated through the adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The site is also the subject of a current outline planning application, under application reference S/OUT/19/1195, which is expected to be approved by the Local Planning Authority in the short term.

These representations will consider the draft NDP2, in particular, the proposed approach to housing and proposed continued allocation of the land at Pentylands Lane, which is strongly supported.

Housing

The proposed approach to housing through the draft NDP2 is supported, in particular the continued allocation of land at Crane Furlong/Pentylands Lane. As recognised in the draft NDP, the site continues to be deliverable, suitable and available, and is the subject of a current planning application S/OUT/19/1195. The application has been under consideration for a substantial period of time, however this is due to a specific legal wording issue, rather than any concerns regarding the deliverability of the site. Through negotiations with the Local Planning Authority, all technical issues have been satisfactorily addressed, and there are no outstanding objections. It is therefore expected that the application should be approved this year.

The proposed Policy 1: Housing Provision & Mix is supported, reconfirming the proposed allocation of Land at Crane Furlong and the expectation that the development should 'take account of guidance in Appendix 1 of this Plan'. The guidance provided in Appendix 1 of the NDP is considered further below.

Policy 1 also identifies a proposed housing mix, which is recognised as being informed by the Housing Needs Assessment. Whilst it is useful context for planning applications, it is considered that rather than applying an arbitrary percentage for each type of dwelling to all schemes, a more appropriate mechanism could be to identify a range, and reference that this should be wherever feasible and/or appropriate. This would allow for developments to bring forward an appropriate mix relative to the specific constraints and opportunities presented on a specific site.

Settlement Boundary

The inclusion of land at Pentylands Lane / Crane Furlong within the Highworth settlement boundary is supported, recognising the context of the currently pending planning application.

Appendix 1: Crane Furlong Development Brief

Claremont Planning has reviewed the proposed development brief provided in Appendix 1. Whilst overall the brief is acceptable, a number of amendments are suggested to respond to the current planning application and technical information that has been presented through that process. This should be reflected in the site's allocation, in order to ensure that the allocation is robust.

· The Allocation is Deliverable –

o The NDP identifies that the site continues to meet the definition of a deliverable site as it is available, suitable and there is a realistic prospect that it will be delivered in the next five years. As identified above, the site is the subject of a current planning application S/OUT/19/1195 which is pending consideration. The application is expected to be approved in the near future.

· Site Constraints –

o The draft NDP identifies that there are no significant flood risks associated with the site, although springs and ground water has been identified on adjacent developments. Through the planning application, no drainage issues have been identified, and the Council's drainage consultees are content with the proposed approach to draining the development.

o The draft NDP also considers potential issues relating to noise from the industrial area to the north, and odour from the adjacent waste water treatment works. Through the planning application process, it has been demonstrated that neither of these factors are a constraint to development on this site, with both issues capable of being addressed through appropriate design measures, including the provision of fencing and landscaping to the boundaries of the site, and setting development away from the north-west corner of the site.

· Site Requirements –

o The number of dwellings to be achieved on the site is identified in the NDP as a minimum of 42, unless constraints require a lesser number. It should be recognised the current planning application seeks outline permission for 57 dwellings, and the capacity has been informed by a robust technical assessment. A proving layout/masterplan has been submitted as part of the application, a copy of which is enclosed with this letter, demonstrating that this level of development can be achieved, and this is supported by the Local Planning Authority. It is therefore considered that the draft NDP should recognise the site as suitable for 57 dwellings, consistent with the current planning application.

o The draft NDP identifies that open space is not required to be delivered on site. The development proposals indicate that some open space could be delivered as part of the development, whilst it is also proposed through the planning application that appropriate financial contributions towards off-site recreation would be secured through a legal agreement as part of the permission.

o Odour is identified as potential constraint, which is acknowledged due to the proximity of the wastewater treatment works. The planning application has been supported by an odour assessment, and this has informed the masterplan layout provided as part of the application, and appended to this letter. It is considered that the landscape buffers identified by the plan included in Appendix 1 of the NDP is overly cautious, and it has been agreed that a reduced buffer will be satisfactory to address the constraint and ensure appropriate amenity for future residents.

o Two options for access are identified in the draft NDP, from Crane Furlong or via Pentylands Lane. Through the preparation of the planning application, all access options were considered, however it was ultimately determined that the only appropriate vehicular access would be via Pentylands Lane. This access has been robustly assessed by the Highways Authority, which has agreed to this access in principle as part of the application discussions. This point of access will minimise the impact on existing residents, and local objection to the planning application has identified that access via Crane Furlong would not be acceptable. The draft NDP should be amended to remove the reference to two potential points of access, instead identifying the potential for pedestrian access via Crane Furlong, whilst vehicular access will be via an improved junction with Pentylands Lane.

o The capacity of the site has been considered extensively through the preparation of the planning application, and as noted above it has been demonstrated that the site could accommodate 57 dwellings, whilst satisfactorily addressing the noise and odour constraints. It is considered that the capacity of the site allocation should be increased to respond to the current planning application.

o The draft NDP suggests that prior to the submission of a planning application, a design review should be sought. It should be recognised that the planning application has been with the Local Planning Authority for a substantial period of time, and therefore it is not possible for a design review to be sought prior to an application.

We trust that these representations will be positively considered through the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process, and the draft Plan will be amended where necessary to respond to the information provided. We would be grateful if you would keep us updated on future progress of the Neighbourhood Development Plan 2.

Yours sincerely

See PDF Attachment RNHW

As a resident of Highworth for over 30 years, I am writing to say that I very much support the following policies in Highworth's Neighbourhood Plan, currently out for consultation. Please ensure my comments and the attached document is put before the examiner.

1. Policy 10, to designate the top northern section of Highworth's old golf course as Local Green Space.
2. Policy 9, to designate the bottom southern section as Open Space
3. Policy 8, to protect the Landscape and Views

The attached document supports my arguments for this.

Thank you.

Highworth Neighbourhood plan

Policy 6.
Community facilities, and infrastructure.

Paragraph 99 doesn't specifically refer to a cycle link with Swindon. Listed with bullet points are nine projects, with "the provision of cycle facilities, and network improvements" as the fifth one on that list . This should be amended to specifically include a link to the Swindon cycle network. One only has to look at the Swindon cycle map to see that Highworth is completely left out. The S106 funding from the new construction should definitely go towards cycle infrastructure.

Policy 11. Sustainable Transport.

Cycling provision in Highworth is non-existent, in stark comparison with the extensive, well-connected cycle network to be found in Swindon. Yet both are located within Swindon borough council. Various routes have been suggested and discussed but it all Comes down to lack of funding. Which is a shame as more houses are being built and more young families moving in and everyone's more concerned about parking places for cars then they are for making it easier for people to walk and cycle into town and into Swindon.

Respectfully submitted.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below my response in support of Highworth Old Golf Course being given Local Green Status.

The reasons myself and my family support this are that is easily accessible, safe green space for us to use for recreation including, walks, running and cycling and we do use it all the time! I can take my children there for walks, where we often encounter various wildlife, including being lucky enough to watch the barn owls. We have pond dipped in the ponds and found all kinds of interesting creatures which was great fun for the children and a valuable learning experience.

There are beautiful views from the golf course, whatever time of year. It is a place I can easily access after a difficult day, to unwind and feel calm again.

I've taken my children for walks there and we take a bin bag and litter picker and collect rubbish along the way. The golf course means a lot to us and we enjoy taking care of it. We have also surveyed butterflies for Butterfly Conservation and seen so many lovely species. It is wonderful to have such a vibrant habitat on our doorstep.

For us this is the only accessable natural green space we can get to without using the car. Pentylands is completely the opposite side of Highworth and not easily accessible.

As Highworth seems to be a growing town, green space is so important for everyone's health and well being. There have been many times I have walked on the golf course and been able to improve my mental health and feel calmer when I returned home. It's important for as many people as possible to be able to access green space easily and preferably without needing to make a special trip in the car, especially when more and more green spaces feel unnatural, with so many people visiting the same spots and needing to pay to park your car. This really undermines the feeling of connection you can have with nature. A local space, that you can easily access and feel a part of is really important. It supports the local health service.

As a family we strongly support the recommendation for Highworth Old Golf Course to have Local Green Status.

If you require any further information regarding this from us, please get in touch.

To the Independent Government Examiner.

Dear Sir,

I feel very strongly that the Old Highworth Golf Course should be made an official Local Green Space in support of Policy 10.

Having lived in the town, in 2 different locations, for more than 48 years it has been an invaluable green area for all members of our family throughout the years. This asset is one of the reasons we chose to remain in Highworth when we needed to move to a larger property. We can walk, not drive in a car, to escape the noise of the ever increasing traffic and pressure of the town. Future parents should be able to enjoy the health benefits I did with my young children and now, as an OAP I regularly walk, sit on the bench to rest (or read in the summer) and benefit from the fresh air. The location is special with its views and wild life. We have collected blackberries & sloes with the youngsters and they have explored & made dens. Where else can they do this without driving miles and in safety?!

The pressure of life is very real today and we need this space for our mental health. Please do not take it away.

Yours sincerely

Hello Planning,

Looking at Section 8 and views into Highworth, seems to not recognise the importance of the views from the west. From the ridge at the top of the hill on the A361 or the footpath from Stanton the views into Highworth are beautiful and unique with the wind turbines visible to the east and the old golf course with its varying tree cover of different species is a quintessentially English countryside view. Cricklade is visible to the north and the downs to the south. New build housing on the area of the old golf course will destroy this view forever.

Under Sections 9 and 10, objections to the proposed designation of HOGC as ' local green space' under policy 10 & 'open space' under policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan fail to recognise the importance of this area to the community.
Both designations should be kept as the area is used by a lot of people, and not just Highworth residents, for leisure and learning purposes. These include dog walking, running, jogging, rambling, cross-country cycling & just enjoying time in natural surroundings. Foraging, nature study and learning about the natural environment are so important in today's increasingly urbanised world. Children cannot be taught to protect what they do not understand.
The views from the higher parts are outstanding and the whole area is returning to a natural state with a commensurate increase in wildlife. Flocks of Fieldfares, in the winter , sparrow hawks, kestrels, Kites hunting and being mobbed by crows and rooks are all part of this area on a daily basis. Go at dusk and you will see barn owls and bats flitting. Skylarks in the morning fill the sky with their song.
Highworth has seen a huge increase in traffic over recent years and this is just about the only easily accessible area where you can get away from the noise. I personally use the area daily on average for rambling, exercise, and relaxation and meditation.
I think that the whole area is a great asset to Highworth and certainly helps to maintain the town as a community. It is also a great asset to the surrounding villages and to Swindon.
Please keep these lovely, quiet, wild, wide open spaces! They are unique and their value cannot be stated in financial terms as they are irreplaceable especially in this area.
Yours sincerely

Dear All,

As an active member of the Highworth community I am in total support of Highworth Town Council's application to make the former golf course local green space. Policy 10 in the current Neighbourhood plan.

I have raised a petition to save this land and gained 4652 signatures on this petition which is 56% of Highworth residents which shows the strength of feeling to save this valuable area of green space.

I have worked tirelessly for 4 solid years alongside a large number of residents to save this space and the LGS application is certainly needed to give as much protection to this area as possible.

I was born and raised in Highworth, moved away at 18 and then returned to live here as I have travelled the world and Highworth is one place I call home, I now look after my elderly parents in an annex in my own home and it is their walkable area from Shrivenham road I am not adverse to housing development in Highworht as I live on Shrivenham road and have not objected to any development along my own road. However with current development Highworth already has expansion of over a third and I feel if this continues to increase then the absolute essence of Highworth's fantastic community spirit will be lost.

The top section is accessible to so many of all abilities and there is nowhere else people can go all year round without driving if this is taken away. It gives a fantastic habitat to wildlife and hedgerows and nature and we have worked with Wiltshire wildlife trust and have their buy in to proceed to protect the landscape further. Pentyands is too far for most of our elderly population to gain access and is flooded during the winter months.

For myself it is my refuge for my mental wellbeing having a fu time career and full time carer of both parents. I have a family and we all utilise this space to unwind and take exercise. We walk, run and cycle over there and forage. I also have an allotment where I grow organic food to obtain optimum health and the views and lifestyle this provides being in a scenic spot is my absolute haven and looking across to houses would not give me the mental relief that i so need in this modern society. Please do not take this away from me as I support not just my child but my elderly relatives also so the impact is not singular.

The ancient hilltop town and approach view to the town will be taken away and will never be replaced. From the site it have far reaching views to the downs and this gives me perspective to a much wider view than just my life and helps me to digest my life in far greater ways than I would be in a housing estate.

I utilise this space at least 4 times a week and when doing studies over their for the community we have witnessed over 500 people on days which also shows the popularity of the space and not just Highworth residents, people come from Swindon, Faringdon and all surrounding villages to take their exercise and

This is a sincerely heartflet email to highlight just what a pure way of living the community of Highworth has and to take this away by developing this land and increasing the size of our town more than a third would be criminal.

Please listen to the voices which are speaking very clearly to you.

Thank you

I am a resident of Swindon Street, Highworth and wish to OBJECT to the outrageous proposed parking changes to Swindon Street.

When HTC advertised the NHP2 to all residents in Highworth, there was great concern from all residents and establishments in the street regarding the proposed parking changes. A petition and comments from nearly all residents and businesses was submitted to HTC, who in their wisdom chose to ignore the comments of all people affected by their suggestions to improve Swindon Street.

There is a serious lack of parking for residents on Swindon Street, many of us park in the Rec car park, High Street, The Elms or Cricklade Road. This lack of parking is dramatically reduced by a continuous flow customers frequenting the restaurants and takeaways. On average we have at least 60 cars each night parking illegally on Swindon Street and the High Street.

By reducing the parking in Swindon Street by including tree planters and redesigning the parking West side will decrease the parking by 35%. This will force more residents to park on other streets causing anger and frustration from other residents. Again customers visiting the establishments will carry on parking illegally, double parking, parking in the bus stop causing more friction between establishments and residents. Installing herring bone parking bays from the junction with The Elms to the bus stop is highly problematic and very unsafe. On average we have between 180 - 240 HGVs and busses going up and down Swindon Street, quite often over the 30mph limit. The amount of cars using Swindon Street has dramatically increased in the past 5 years, causing air and noise pollution. As many of the houses/establishments in Swindon Street are listed buildings and in a conservation area all our properties have been affected by air pollution, noise pollution and serious vibration from the continuous flow of HGVs. Air pollution is a major concern.

The Swindon Street Residents Group submitted a petition and suggestions to HTC, here are the suggestions submitted to make Swindon Street a nicer and safer street:

Install flower/tree planters on the pavement
Repaint the yellow lines (very faded)
Speed limit to 20mph
Weight restriction from the Fox roundabout on Swindon Street and Lechlade Road

Yours sincerely

I strongly support the proposal to designate as Local Green Space (LGS) the upper area of the Highworth Old Golf Course.

Highworth is a hilltop town which is rapidly expanding outwards, and further down the hill.
This means that the distance between the town centre and publicly available green space is increasing significantly.
The only significant green space left within easy relatively LEVEL walking distance of the centre of Highworth is the Old Golf Course.
Highworth has a significant number of residents who would find it hard to walk further to other green space and then return uphill to get back home.

I am now 70 and used to look after my 100 year old mother. I was able to take her round in her wheelchair to see the old golf course, and she found it very relaxing.
As I get older, I want to be able to do the same thing.
Although I currently live at the bottom of Highworth I am in the process of relocating to a bungalow at the top of Highworth because I was finding it too tiring having to walk up the hill to the centre of Highworth to see the doctor or visit the Library or shops.
When I can no longer drive, I should still be able to walk or use mobility aids to get to the old Golf Course, but the rest of the green spaces round the edge of Highworth at the bottom of the hill will not be accessible without getting a lift in someone's car.

In the same way that Swindon has the Old Town Gardens on top of the hill so that people can get to it easily and don't have to deal with hills, Highworth residents should be given a similar area of local green space, which the old golf course currently provides.

In addition to just being an area of grassland, it provides an area where you can sit down and take advantage of the views and listen to the birds to help you relax and reduce mental stress.
It is far enough away from roads to be quiet. It also has car parking so people who can't walk there can easily drive & park.
It has a disused building that could be opened up as a café, like the one in Old Town Gardens.

Westmill woodland burial ground is rapidly reaching capacity, and part of the old golf course near the current cemetery could start to be used as a replacement woodland burial ground.
This could provide income whilst enhancing the area with trees, wild flowers and a woodland setting to encourage more wildlife for residents to see.
(My parents are both buried at Westmill Burial Ground & I find the whole atmosphere of a Woodland Burial Ground very calm & relaxing. If you stay still you start to see all the wildlife).
There is no reason why a Woodland Burial Ground wouldn't offer the same on the Old Golf Course.
Woodland Burial sites are not only for people who have relatives buried there, they are areas for everyone to enjoy the peace and tranquillity; to relax and watch the wildlife.

Kind Regards

As a mental health counsellor I wish to express my dismay at any proposals to build on land that is so incredibly important to the health and wellbeing of the community of Highworth.

Research consistently shows that spending time outdoors in nature has a significant positive impact on mental health, often leading to reduced stress, anxiety, and depression, while promoting feelings of calmness, happiness, and improved overall well-being; studies indicate that even small amounts of time in green spaces can provide these benefits, with the most notable effects seen when people regularly engage with natural environments.

I regularly recommend that clients make use of the Old Golf Course as part of their journey towards recovery as I do myself, on my own, with family or meeting friends for walks.

As a result of Covid more and more people are not leaving their homes and if we remove our green spaces this will make it even more difficult for them to lead a healthy and balanced life. Where will they go?

The Old Golf course has been in my life for the best part of 53 years. Living in a road backing onto this area, which was open fields prior to the golf course, it provided the Wrde Hill children with hours of fun - hide and seek, building dens etc.

This area belonged to the people of Highworth and up until recently it was protected. It has thousands of years of history buried deep in its soil. Roman remains were found within spitting distance. Are we going to be the generation that destroys this.

If you stand at the top of the golf course, you have the most outstanding views in every direction. It changes with the seasons, magnificent sunrises and sunsets can be seen from different parts of the open space. It really is a place of outstanding beauty.

The Old Golf Course would continue to be a place for our young people to enjoy nature and put down their computer screens. Learn about what nature has to offer them in terms of their wellbeing. A natural playground for generations to come and a place for therapists to use with clients for walk and talk.

This green space is special to me, my family and the population of Highworth please consider the incredible loss to us all.

Kind regards

I write in support of the top section of the Old Golf Course in Highworth becoming a Local Green Space, as in Policy 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan 2 by Highworth Town Council.

As a retired 67year old, I am aware of the need to keep up exercise for my health. My husband and I routinely walk around the Old Golf Course, which is our favourite place to walk! We walk there at least weekly in the spring, summer and autumn and several times a month during the winter. We appreciate the open space so much, where we feel a sense of calm descend over us as we walk through such a beautiful green natural habitat and enjoy the wonderful views.

As someone who is prone to tension headaches and migraines, I know that walking in such a peaceful environment is very good for lowering my stress levels and helping every aspect of my mental health as well as my physical health! I can feel my stress levels lower immediately as we walk into the open space of the top section of the Old Golf Course.

Many years ago I went for a free health check at Highworth library and the then 'health ambassador', Pepi James, encouraged the women that she'd had seen for health checks and subsequent advice, to form a walking group. I joined this group and for many years went on those weekly walks, usually around the Golf Course. I found it a lovely social time of walking in such a special place. Several in that group had been bereaved and shared how these walks with others in such green peaceful surroundings were very important in mitigating against the loneliness of their new life circumstances. I understand that the walking group still walks, usually around the Old Golf Course, on Tuesday mornings.

My allegiance on Tuesdays is now with Highworth Artists Society. Last year one of the leaders organised an outdoor painting trip to the Old Golf Course for us members to paint the stunning views, outdoors, in the beautiful surroundings.

The top section of the Old Golf Course has served us well as a wider family, we have gathered there for walks with our daughter's family and their dog. They come and stay in Highworth every school holiday. We have had family picnics there and fun games of croquet on the grassy patch just in front of the old golf shop. We have even encouraged our grandchildren to do some star-gazing there at night too, as it's such a good place to get away from the light pollution of the town.

We also appreciate the fact that the Old Golf Course is wonderful for wildlife, and therefore needs Local Green Space status to protect it's habitat. I have often spotted birds of prey, greater spotted woodpeckers, butterflies, etc there. In fact today I have received a news email from Butterfly Conservation, with an article stating how important moths are for pollination and that they are a vital part of the food web - without moths, many other species would decline. The unlit Old Golf Course is benefiting much wildlife which is not necessarily visible in the day, including moths. I quote from the news email:

"Our research showed that moth caterpillar numbers under LED street lights were 52% lower in hedgerows and 43% lower on grass verges compared to those which were unlit."

With the number of new housing developments in Highworth, I feel it's imperative that the top section of the Old Golf Course is designated as a Local Green Space so that the new residents and their families, (as well as Highworth's existing population), have the opportunity of accessing an open space for recreation without having to resort to driving somewhere for a walk in nature. Driving to find a Green Space would result in extra road congestion and more vehicle emissions, which would mitigate against Swindon Borough Council's policy of working towards net zero in an effort to mitigate climate change.

One main advantage of the top section of Old Golf Course being designated in the new Neighbourhood Plan to be Local Green Space, is that it is able to be accessed from the centre of Highworth easily. In particular, it is a flat walk from Cobbett Court, (comprising 42 flats for

residents over 60years old), located in Hammond Close, Brewery Street. This is where my parents-in-law lived for 16 years. My father-in-law in particular enjoyed walking from his flat to the top section of Old Golf Course and until in his early 90s he could enjoy walking there independently to admire the beautiful views. A heart condition prevented him from being able to walk the hilly route to Pentylands green space. I'm sure that other residents from Cobbett Court enjoy this walk, on the flat, to such a valued asset of our lovely town.

Thank you for reading my comments in support of Policy 10 of Highworth Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan 2.

Comments on Highworth Neighbourhood plan.
Having read the draft document and the associated documentation I feel that this it is a well Thought out and structured Plan, which takes into account the comprehensive surveys of the residents on all aspects of the document
It also takes account of future expansion, the proposals for changes to the High Street and Swindon Street are sensible and logical.

The Design codes for the Conservation area will go a long way to ensuring or historic buildings and town centre appearance is retained and enhanced.
Highworth is a 13th Century hilltop town, the road infrastructure was built to accommodate the horse and cart and is ill-suited to accommodating 21st century traffic flows. There are numerous pinch points that cannot be altered without removing the Historic buildings and inevitable settings of the town that we are charged with protecting.

LOCAL GREEN SPACE
As a Hilltop town space is at a premium, The Old Golf Course conveniently situated adjacent to the town centre is irreplaceable. The upper part provides vital all year-round easily accessible open space, vital for mental health and wellbeing, not only to Highworth residents but to the wider community.
There is no other open green space within Highworth that can do so.

The Old golf course
Has been in local authority ownership for over 50 yrs and in that time, it has sequestered thousands of tons of carbon, should the land be developed. the Fauna and Flora that have established themselves will be lost and a large proportion of the sequestered carbon will be released into the atmosphere.
Since the creation of Swindon as a borough, virtually all of the development of the town has taken place West of the A419. Logically the borough has developed its parks and open spaces to accommodate those residents living in the developed areas.
With the emphasis shifting to development East of the A419 the borough is sadly lacking in parks and open space with only Stanton Park to the east. Yet the Residents of 8,500 house Eastern development, 1550 house Kingshill lane Blunsdon development, and the numerous proposed smaller developments in Highworth will require open space for their health and wellbeing
Lydiard Park is suffering from serious issues with the health of the trees, caused by ground compaction due to the high footfall.
The no metalled paths at Shaw Ridge, Moulden Hill, Coate Wate, The Lawns and Stanton Park are in poor condition, again because of high footfalls. The retention in local authority ownership of the Old Golf Course will help mitigate these pressures and as the maintenance responsibility would fall to the Parish Council there would be no financial burden placed on the Borough Council.

Dear Sir or Madam
I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion in Highworth Town Council's new Neighbourhood Plan of the application to designate the top area of the town's Old Golf Course (OGC) as a Local Green Space.

My wife, my severely sight-impaired daughter and myself can and do access the OGC regularly from our home without having to cross the busy A361, something that is particularly important to my daughter. On average throughout the year, two or three of us walk on the OG at least once a week for 30-45 minutes and more often during the summer months; we believe that this is important for both our physical and our mental well-being.

I appreciate the peacefulness of the area, the far-reaching views over unspoiled countryside and the wildlife habitat that it provides, and I also support the community initiative for the OGC to be developed as a nature park.

More generally, there are already several large housing developments in progress around the periphery of the town and little green space in the centre. I believe that it is particularly important to retain the top area of the Old Golf Course as a Green Space because of its close proximity to and accessibility from the centre of Highworth and the amenity it offers to all residents.

I urge that the designation of the top of the OGC as a Local Green Space should be endorsed.

Yours faithfully

I would like to object to Swindon Borough Council's proposal to build houses on Highworth Old Golf Course. With the current and future planned growth in other parts of the town, the Old Golf Course would be an even more important green space for exercise. It is currently used by significant numbers of adults and children on a daily basis for outdoor exercise. Unlike many other green spaces in Highworth it does not become waterlogged in winter and it is a haven for wildlife throughout the year.
My wife and I are both in our late 70's and regularly walk our dog here as it easy walking in open countryside. We particularly appreciate the opportunity to rest on a seat and enjoy the tranquility and scenery of this elevated position before continuing our walk. We are constantly being told that we should immerse ourselves in nature for our mental and physical well being.
Whilst no large development is ever welcome, expansion of other sites in the Highworth area would not result in the same loss of publicly accessible space.

When it was proposed to build on the green space in Highworth some years ago I was part of the significant group who protested against it. That is the only time I have attended a protest in my life. I perceived it to be that important and I still do.

The Highworth plan is well conceived and well written and should be supported. I do.

The views are nice but not important in this moment. Two things are of overriding importance. The first is health of the local population. The second is the protection of the environment, including its animals and plants.

Highworth is on a hill. We all know this but it is important. The hill allows drainage and, as can be seen when rain falls, intermittent springs start to flow - enough to cause damage to main roads and to make the lower parts of the hill muddy and difficult to walk through.

Much of the old golf course is used on a daily basis by two groups - the elderly and young parents with their children. I, aged 78, am one of the former group but I used to be part of the other as my children were born here. We know its value first hand.

I use it regularly and it is a significant part of the reason that I still can. I also appreciate the area's beauty, which helps my well-being.

The other matter is the environment and its wildlife. I can understand the argument for refusing development because of a newt but that is insufficient. What matters is what we have and that it is improving. We have foxes, badgers, hedgehogs, crows, a myriad of smaller birds, some that are unusual and others that disappear when an area is built over.

I ask that you keep to the plan. We are already building on farmland towards Sevenhampton, and Blunsdon is growing this way. If it is permitted to continue we will regret it forever but be unable to reverse it.

I request that the council does not permit this to happen.

Regards,

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to express my support for the inclusion in Highworth Town Council's new Neighbourhood Plan of the application to designate the top area of the town's Old Golf Course as a Local Green Space.

As a severely sight-impaired lady being able to access the Old Golf Course easily from my home without having to cross the busy A361, is essential to me. On average over a year, I walk on the Old Golf Course at least twice a week for 30-45 minutes; something that is very important for both my physical and mental well-being. As someone who works from home this beautiful space is essential to pause from the busyness of life and get some much needed fresh air and exercise. I enjoy the peacefulness of the area, the birdsong and natural flowers alongside the fabulous views over unspoiled countryside and the wildlife habitat that it provides and I therefore strongly support the community initiative for the Old Golf Course to be recognised as a nature park.

With so much of our beautiful countryside being overdeveloped we all need access to green areas and once developed the damage is done particularly because with my disabilities I cannot drive. Moreover, it would surely be a better policy to regenerate empty offices and other unused buildings than developing this beautiful space.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion in Highworth Town Council's new Neighbourhood Plan of the application to designate the top area of the town's Old Golf Course as a Local Green Space.

Myself and my severely sight-impaired daughter frequently use the Old Golf Course as the only accessible area for us to exercise and enjoy some fresh air in Highworth.
We live on the Swindon Road which does not have pavement on our side.
My daughter who is an adult cannot cross the road unaided at certain times of the day due to the level of traffic and the speed at which it moves.
My daughter works from home which means the Old Golf Course is the only space where she can get to independently.

The Old Golf Course is a beautiful and peaceful place to walk and enjoy the surrounding scenery and bird life.

Like so many places in our country Highworth is being developed without much thought to the needs of the community. We need pleasant places to walk - without getting into a car - nearby for all of our well being.

I hope you will take my view into consideration when deciding on the future plans

Yours faithfully

To Whom it May Concern,

This is my personal response to the subject consultation regarding Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 but, it also represents my family's story.

In 1983, as a serving member of the Royal Air Force I found myself and my young family posted to RAF Brize Norton. My 2 children, aged 9 and 11, were facing a move to their 5th home and 4th school having started school in the then West Germany, moving to Lincolnshire and then South Wales and now Highworth; a challenge faced by many young service families and their children.

My answer to this family issue was to set down family roots. After a great deal of research and pondering, my wife and I chose to make Highworth our long term family home and so, in 1984, it came to be so.

Now in 2025, we are 3 generation, still all living in Highworth. We remain here because despite the fundamental changes that we have seen in the last 41 years, we remain committed to the lovely ancient hilltop town that is Highworth and the surrounding views and green space. I and my family therefore support the subject Local Plan.

Having participated, as a local resident, in the process of developing the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan and Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, I strongly support The Plan in general. However, I place particular emphasis on the following aspects of of The Plan as being fundamental to the preservation of the identity, integrity character and beauty of our town and continuing provision of the quality of life that I have strived to give my children, grandchildren now, and for future generations to follow :

- Policy 3, Town Centre Improvements as set out in Paragraphs 77 to 80 and Table 6;
- Policy 8. Landscape and Views in its entirety;
- Policy 9. Open Space 9 in its entirety; and
- Policy 10, Local Green Space in its entirety.

Politically, Highworth may part of the Borough of Swindon but geographically, it is independent of

the sprawling urbanisation that Swindon has become. It is an ancient and historical hill top town surrounded by green field agricultural land it is this that has attracted families to move here to occupy the approximately 500 new build homes that have been built here in the last 10 or so years. As such, it is imperative that all residents can now continue to have access, within safe walking or cycling distance to the local green space and leisure facilities that brought them to our wonderful town.

Yours faithfully,

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan's proposal to designate the top half of the Old Golf Course (OGC) as Local Green Space and the bottom half as formal Open Space. As a father and husband, the preservation of the OGC is incredibly important to my family and me. It provides a space for us to exercise, play, enjoy, and create lasting memories.

Since moving to Highworth two years ago, the OGC has been a key factor in our decision to settle here long-term. While I understand the need for housing, I believe that the OGC is not a suitable location for development. Building on this beautiful re-wilded open space would be a grave error on the part of Swindon Borough Council. It would deprive the community of a crucial resource that significantly enhances our physical and mental well-being and disrupt the flora and fauna that have made it their home. Additionally, removing this space would lead to poorer general health for the local population, both physically and mentally, and increased car use, resulting in more pollution and congestion as people would then needlessly need to travel to other green spaces for the same benefits.

Regarding Policy 8 - Landscape and Views, the vistas from the OGC are stunning and provide a sense of serenity in our otherwise hectic lives. I urge you to consider these views as part of the required Landscape and Visual Assessment for any development proposals.

I fully support Policy 9 - Open Space, which proposes to designate the bottom half of the OGC as formal Open Space, offering some degree of protection.

Most importantly, I wholeheartedly endorse Policy 10 - Local Green Space, to preserve the top half of the OGC as a green, accessible open space cherished and frequently used by Borough residents. With over 300 species of flora and fauna documented on the OGC, its ecological value is immense. Additionally, I support the Town Council's costed Business Proposal for recreational use of the land.

In conclusion, I urge you to make the right decision and preserve the Old Golf Course for the people of Highworth, the children, and future generations, as was intended when it was entrusted to them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

To Whom it may concern.

It holds immense importance for me and my family that the Old Golf Course remains a cherished Local Green Space, as per Policy 10 of the neighborhood plan.

The space is conveniently located within walking distance of the town center and my residence, allowing me to enjoy daily walks, either solo or accompanied by my husband and children. Its accessibility is a key factor, as I frequently witness diverse groups of people using the space, including parents with children (both with and without dogs), elderly individuals, and groups of friends. I've even seen individuals using walking sticks and mobility scooters to fully utilize the area.

I personally utilize the space daily to walk my dog, run, and relish the tranquility it offers. The breathtaking views, the symphony of birdsong, and the presence of various wildlife, including rabbits, hares, deer, pheasants, woodpeckers, and even a couple of barn owls, create a sense of escapism from the demands of work, the hustle and bustle of daily life, and the stressors that come with it. This space serves as a catalyst for slowing down and finding moments of relaxation.

In these times of remote work and limited social interactions, I genuinely believe that this space is vital for my health and well-being. The chance to bump into people on my walks, exchange greetings, and engage in conversations is a significant source of joy. The relaxed pace of the walk allows for more time to connect with others.

It's also easy to entice my children to join me on these walks. The quick and convenient access to the space eliminates the need for a car ride, and they absolutely love running along the numerous paths and exploring the old bunkers. In fact, they even requested that I wake them up early in the spring (at 6 am) so they could witness the Barn Owl hunting. It's wonderful that my children get to experience such diverse wildlife.

The Old Golf Course boasts a rich variety of landscapes, including woodland areas, mowed grasslands, and wildflower meadows. There's always something new to discover and discuss with my children, fostering their curiosity and appreciation for nature.
Local green spaces are of utmost importance for everyone's well-being. However, with the increasing number of houses and solar panel farms being built around the area, our countryside is shrinking for both us and the wildlife. One of the primary reasons we chose Highworth 11 years ago was its hilltop location, as well as its rich history and the breathtaking views and countryside surrounding it. We are avid walkers and make every effort to get out and explore as much as possible.

It is of utmost importance to the community that this green space remains accessible and beneficial to all.

Regards

I am writing to put forward my strong support for the top section of The Old Golf Course in Highworth to permanently remain as an open green space, so it can be enjoyed by all residents & visitors to Highworth.

This beautiful slice of countryside is a wonderful asset to our town which is so valued & appreciated by our community. I cannot emphasise enough how much this open green space is used & loved by walkers of all ages, as well as runners, nature watchers & dog walkers throughout every season of the year. It's a wonderful space for engaging in some exercise, chatting to passers-by & observing the wildlife, trees & wild flowers. All of this whilst enjoying magnificent open countryside views in a safe open space. You cannot put a price on that, can you? Ask anyone from our community & you will learn just how much of an asset The Old Golf Course is to them. Why would anyone want to take it away from the good people of Highworth?

From a personal perspective, I have made Highworth my home for the last 45 years. Why did I choose to live here? Because of the rural aspect of the town & the fact I have been able to enjoy the countryside on my doorstep. I really value the fact I can walk from my home & within minutes I can enjoy the freedom & benefits of the countryside. I no longer drive very far & so it's vitally important for me to access this open green space so I can maintain my independence & mental well-being. I know many people in the Highworth community who are in a similar position to me & who would also be devastated if this wonderful asset were taken away. And for what purpose? So that yet more houses can be built on this land, without thinking about the repercussions of this unnecessary action. Highworth already has hundreds of new houses currently being built with many more planned, which is destroying precious natural habitat in the process!

I cannot emphasise enough how important The Old Golf Course is to the health & wellbeing of the Highworth community. Please leave this precious piece of land untouched for children to play on & where people can meet & relax. A wonderful green space to be enjoyed & appreciated by generations to come.
Thank you.

I am adding my voice to those others who feel equally strongly on the future of this vitally important site.
The OCG is a prime and important green space for the for the wellbeing of not only Highworth residents, but for visitors to our lovely town and those from other villages.
My reasons for supporting the development of OCG into a Nature Park are for preservation and posterity. We have a growing population - this is a wonderful green space for people to exercise, walk with children, friends, dogs. Children are increasingly computer and mobile bound and we are running out of green spaces.
Preservation: protection of hilltop town status of our ancient town.
I wholeheartedly support the plan to protect wildlife.
A Nature Park will provide wellbeing, calmness and therapeutic use of the OCG.

Dear Sir/Madam

i have lived on Swindon Road for over 20 years and walk my dog over at the golf course twice aday. I have met so many different people over there by just walking,

to build over there will be a great shame as the traffic would increase tenfold.

Too lose the area would be horrendous for us as a family and for all the wildlife that lives there.

Regards

Good afternoon
I am writing in support of the proposed 'Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2' as a very considered and well written document

Having made the decision to move our young family here a few years ago to live in a market town with a thriving community spirit we have big concerns with some of the proposed changes that have been outlined in the Swindon plan
Our children are in local schools, we shop in the independent businesses, use the leisure centre many times a week and value the open spaces available

Although I am pleased to read about improved cycle routes, public transport and maintaining the character of the town, I note the following points:

-improving the visual and physical appearance of the town;
-prevention of significant adverse environmental impact;
-provision of a range of social and recreational facilities

And therefore I would like to express a significant point about the 'Old Golf Course' within item 10 'Local Green Space' of the Highworth Plan, I am outraged that SBC are even considering building on this valued piece of green space. I understand we need more housing, but surely there are more appropriate brown field sites within the Swindon area ?
This is an important green space which will protect our market town and is within easy walking distance of the high street
We regularly use this area for walking with the kids and a great place for them to learn about local habitats – ironically they learn in school about protecting the environment but we are potentially taking that away from them !

To sustain the area, could we not propose a community café at the OGC for all to use and make it a visitor attraction as with Stanton Park, as you mention in the SBC Plan you want Highworth to be a tourist attraction and 'a gateway to the Cotswolds'…

Many thanks

To whom it may concern,

I grew up in Highworth and have returned, but been watching with interest the ongoing saga and unnecessary fight that the residents of Highworth have had to make to ensure the Old Golf Course stays a free open space and clear of residential buildings over many years.

The only incentive I can see for the Council (and SBC) is the remuneration it would receive for selling land to a developer!

I am shocked and appalled that after the many years the residents have continually expressed their views to the Council to keep the site an open space for the benefit of their mental and physical health, we are still being asked to help the cause. Surely, it is been made very plain what we want! I know the space had a covenant on it and someone within the Council (whether it be HBC or SBC) didn't ensure it was continued - was this because they hoped to sell the land and profit from it? I suspect that the Council has actually wasted a huge amount of money from designing and redesigning all the plans which have been circulated and announced over the years and nothing has come to fruition.

Within Highworth there isn't much open flat space within walking distance that allows locals to commune with nature, dog walk, children play/run around and now you are taking this away from us? The area you are designating to keep open isn't suitable - it is submerged by water a lot of the time; at the bottom of the hill (so hard for the ageing/less mobile residents to walk to) and doesn't give any views. I just cannot understand your thinking or rationale. I fear that it just comes back to the basic greed of the Council to try and recoup some money to fill their coffers before bankruptcy!

We need to be so careful because once this space has been absorbed by housing, it has gone forever. The future generations of the town will not have open spaces and they are the generations that are severely impacted by mental health issues, especially after covid. It has been proven that open spaces can alleviate this and are extremely beneficial.

I implore you to rethink your strategy and leave Highworth alone.

Thank you for your time.

We wish to express our support for the Old Golf Course becoming a local green space that is protected for years to come and to let you know how devastated we would be if this were not the case.

The golf course is at the bottom of my road and over the years provided so much fun for my 3 children and their friends. Hide and seek, building dens, enjoying being out in the fresh air having fun.

Its locality provides an easy place to meet friends and family for a walk. The space provides breathtaking views, and a whole host of wildlife that would be lost forever if built on.

The golf course provides us with valuable daily exercise, a safe space to get out from our 4 walls. Having recently had a hip replacement, I was able to use the Old Golf Course to build up my strength and recover.

You may not be aware of the Roman remains found on the edge of the golf course, in the last house in Wrde Hill. This area is historical and I am sure has much more to be found, how sad would it be to destroy our history.

We appear to be living in a world that is consumed by technology, if we get rid of our green spaces where does this leave us, staring at screens?

This space must be saved and used to provide us and the generations to come with a space to enjoy the views from every angle, learn and protect the wildlife.

Regards

Dear Sirs,

We are writing in support of Policy 10 of the proposed new Neighbourhood Plan.

The Green Space formed from The Old Golf Course is a zone of tranquility within easy reach of the urbanized areas, with accessibility for all. It is well maintained with Moen walkways (many thanks to High worth Town Council for their excellent work here) so that we are able to see visitors of all ages and abilities, often seeing push chairs with young children and older people with mobility issues.

Such an area allows access to fresh air and exercise, promoting physical and mental well-being on both personal and community levels, for the local populace. The need for such an area of well-being, comfort and happiness can only increase, given the approximately 10% increase in households within the town which have been approved.

The site also provides a rich, biodiverse habitat which enriches the Town and local area. Through being undeveloped various native flora and fauna have been able to thrive and expand; creating an area of nature sustainability and urban vegetation.

The Old Golf Course is an asset and amenity to the residents (and visitors) which allows an area to escape from the built up commercial and already expanding residential majority of the town, within a few minutes walk.
That this amenity is available and accessible to the vast majority of residents on foot prevents added traffic and consequential ecological damage.

Should this facility be lost, there will be serious impact on community health and welfare, with subsequent strain to healthcare services as well as a serious degradation to local wildlife and it's habitats, all of which will lead to an erosion of the character of the town and surrounding countryside.

Yours Sincerely,

My wife and I came to live in Highworth nearly 50 years ago.
The town is our home.
We are both in our 80s and, like so many elderly residents, rely on the Old Golf Course for its accessibility.
It provides safe opportunities for exercise in the fresh air, away from noise and traffic.
Possibly more important is being able to relax the mind in this beautiful setting, such a help to mental wellbeing in these turbulent times.
Where else in Highworth have we these facilities?
If it's lost, it's gone for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren. It's lost forever.
We hear suggestions that "only the upper part, nearest the town" would be built over.
That would mean the remaining area, being further away from the town, could be accessed by fewer people.
The lower area is also less attractive than the upper, which has superb views and does not become as slippery and muddy in wet weather.
We recognise that houses must be built, but to do so and destroy this irreplaceable gem would be a very sad day for us all.
Please think very carefully about our Old Golf Course.

With Kind regards,

Dear Sir/Madam

I know that there are serious discussions going on regarding the possibility of building on this beautiful space.

I understand the need for more housing but feel very strongly that there are better places within Highworth to do this.

I have lived in Highworth since the age of 8 and moved here in 1974.

I have volunteered as both a Cub Scout Leader and Highworth Juniors Football Club and know many people within the town and all are opposed to building there.

Highworth, for its size, has always had very poor facilities. Playgrounds are poor for youngsters compared to many other towns and indeed villages.

What we have had is beautiful countryside around us. I walk with my life on the Old Golf Course most weekends and we love it. It is good for our mental health and easily accessible, free and beautiful.

You see children in that area and parents feel happy to let their children play there.

If we can't walk there it will affect that and cause us to drive elsewhere and walk, which is not good for Green credentials.

It makes us feel better when we go there. It boosts our mental health. It is a fantastic place for wildlife to flourish and we have really come to appreciate it since Covid. It helped us get through it.

Highworth just doesn't have the facilities to support mass house building, as it is so much more difficult to get a doctors appointment and I know that school places are now more difficult to get.

Please don't take away the one area which gives us relief from all the misery in this country at the moment.

Kind regards

As a concerned resident of Highworth, here are my comments on various policies regarding the Highworth NP2:

Policy 4: Tourism. Highworth is located in a prime spot for tourism, with the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the South, and the Cotswolds to the north, not to mention Cotswold Lakes nearby to the west. All could be accessible if the National Cycle Network joined up Highworth with one of its existing routes, thereby increasing footfall in the cafes and shops of Highworth. SBC is missing a great opportunity to welcome tourism…. Highworth is a great potential destination for Cycle Tourism, which is a growing trend.

Policy 6: Community facilities and infrastructure: greenfield development should be avoided!! An an ancient hilltop market town, this is important to Highworthians. This relates also to policy 8: Landscape and views.

Policy 8: Landscape and Views. I support the proposals in preserving the natural and local environment, and this includes the views looking out over our surroundings and the views looking into Highworth. When I am out walking on the footpaths of Highworth, and see the views looking out over the Cotswolds, or the amazing view of the Uffington White Horse w/Westmill Wind farm in the foreground, or the fantastic vistas to the South from the Old Golf Course, it lifts my spirits.

Policy 9: ; Open Space. The Old Golf Course, enjoyed by so many, is very important to Highworth. It is an easy walk from the town centre. Since the golf course closed in late 2019, it has gone from strength to strength in terms of providing the area with a rich resource for well-being, both physical and mental. With the land reverting back to its previous biodiversity, it is becoming a wildlife haven with hundreds of species of wildflowers, insects and mammals being observed. **(see policy 10 below) It provides a calm & quiet space for reflection - an excellent spot to enjoy the sunset.. With a growing population, it becomes ever more important to provide open green spaces. Personally, I know if I walk out my door, I can be to the Old Golf Course in ten minutes, and walk the periphery, return home. It provides a 1 - 1.5 hr workout. With lungs full of fresh air and the mind calmed.
I SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL THAT THE BOTTOM HALF OF THE OLD GOLF COURSE BE CLASSIFIED AS OPEN SPACE .....see policy 10….

Policy 10: LOCAL GREEN SPACE. I strongly support the preservation of the top (North) half of the OGC as green, ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE
** There have been over 300 species of flora and fauna recorded on the OCG.
The MENTAL HEALTH & WELL BEING provision is cannot be denied. For all of the reasons mentioned above in policy 9, as well as the potential RECREATIONAL aspect: with the recent opening of the Moredon Sporting Hub, it seems a shame for us to miss the opportunity to also consider some recreational use of this land: I have been assured that the HTC has submitted a costed business proposal. I would like to know what the SBC Ecology Consultant's feedback was….

Policy 11: Sustainable Transport: As an experienced cyclist, I still avoid cycling on the A361 from Highworth To Swindon!! For obvious reasons. In the past, the longer route via Sevenhampton was my "quiet route" , but recently the section of road from the A420 jct with B4508 (passing by Westmill Wind Farm) then left at the Highworth Road jct, which takes the traffic through Sevenhampton, and right onto Supermarine Rd and the A361 Supermarine roundabout. THIS HAS BECOME A RAT RUN WHICH HAS TO BE EXPERIENCED TO BELIEVED !!. I would challenge anyone to cycle it with me on a Friday between 3.30 - 4pm.

There needs to be a linked up route for all types of cyclists to be able to access the enviable cycle network in Swindon. A CYCLE LINK BETWEEN HIGHWORTH AND SWINDON, specifically between Highworth and South Marston Industrial Estate is urgently needed, especially with the new developments there. This really needs to be a priority!

I feel fortunate to reside in a town such as Highworth, where we have such involved and

responsive councillors. They are a credit to Highworth.

Respectfully submitted

I read with interest the Highworth plan and must comment that I was particularly pleased with it's thoroughness and detail.

A few points:

A positive regarding the proposal for cycling and cycle routes both around the town and to Swindon
A positive regarding the proposals expanding the housing (people need somewhere to live !!)

A little caution regarding protecting the central hub which is our high street, where many community events happen. Clearly the residents would prefer shops, bars and café's as apposed to pubs and shops being converted to HMO's and flats.

A large caution regarding the 'Old Golf Course' which myself and neighbours feel strongly about. Also some of my son's friends from South Marston use it for dog walking and joining him on 'bug hunts'.
I've previously raised concern regarding the distance we'd have to travel out of the town just to go for a nice walk.

Pentylands always seems flooded.I could spend more time listing reasons why I am not opposed to development and prepared to work with the council to seek other areas if necessary but I've previously responded formally to plans last year.

The community of Highworth would absolutely no doubt be happy to resourse a café, tend to a lake / park, I for one would happy support 12 hours per week.
We should be celebrating this resourse. My lad play's for Highworth under 7's and often I mention the space to the away team's parents especially if they have dogs so they can utilise the resource during and after the match, you can imagine the 'hidden gen' responses.

Please inform me if there is anything else I need to do to both strongly oppose this or to indeed work to publicise and protect it.

I managed to find a writing practice note my son wrote a few months ago which I enclose.

Kind Regards,

To

Swindon Borough Council/Highworth Town Council

We support the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2.
In our opinion it is a thorough and considered plan submission for Highworth within the legal framework required.

The serious concerns arising from the plan, for us, specifically relate to

Policy 10 - Local Green Space

Background
We have lived in Highworth since 1977.
We are a couple in our 'Seventies' and use the 'Old Community Golf Course' for our daily walk, along with many other people.
Our 3 children have grown up with access to this green space.
Now our 5 grandchildren on their regular visits and sleepovers have that same access as their parents and grandparents to that green space.

Comments
The paragraphs 112 -117 accurately capture our position on Open Space and Local Green Space in Highworth.
Specifically para. 117, relating to the Old Community Golf Course.

This area is of paramount importance to Highworth and should not be considered by Swindon Borough Council as a bargaining lever to exercise its 'power', rather than 'authority' over Highworth Town Council and hence the population of Highworth.

The value of this land is immeasurable, in terms of wellness, exercise and mental health, to the population of Highworth.
This applies to all ages but particularly to the older and younger populations.
This was particularly evident during the pandemic when the Old Community Golf Course provided a necessary open air outlet for 1000's of Highworth residents.
Other than the 'Old Community Golf Course' there is no other 'Open Space' or 'Local Green Space' that is accessible from central access points in Highworth.
With continued housing developments taking place on the boundary perimeter of Highworth, unless some Local Green Space is retained nearer the centre of Highworth,
there will be very limited access to such spaces.
The ecological value of the 'Old Community Golf Course' is immense, just from walking around the area it is obvious how diverse and wide ranging the nature of the animal life and plant life is.
By demonstration, there is plenty of land around Highworth, there is plenty of land that is less diverse ecologically, less beautiful visually, less valuable to Highworth regarding exercise, well-being and mental health Some of this land is already being built on!

Conclusion

We support Highworth Town Council -Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 particularly in relation to the 'Old Community Golf Course' being designated as 'Local Green Space'

To who it may concern,

Highworth neighbourhood plan policy 10

Myself and my wife really value the Highworth old golf course as open space.

We believe it should not be built upon.

This open green space provides us with the local ability to walk our dog, to show our son nature in a natural open environment, somewhere to go in both the winter and the summer which doesn't cost us truly enriches our lives.

We can walk here within 2 minutes, we love the views, it allows us to escape from busy roads and cars and be in nature. We walk here every day through the year and our sons learning we can genuinely attribute to nature we show him there.

If this space goes and is built on there won't be anywhere else accessible in Highworth for us to walk our dog apart from on a main road so she won't be able to be off her lead anywhere unless we drive which with a 2 year old with strict bed times will mean it won't be an option.

I feel passionately about keeping the golf course and truly hope you'll consider our thoughts and circumstances

Dear Sir / Madam

I am sending this email to express my concerns over the proposed development for housing on the old golf course in Highworth.

Highworth has already grown a lot over the years, with the Pentylands and Wrag View developments, Backhouse - which seems to be getting even bigger by the day, the site by Aldi coming soon, along with the large development springing up opposite Wrag Barn Golf Course.

Highworth is a small community and not equipped for the sort of additional growth being proposed by building on the golf course.

The high street is already busy with traffic and the seemingly endless roadworks around Highworth can result in gridlock now, which will only get worse if more people are living in the area. The secondary school is still using pre- fabricated buildings which are certainly not looking up to standard for our children's education and yet I have not heard anything about improving this site.

The recreation ground and golf course provide a 'breathing space' from the busy lives we all lead and is a place to mentally unwind. If you walk across the top and sit on a bench you have fabulous views and you are away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. This is the space that is usable for everyone all year round and easily accessible for everyone in Highworth.

I was very sad to see all the hedgerows gone as work began opposite Wrag Barn Golf Course, we are damaging our wildlife by doing this. This has now gone forever, so the green spaces we do still have such as on the old golf course, are precious and should be protected and preserved.

Some might say that the people of Highworth have Pentylands to visit, but unfortunately this is more a place to visit during drier weather. As soon as there is any decent rainfall this area becomes a quagmire in places and is not a pleasant place to go unless you like trudging through mud.

The influx of people that this additional building will bring to Highworth will make life more

difficult for the current residents. For instance, there will be more traffic and the doctors surgery will be put under huge strain, especially as the building is limited in size or will this be 'upgraded' to cope with the additional number of patients?

The infrastructure is just not there in Highworth including shops, where our medieval high street is very small. Do we now have to expect plans for a huge supermarket in the future to service this new housing?

I moved to Highworth because it was a green place and I love the countryside. All the building which is going on worries me about how Highworth will cope. It makes me feel like I'm going to eventually be forced to move out of the area to find somewhere else that has the qualities that are rapidly and sadly disappearing from Highworth.

I hope that whoever is making decisions on this site will listen to people like me who have genuine concerns about the future of our ancient town. While called a town, Highworth is actually a small place which will lose its character if it continues to grow in the way that has been suggested and it's population will struggle to enjoy places to relax if the developers keep concreting over our green spaces.

Yours faithfully

Reference POLICY 10 - Highworth, Witshire

As a resident of Highworth I am writing to express my wish to make Old Golf course a local green space in support of Policy 10. I have set out several key points in support the LGS below:

Highworth is an ancient, hilltop market town with a unique history. It has an historic church and was mentioned in the Doomsday Book. A local green space enhances and protects Highworth's status.

Highworth is a rapidly expanding small town which is welcoming to new comers of all ages especially families. It is vital therefore to have access to a local green space. The old golf course is well situated, not far from the centre of the town and is easily accessible. If the old golf course is lost, Highworth will lose its nearest green space which is potentially detrimental to al the residents.

Highworth is situated on the main A361 and the increase levels of traffic, noise from large articulated vehicles and pollution are very noticeable. The people need somewhere to breathe and the opportunity to relax away from this main trunk road. In addition the High Street and Market place are increasingly busy with traffic.

It is hoped that the Old Golf Course would be considered as a nature park. It seems to be the perfect place considering the abundance of wildlife and natural beauty enhanced by beautiful views from every direction.

It is well documented that taking exercise such as walking has significant benefits for those who suffer from problems with their mental health. Keeping active, undertaking gentle exercise having

somewhere to relax and enjoy the outdoors is for mental and also physical health.Having access to the The Old Golf Course is essential for enhancing the health and wellbeing of the residents of Highworth old and young alike. An LGS for Highworth is an important public health issue which should not be under estimated.

Yours sincerely,

Good morning,

I am writing with reference to POLICIES 8, 9 and 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood plan and in particular the proposal that the Old Golf Course remains as a local green space.

I am a regular user of the Old Golf Course both as a runner and dog walker and, unlike Pentylands, it is accessible in all weathers. When the weather has been dry enough you can extend walks from Pentylands up to the Old Golf Course and across to Stanton and beyond.

During the summer months I often run home to Highworth from work in Swindon and were this space to be lost, there would no safe running route from Stanton onwards. All the local roads from Supermarine towards Highworth are too dangerous. Previously you could run to Sevenhampton but as this village has become a rat run to avoid the police station/Sainsburys traffic lights , this is no longer an option.

When you reach the top of Redlands and look across to Highworth the open views are peaceful and calming .It is also at this point that you are reminded of Highworth being a historic hill top town and this unique view should be maintained.

Whether using the Golf Course in summer or winter, you regularly see people, some of whom simply use it as a place to sit, rest and reflect. As it is only a short , flat walk from the High street, older residents who live in the housing around the area, are able to benefit from this. Given that Highworth is a hill top town, there are no other green spaces that are accessible to older or less mobile people in this way. Pentylands is at the bottom of the hill and still a considerable walk from the nearest bus stop - you then have the walk back up the hill!

Highworth residents are well aware of the benefits of this green space and use it reguarly but by keeping the Old Golf Course a local green space, these benefits could be shared and enjoyed by people from outside of the town (and probably already are). Given the increase in the size of Swindon over decades, Lydiard park and Coate Water are often very busy, particularly at

weekends, showing that people value, need and use their green spaces. Parking at both locations can be difficult. By using the Old Golf Course as a recreational space for the Borough, it would give another option for residents to use.

Regards,

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of not only Highworth for the past 30 odd years and someone who has read Policy 10, I am writing to you today to oppose the housing application made on the Old Golf Course and to sincerely my bid my favour in keeping it a Local Green Space.

One of the reasons we chose to buy our forever family home in Bydemill is because of the Old Golf Course. Our daughter is only 1 but the life she will lead walking our dog around that space was a priority to us. For her to be able to walk and play and learn and breathe in such a wonderful environment was of the upmost importance to us and her upbringing. The Old Golf Course was the first place I took my husband when we first met and he visited Highworth. It was a stunning evening in late May and sitting in the grass to show off the views and sunset is a memory I will hold dear until I die knowing that he is the man I will spend the rest of my life with and these are fields in such close proximity to our family home.

The Old Golf Course has such stunning views, allowing us all to take a breather from our daily lives. It is welcome to my mental health as a local SEND teacher, working long hours at school means the green space on the doorstep of our home is invaluable to my head space.

One might argue that this space is now busier than it ever was a golf course. The friends and strangers we meet & greet on our daily walks is a true testament of how pleasant Highworth is as a place to live and to visit. It is a small community that is already on the rise - keep this area as a Local Green Space to draw people in.

Personally we appreciate the size of Highworth as it already is. It is one of the USPs for us. The Golf Course is so close to town centre, it's so convenient to get some good breathing space before completing errands in the town centre. It must be said, we are under no illusion that towns need houses - we just plead that these are built elsewhere. The fields are already boggy and unsuitable for building but are a hustle and bustle of wildlife and community. Imagine turning this site into a country side park that people, dogs and the wide variety of nature can enjoy and educate themselves in for years to come.

In a time of ever growing need for green space and clean environments, why ruin somewhere that is perfectly suited for walking, running, sitting, yoga, pushing push chairs and wheelchairs around. Somewhere that has parking and the potential for a small shop/cafe. Somewhere that has beautiful trees, shrubbery and hedgerows covered in small animal tracks and habitats. Somewhere that hundreds of people can use to socialise, to exercise, to wind down, to enjoy. Houses on this site would destroy this. They can be built elsewhere.

To ruin this rich and luscious green space would be a huge regret for Swindon Borough Council now and down the line. I don't know a person who agrees to houses being built in this specific area.

Consider the wildlife. Consider the residents. Consider the future generations. What is best for one's pocket is not best for the futures of a community.

Please do not build on the Old Golf Course.

The potential for education, leisure and exercise is unbound.

Please make it and keep it a Local Green Space.

Regards,

Highworth neighbourhood plan policy 10

Myself and my husband really value the Highworth golf course as it is.

We believe it should not be built upon.

This open green space provides us with the local ability to walk our dog, to show our son nature in the while grass, somewhere to go in both the winter and the summer which doesn't cost us so it truly enriches our lives.

We can walk here within 2 minutes, we love the views, it allows us to escape from busy roads and cars and be in nature. We walk here every day through the year and our sons learning we can genuinely attribute to nature we show him there.

If this space goes and is built on there won't be anywhere else in Highworth for us to walk our dog apart from on a main road so she won't be able to be off her lead anywhere unless we drive which with a 2 year old with strict bed times will mean it won't be an option.

I feel passionately about keeping the golf course and truly hope you'll consider our thoughts and circumstances

I wish to add my support to the Highworth neighbourhood plan in particular to the section about the old golf course mentioned in policy 10.

I and many others in Highworth feel very strongly that the old golf course should be kept as a recreational space for the use of Highworth and all Swindon residents.

This area has always been a recreational area and is used by many people on a daily basis. I have walked around this area many times sometimes on my own and sometimes with walking groups. While I would like the whole area to be kept for recreational use I feel that the top section is the most important part as it is the area most accessible being nearer to the town and easier for younger and older people to use.

With all the talk of climate change and the mental health of the population, I do not understand why this valuable resource cannot be kept. I know that times are hard for councils and money is short but if this area is sold off it can never be replaced.

Highworth is a lovely town but has limited facilities and this area of natural beauty with its wonderful views is, and always has been a vital part of the town. Although we have green areas around Highworth most are not accessible to walk with the few footpaths available generally ending on very busy roads and no cycle routes connecting us to other areas of the borough. This means using public transport or cars just to have a walk or exercise.

I am not a NIMBY we have many houses being built in Highworth and more being planned but this area is special to the people of Highworth and always has been. Please listen to the views of the majority of the residents of this town (we have great plans for the area) and settle this long running saga. We do not seem to have a great deal of facilities provided by Swindon council in Highworth please don't take this asset away from us.

Dear Sirs,

I understand that public consultation with regard to the above Plan is about to close and would be grateful if my views below can be registered.

I note that many of the policies in Neighbourhood Plan 2 have been carried forward after review from Plan 1, and I support all of the revised policies in Plan 2.

In particular, I wholeheartedly agree with the designation of the northern section of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space, in Policy 10. Since use of the site as a golf course ended, the public use of the land has massively increased, as shown by the many footpaths that have developed, where previously there was only one permissible public route across the land towards Stanton Fitzwarren.

It has also become a haven for wildlife, which has expanded without any human intervention, and for example it is now possible to see barn owls, red kites and buzzards patrolling the area. As apex predators their success is a good indication of the general health of the mammal, insect and botanical foodchain supporting them.

In addition to benefitting from the chance of an encounter with the local wildlife, people using this land also greatly appreciate being able to have access to an extensive peaceful uncultivated area, relatively close to Highworth town centre, which enables them to have an invigorating walk or run or indeed a gentle stroll away from the roadside.

The benefits to a person's wellbeing of being out in the open cannot be overstated, and the extensive views towards the Downs and Blunsdon, and back towards the town, accentuate this feeling and demonstrate the fundamental character of Highworth as a hill-top settlement.

I get a great deal of enjoyment from walking around the Old Golf Course 3-4 times a week, and I hope that the protection afforded by designation as Local Green Space will mean that this area of land will be a permanent asset for the benefit of Highworth.

Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in support of Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan which designates the Old Community Golf Course as an Open Space.

I am very concerned that there is a possibility that the old community golf course in Highworth could be developed.

I regularly swim at the Highworth Recreation Centre and meet up with a local walking group afterwards. We tend to keep most of our walks within Highworth and often plan our route across the old golf course. Even when the walking group is not meeting I will walk around the old golf course on my own.

It is in a convenient location for all our members, particularly those who live in the town and who do not own a car or who do not drive. Fresh air and exercise are essential for maintaining our health, whether we are young or old. You quickly get out into the open countryside from the OGC and the views are so beneficial for our wellbeing. I have lived in the countryside all my life and I feel very claustrophobic when I am in a built up area. I cannot imagine what it would be like for young children not to be able to run about safely without the fear of traffic.

Swindon is encroaching on all the surrounding villages and it is essential that this open space is preserved. There is too much noise and "busyness" in our lives and we all need the peace and tranquillity of an open green space with wonderful views.

The more open green spaces that are built on, the less habitat there is for wildlife. Who doesn't enjoy watching a robin following them on their walk? Just the sound of birdsong can be so uplifting, which is essential for our mental wellbeing. Aquatic life in the nearby streams and watercourses would be lost as well as small mammals and invertebrates. Insect life which is essential for pollinating the agricultural crops as well as gardens would be greatly reduced.

I strongly urge all the people involved in the decision process to consider the detrimental impact building on the old community golf course would have on the local population and those who visit the town from the outlying villages. The general character of the town would be lost for ever too.

Yours faithfully,

Dear Sirs

I wish to add my support in making the Old Golf Course a local green space and I am in total agreement
of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 10.

I have lived in Highworth for over 30 years and have seen a lot of changes, notably the major increase in
traffic and speed throughout the town. I live on the Swindon Highworth Road A361and the traffic is horrendous.
Twice a day regardless of the weather I attempt to cross the road. Once I am across the road and onto the Old Golf Course
it is a total haven. The noise of the constant traffic vanishes. The peace and calmness of walking around there is immense.
To be able to see the changes of the seasons, the wildlife and the views of the unspoilt countryside cannot be under estimated.

It is lovely to see so many people from Highworth regularly using the green open space. It is such a big part of so many lives and not forgetting
the four legged friends that use it to.

People need places to go that helps their Mental Health and Well Being. We cannot keep building and expanding our town without having the green spaces.

Please take time out to walk over this amazing Green Space and find out for yourself why it is so important to so many and needs protecting
for our Children and future generations.

Many Thanks

Good evening

I am writing on behalf of my family to show my support of Policy 10 on Highworth old golf course.
My wife and I use this gold coirs for walks at least 3 times a week with our young children.
This is a treasure and the only walk in Highworth with a nice view, this is evident as I can guarantee over 100 people go in this walk with their families, dogs or even on their own for a time out.

Kind regards

Hello,

I live in Highworth and use the old golf course every day for our dog walk, it's great having this space for our walks as I don't have to drive to a field and congest the roads any more than they already are in Highworth.The roads are already extremely busy in Highworth and this will only get worse.

There is an abundance of wildlife on the OGC, we have been lucky enough to see hares, we have heard the woodpecker and we often see the deers bouncing through as well as the muntjac that run through. We even came across a baby deer that had just been born last year. You never know what you might see when you walk on the OGC as there is always something unexpected to brighten up your day.

When walking on the OGC we often stop at the top of the hill and take a moment to look at the view. Walking is a great form of therapy and walking around the OGC is very different to walking round a built-up area. The OGC has been a very important place to walk and get away from the noise and hustle & bustle of everyday life and have a walk with nature. I know that if we didn't have access to this space I wouldn't walk everyday as it would mean putting my dog in the car and driving to a field which I do not have time to do this every day.

Please keep this space as green space and save our OGC.

Thank you

Good Evening
Just a few thoughts re the above.
I have live in Highworth over 25 years and have never seen the old golf course(OGC) busier. It's a great open space which is readily accessible by foot, car or bus. We know walking is good for people as is social interaction so why deny the residents of Highworth that opportunity. It's a vital safety valve for the community and when on the golf course you feel amongst friends. The lower part of the OGC would require extensive drainage works to enable its use all year round as in the winter months much of it is waterlogged.
Were the OGC not available then people would have to travel to find a green space. That would increase traffic on already busy roads and add considerable to CO2 emissions.
We take our dogs out twice per day so if we used say Stanton Park then the dog walking mileage would be 4x 2.2x365=3212miles per year. We are just one household so you can imagine the huge increase in emissions if 20 families were in a similar position. All this unnecessary pollution could be avoided by leaving the OGC as is. It brings such joy to so many people in different ways that its demise would be a body blow to many.

I would like to offer my support for Policy 10 - The Old Golf Course

I have lived in Highworth for over 40 years and I have always really valued this lovely green space which happens to be very near where I live.

Initially it was open fields, then a golf course, and latterly an open space for the community to use. This was especially important during lockdown and MANY people in the town were to be found walking there. It helped that the local Groundsmen kept many paths in good order (this has continued to this day) and the area was very well used, not just for dog walkers but for others who appreciated this beautiful open space.

This has continued now and the space is well used. I personally regularly walk there. I have always enjoyed the open views all around. The area does not get water-logged, which I know from personal experience can be a real problem in Pentylands Country Park at the bottom end of the town. I know that for this reason alone many prefer to use the Old Golf Course.

With many new housing estates (some containing MANY houses) appearing all around Highworth it is ever more important that open recreational spaces are available for everyone to use and benefit from.

I would love to see the Old Golf Course developed into a nature park, and I think the old golf course building could be a coffee shop run by local volunteers. (as used to be offered by golfers)

This is a beautiful open space. PLEASE hear the pleas of many local people and keep it open for our use.

Hello
I am a resident of Highworth and am writing in relation to the above. I am particularly interested in the idea of the Old Golf Course being designated a local green space in support of Policy 10.

I currently use the Old Golf Course regularly for walking (every day in the lighter months and 2-3 times a week in winter). This is important for my physical health but also my wellbeing as I need to be able to find somewhere to relax, and the green space is invaluable for this. I do not drive and cannot feasibly get to many other green spaces locally, particularly as I am also a carer and so do not have the time to get multiple buses or walk long distances before getting to green space. The options I have for walking locally have reduced over the years as footpaths and areas I used to walk have been changed due to housing development. This includes the footpath to the side of what is now Wrag View and the new development further along the Shrivenham Road out of Highworth. Collectively these developments have reduced the wildlife near my house (there are already noticeably fewer foxes and muntjac this winter). Fortunately the Old Golf Course gives a haven for wildlife and good accessible routes for walking near to the centre of highworth where i live. I very much support the idea of this being protected.

Regards

Hello,

I understand that there may be objections to the proposed designation of HOGC as ' local green space' under policy 10 & 'open space' under policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan..
I believe that both designations should be kept as the area is used by a lot of people, & not just Highworth residents, for leisure purposes. These include dog walking, running, jogging, rambling, cross-country cycling & just enjoying time in natural surroundings.
The views from the higher parts are outstanding & the whole area is returning to a natural state with a commensurate increase in wildlife.
Highworth has seen a huge increase in traffic over recent years & this is just about the only easily accessible area where you can get away from the noise. I personally use the area several times a week on average for rambling, exercise, & relaxation.
I think that the whole area is a great asset to Highworth & certainly helps to maintain the town as a community. It is also a great asset to the surrounding villages & to Swindon.
Please keep these lovely, quiet, wild, wide open spaces!

Best Regards,

Good afternoon

As a long-term Highworth resident, I am writing to express my wish and hope that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan in support of Policy 10 for the Old Golf Course being preserved as a local green space can be achieved. It is so important, particularly following the events of the Covid pandemic, to have a peaceful green space to walk and get away from the stresses and strains of eveyday life. I work from home a great deal and just being able to take 20 minutes away from the screen, get some fresh air, listen to the birds, exchange a smile and a chat with one of the many dog walkers the space attracts, makes a huge difference to the day. Highworth is not a massive town and this space being in such easy reach for all and close to the town centre is a massive plus. It is high up in the town and has great views, not only of the surrounding area but the sky, when there were reports of the Aurora being visible this far south, not that long ago, the old golf course attracted virgin stargazers trying to get a glimpse.

Society in general seems to make a great deal of trying to get (especially young) people away from the screen and back outdoors, and yet in the same breath Swindon Borough Council will take away one of the few free-to-use opportunities to do just that, so they can profit from it.

As a town we must support Policy 10 and preserve our local green spaces.

Yours sincerely

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a local resident of Highworth having lived here with my husband for nearly 40 years and brought up my family here. I wish to thank Highworth Town Council for all the hard work they have done in making the Neighbourhood Plan and wish to make the following representations:

I entirely support Highworth Neighbourhood Plan (version 2) and the previous Highworth Neighbourhood Plan (version 1). This represents the considered view of local residents, contains important demographic information, is based on local consultation the Vision for Highworth which is a unique document which doesn't exist for any other area of Swindon Borough Council and the original plan was well supported at a Local Referendum .

The purpose of Neighbourhood planning is to enable local residents to have a democratic view about how they want their Neighbourhood to develop, what is important to local residents and to decide where, and what type local housing should (and should not) be.
Therefore in my view , having been through all due process including regulation 14 consultation this plan should be supported entirely by the local Inspector. I wish to make my representations in person when this takes place.

The following issues are very important to me

• Highworth is a distinct and separate rural community which is only relatively recently part of the Borough of Swindon. It is vital as the Neighbourhood plan suggests that this unique and special community with needs which are different from the rest of Swindon (by virtue of its older and therefore needier population, lack of transport and rural /farming industry) be recognised and respected.

• In particular Highworth's unique status as a hilltop town should be respected and no development should be permitted outside the settlement boundary identified in the maps submitted in the Neighbourhood plan.

• Local residents do not object to further development, but this should only be on sites already agreed for development such as Crane Furlong. This site has been available for over 4 years but has still not been developed and I can not understand why this has not happened. However, this may be due to land banking or developers not having the available resources. I understand that Highworth Town Council has been prepared to surrender its lease to SBC in return for a long term lase on the Old Golf Course site but as far as I am aware this has not yet been agreed

• It is also very important that all the local Green and open spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan are protected in perpetuity from any development and should not be built on

• It is extremely important to myself and local residents that the Old Golf Course site is protected in its entirety as a public open space. Highworth Town Council produced an extremely detailed business plan about how this site can be developed since Twig market relinquished their lease several years ago. Swindon Borough Council over 2 years ago also agreed with this plan and agreed to remove Highworth Old Golf Course from the SBC Local Plan as a site for development. They felt then and I believe still do that Highworth had already taken more than its fair share of new housing , that the site had always been public open space, that the site was very important to the people of Highworth and the wider population not only for leisure and recreation but because of the environmental and biodiversity needs for the local population. It was also agreed that Highworth does not have the infrastructure to support increased building which was originally proposed for this site.

• Highworth Old Golf Course is also personally important to me because:

• It has become a species rich site and a pleasant place to walk for leisure, improving mental

health and sociability

• It is the only flat and accessible all year-round place in Highworth to get daily exercise

• It has parking for those who can't walk from the bottom of town

• It has enormous potential for further development and enhancement including a café on the old golf shop if only SBC would take seriously and consider the proposals put through by Highworth Town Council

• I therefore am very disappointed that an officer of SBC and as far as I am aware without authorisation from Councillors has indicated that they will oppose the designation of Highworth Old Golf Course as a public open space presumably because they wish to build on all or part of the site. SBC could have responded at Regulation 14 consultation but chose not to do so.

• I hope SBC will consider the many representations made, the weight of local opinion , and the clear view they all agreed only 2 years ago and withdraw their objection to Highworth Old Golf Course site being a public open space across the whole of the site (both upper and lower)

• I look forward to representing these views in person to the Inspector. Please acknowledge receipt of this representation and ensure it is published in full in all consultation documentation. Thankyou.

Yours sincerely

Hello,

Please see below my response to the new neighbourhood plan and in particular Policy 10 and the Old Golf Course.

It is very important to me and my family that the Old Golf Course is kept as Local Green Space for many reasons, and as per Policy 10 of the neighbourhood plan.
The space is easy walking distance to the town centre and to my house, so I am able to walk to and around it every day, either by myself or with my husband and children. It is easily accessible to all and I frequently see parents walking with children (with and without dogs), elderly people, groups of walkers and runners etc and have seen people with walking sticks and mobility scooters being able to make use of the space too.
I use it on a daily basis to walk my dog and run, and enjoy the peacefulness I get every time I am in there - there are beautiful views, I can hear and see a multitude of birds and other wildlife (including rabbits, hares, deer, pheasants, woodpeckers and a couple of barn owls). It makes me feel completely away from work, the busyness and stresses of my day and makes me slow down and relax. I honestly think this space is vital for my health and wellbeing, particularly now with working from home and not seeing many people. I love bumping into people on my walk and saying hello and having a chat - it makes a massive difference. Everyone is on a walk and not dashing to somewhere so have more time to talk.
It is easy for me to get the kids to come out on a walk with me as it is quick and easy to get to (we don't have to go in the car), and they love running along the many paths and in the old bunkers. They even asked for me to wake them early in the Spring (at 6am), so that they could come and see the Barn Owl hunting. So great that my kids get to see so much wildlife.
It is so diverse in there - there is woodland area, mown areas, long grass areas, wild flowers - there is always something to see and talk to my children about.

Local green spaces are so important for everyone and their wellbeing and with more houses and solar panel farms going up around the area, our countryside is shrinking for us and the wildlife. One of the reasons that drew us to Highworth 11 years ago was the fact it is a hilltop town with lots of history, as well as the fact it was surrounded by beautiful views and countryside. We love walking and try to get out as much as possible.
It is incredibly important for the community that this space is kept as green space for all to use and reap all the benefits it brings us.

Thanks

I would like to register my support for the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, especially as it deals with the Old Golf Course. I think it is vital that we conserve the area designated in the plan and discussed under "Point 10 - Local Green Space" as an open green area for the use of residents. I understand that this area meets the requirements of the NPPF to be designated an LGS.

Until recently my understanding was that Swindon Borough Councillors and our MP were in agreement with Highworth Town Council that this area should be retained as a local green space. I now believe that a Borough Council Lead Officer is opposing this. I do hope that all the elected members of Swindon Borough Council will continue to support Highworth Councillors and residents in their wish to retain part if not all of the Old Golf Course as green space and not be swayed by the view of one employed officer to go back on their word. All the surveys and consultations have shown overwhelming support by the people of Highworth for protecting the Old Golf Course - which was of course originally left to the people of Highworth for recreation.

Highworth has a growing and also aging population and there is a real need for careful planning to support these residents. We all saw how important green space was during the pandemic - and who is to say that a similar situation will not arise again. It is now clearly understood that access to open spaces for fresh air and exercise is vital for both the physical and mental health of the population.

There is lot of house building taking place in and around Highworth at present, which has resulted in a huge loss of habitat for wildlife. One example of this is the current large development on Shrivenham Road where a developer was allowed to destroy all the old hedges around the site. Even if these are replaced with 'ornamental shrubs', that habitat and the wildlife dependant on it is lost forever. Please do not make the same error of judgement in the case of the Old Golf Course.

In the hope that Swindon Borough Council is really listening to us,

Yours sincerely,

Good Afternoon,

I would like to add to the many residents of Highworth and its surrounds who support Highworth Town Council's Proposal to designate part of the above area as a Local Green Site in accordance with Policy 10.
I used to walk around the Community Golf Course whilst it was still a golf course but then found many more trails, especially during Covid lockdown, to enjoy. As an emergency services worker who worked throughout those times, I found my mental health to be adversely affected by not meeting with friends and family and being able to get out into such a nature-diverse green area helped immensely.

I still walk these trails every week or so and have encountered a rich array of birdlife, surprised deer, magnificent hares and enough rabbits to fill Watership Down.
I've seen Kites and Buzzards overhead; sparrowhawks on a mission and damselflies, dung beetles and insects of, to me, an unknown family. There must be many things that I do not see.
All of this fills me with wonder and takes me away from my job when viewing indecent images of children would tear the soul out of me.

The land doesn't seem to ask for much in return. It serves as a buffer between peace and the busy streets of our lovely town whilst remaining an easy walk for many of us. It may be that we have to make an area of it pay; we have a wonderful Action Group who we look to for innovative ideas and whom the councils should be happy to consult with.
It's not always necessary (nor beneficial) to take the lazy, obvious route with land and I hope that those involved through the council understand that they have a responsibility to those who have voted for them and to the assets of which they are guardians, be those areas of nature or manmade structures.

Just because we can doesn't necessarily mean that we should.

With Kind Regards

Dear Sirs

I am in general agreement with much of what is proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan 2 for Highworth. However I am concerned and disappointed that the previous Neighbourhood Plan has been overridden in recent years to allow substantial developments to take place outside the development areas shown, and without appropriate consideration or investigation of the need for additional infrastructure.

I am particularly concerned that the rural nature of Highworth and its environs should be respected and preserved. In this respect The old golf course in particular is a specific area which has for many years been open for use by the people of Highworth and the public in general. For historic reasons, there are relatively few public footpaths in the farmland elsewhere around Highworth and the old golf course is a significant and convenient outlet for recreation and exercise. I feel that the convenient access is also particularly important in Highworth as the population is significantly older that that of Swindon in general, and the need for gentler exercise opportunities, such as easily accessible walking, is therefore more important. The land for the Old Golf Course was originally provided to the people of Highworth with this in mind.

I had previously understood that the preservation of the Old Golf Course for free public recreational access had been agreed between Highworth Town Council and Swindon Borough Council, but now understand that this may no longer be the case. I am therefore writing to strongly express my support for Policy 9 and 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, which shows the whole area of the Old Golf Course as a mix of Public Open Space and Green Space.

Regards

Hi,

I've recently moved to Highworth, and recently had a new dog. I go every day to the old Golf course and was horrified to hear that such a beautiful place could be turned into housing! I am a cancer survivor and find walking around such a beautiful space aids my mental wellbeing as well as the physical benefits of having something so close to town, with such beautiful views. I have met new people there too, it is so well used by the public. The negative impact it would have on the wildlife in that area is criminal, only yesterday, we spotted a wetland area with bullrush and very soon frogspawn, and other pond life. I for one would be devastated to lose such a beautiful space for my daily exercise and mental wellbeing. Please please reconsider for our local residents and future generations, leave spaces in this ancient historic town where people enjoy beautiful views and connect with nature.

Kind Regards

Policy 1
Crane Furlong is a cul de sac and needs to remain so. The current access to Crane Furlong already has many cars on both sides of the roads and travelling from Folly Road to Crane Furlong is already a 5mph speed in order to avoid collisions. By opening this up, more traffic and potentially accidents.

Policy 10
This space is important to me as it keeping it green, accessible benefits my mental wellbeing as I can appreciate the open space and views as well as the diversity of nature that is part of the hilltop specialness of Highworth.

Appendix 5: Organised clubs and activities available in Highworth
Are you aware that Bang 2 Rites have two mentions

There is no mention of 'Highworth Community Cider Project' This needs to be added as it is a valuable community project raising money and giving other charities and groups much needed revenue

Many thanks

Good afternoon, I would like to express my views on the Old Golf Course in Highworth.

I've been a resident of Highworth for almost 40 years and since retiring, I've walked around this wonderful space twice a day almost every day. I had 3 dogs, it was a great start to our day and a lovely ending with the amazing views and sunsets.
It's a place where you can seek companionship from fellow dog walkers or enjoy peaceful solitude if that's how you feel.
It's fascinating to witness the diverse flora and fauna throughout the calendar year.

I cared for my parents for the last 20 years, I managed to get them both out there too. And at times of stress I walked around alone to regulate my feelings and mental health.
When friends visit, we have lunch and take a walk around this great facility.

The Old Golf Course, which we in Highworth feel so lucky to have, is an essential breathing space which is usable all year round. It's a lovely space with a huge feel good factor and widely used - from picnics in summer to sledding in winter and I for one would be lost without it.
I appreciate houses are needed, but taking away this space would necessitate driving to find something similar. At the risk of sounding selfish, there is a feeling that we have had our fair share of new houses in this small, hilltop town.

Please let the people of Highworth continue to enjoy this space for years to come.

The Old Golf Course enables people of all ages and levels of mobility to enjoy untroubled recreational walks and views in natural surroundings, close to the centre of the town. We regularly exercise our dogs there. It provides a relaxing change from the overloaded roads which we are experiencing due to additional development in the area. The other opportunities for walking in the countryside around Highworth are extremely limited. Indeed they are being taken away with each new development (eg. land opposite Wrag Barn on Shrivenham Road). Loss of the OGC amenity would leave only Pentylands Park as a major space. This land is waterlogged for much of the year, away for the centre of the town and inaccessible to many.
In response to the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan consultation. I am expressing my view that the Old Golf Course should be made a local green space in support of Policy 10. The green space is important to me, to Highworth's neighborhood and to the wider Swindon community and borough. The old golf course is accessible green space within easy walking distance of the town centre. This is important - there are few accessible green spaces within Highworth. It is well evidenced that green space is important for public health, and for mental and physical wellbeing. With increasing housing and traffic, this open and accessible space is a critical asset both to Highworth and Swindon. With obesity levels continuing to rise, creating further pressures on health and social care, access to green space is critical. The old golf course is shaven for wildlife. The diversity of species is extraordinary and has been documented. Biodiversity loss is a global issue. The local community has expressed its wish to create a nature park. Highworth is an ancient market town. It has expanded and continues to expand. Protecting it's hill top status is important and this green space enables this. The old golf course widely used by people for recreation. The views are key to this. The views are part of the reason the space is so well used - that sense of openness is important in a crowded world for mental. I use the old golf course everyday. It's a central plank of my approach to mental and physical wellbeing. Without it, I would likely be less healthy, adding pressure to local services, or drive to other places adding to traffic and environmental impact. There is extensive community feedback that I strongly support to protect the openness of the old golf course. It is designated as an open space. I am now expressing my support for it to be a local green space in support of Policy 10.

Dear Forward Planning Team

Ref: Policy 10 from the "Highworth Neighbourhood Plan".

As a long term resident of Highworth, I would like you to hear my views relating to the Natural Space that was the Old Golf Course.

• I live at the top of the Village and appreciate the ease of access to a valued Green Natural Space that I can walk to. We do have Pentylands but it is a long walk on the other side of the Village, via a steep busy road.

• I have grown to appreciate the OFC for its beauty, wildlife, changes in seasons, accessibility and social aspects.

• When out walking I meet lots of Highworth Residents and I find it very uplifting as I am retired, and value the connections, especially for my mental health.

• My grandchildren love to visit and share in the Natural Space that is the OGC. It is very important for children to be outside, to understand plants, animals and eco-systems, and to have large spaces to run and play.

• I moved here because it was a Village with green spaces, gorgeous views and character. It is a very friendly, caring place to live and I do object to the amount of houses being built for the sake of revenue to the Council: the infrastructure of our lovely Village is already suffering from the Heavy Traffic and lack of facilities as more houses are built. Why do we need even more?

• The Local Community has been trying to make their voice heard for years now. The Govt and Local Councils are there to represent the people of the UK and my greatest wish is that Green Spaces are taken seriously and we are not silently herded towards a soulless society living in boxes.

• I graciously ask that that you consider protecting the OGC for our residents, visitors and future generations.

Kind regards

Highworth Neighbourhood Plan - Policy 10 Old Golf Course

Like all our neighbours, we think that the old golf course is one of Highworth's vital assets that needs to be maintained for the benefit of all Highworthians. It seems that having it designated as Local Green Space is the best way to achieve this, so we are fully supportive of the plan.

Apart from the fact that Highworth already has more houses than the local infrastructure can support, the old golf course is the only open space that is within easy walking distance of the town centre. This, and the fact that access to it does not involve steep climbs, means that the high proportion of residents that are no longer in their prime can all enjoy it.

Being able to walk over the old golf course in safety is also important because all the roads out of the town have either narrow, uneven and poorly maintained footpaths or no footpaths at all. The roads themselves are also narrow, due to almost all being built long before cars, lorries etc were dreamt of, and are in a dire condition due to a lack of money to maintain them. If these are left as the only places we can walk, it is clear that it wouldn't be long before serious accidents begin to occur.

As well as being a calm, tranquil area for people to enjoy it also provides an ideal habitat for many species of plants and wildlife to flourish. To take this away for no good reason would be an indefensible act of vandalism that we must prevent from happening.
It is probably a futile hope to think the "powers that be" will stop piling more and more houses into Highworth, but the old golf course must be the last area that should be considered for this.

We frequently walk the paths over the old golf course, either by ourselves or with our daughter's dog, and cannot ever remember doing this without meeting others who were also enjoying this unique area. Please do not take this important facility away from us.

Dear Sirs
I wish to express my support for the above and in particular Policy 10.
The old golf course has become a fantastic social space that feels like the whole town uses, there is no other facility like this within Highworth as pentylands park is largely unusable for 8/9 months of the year.
Highworth is a town that is growing and rightfully so and this makes this space all the more important.
Regards

Hello

Please note I fully support Highworth Neighbour Plan and my comment is that Highworth needs to safeguard the Old Golf Course as a public Open space.

When the local authority purchased this land the Hares Family sold this land a covenant was put in place that this land was to be used as open space. for 25
years. Yes, that covenant has ended however the Local Council should still protect this land.

Regards

I feel very strongly that the Upper Golf Course should be designated as a Local Green Space, as per Policy 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

We have fought long and hard for the preservation of this valuable resource in Highworth with more than half the population signing a petition reflecting the strength of feeling of the towns' residents.

Since then Highworth has faced a sudden influx of new housing developments with large ones currently being built near the town centre, and more in the application stage. The population of our town is going to increase substantially and I think it's vital that old and new residents are able to continue enjoying the existing, very well used, upper golf course as a green space available to all for exercise, relaxation and mental well being. There is access easily available to all on the flat regardless of ability. The lower OGC is un-useable for people with disability (due to the terrain) or due to water-logging several times a year.

Our family have used the OGC (Old Golf Course) for many years and we love the wildlife, diversity of trees and flowers. We love the opportunity to exercise and unwind nearby without having to use the car to reach another 'country park'.

Highworth is suffering from an influx of new cars (new residents), and road closures due to existing housing projects causing a nightmare on our small roads. Having a Local Green Space nearby that can be walked to and reduces extra cars on the roads (driving to alternative sites).

I particularly enjoy the seating in the top west corner when I need a break - it's the ideal place for relaxation, mindfulness and a break from everyday stresses - the views to open countryside are beautiful and should absolutey be preserved. I also enjoy the social aspect - people often stop for a chat.

I am dismayed that SBC plan to oppose the LGS application. I understand that new housing is needed but it needs to be built, but it is essential that there are suitable places to go and relax in open areas for fitness and well-being incorporated in the plans.

It is incomprehensible to me that an existing well used natural LGS is not considered somewhere to be valued for Highworth's residents old and new. Please leave this area for all to enjoy as the town expands rapidly.

Yours faithfully

Dear SBC

I am writing to offer my support for the proposal of the designation of ‘Local Green Space’ at the Old Golf Course in Highworth.

This is the only large green space in Highworth that is accessible all year round. We have a population of circa 8k which is growing at a rapid rate, what with new development underway around the town. Surely, we have a moral duty to provide residents with green space.

I use the Old Golf Course every single day for walking my dog and we both absolutely love it. Not only is it beautiful and peaceful, but it is also a haven for wildlife. It would be devastating to see it go…

The residents of Highworth are NOT against development, and we have many new sites under construction as we speak, but please, please allow us to keep our only green space.

Kind regards

Dear planning authority,

Having fully now read the subject plan and accompanying appendices I wish to add my endorsement to the concerns raised by my fellow Highworth residents. In particular the old golf course should be retained in its present wild but accessible state until that can be improved upon without residential or commercial buildings. Also any future residential buildings felt to be essential for the town should not be as soulless as those recently built on the entry into Highworth from the Swindon road.

I realise that no planning authority can please all of the people all of the time - but please do your best.

Sincerley

Highworth is steadily losing its identity as a hilltop town.The Windush, Haresfield and Willows estates have effectively covered the NW to NE part of the hill in houses. Two green fields can be enjoyed to the west between Hampton and Highworth, but only via a public footpath and not a green space where people are free to roam.

Even without the two estates which are being built (Backhouse Second Phase and Honeymans Helm) Highworth's roads are already congested, especially at the traffic lights and the Fox roundabout at rush hour, and Shrivenham Road outside the Secondary School at the start and end of the school day.

Since I moved to Highworth in 1979, only a small annexe has been added to the doctor's surgery. Urgent appointments are sometimes offered at Tadpole or Taw Hill surgeries; people without a car need two buses or a taxi. There has been no addition to the dental surgery.

Of the various green spaces in the town, the Old Golf Course (OGC) has several advantages. Being on the level, it is readily accessible to a lot of the many elderly residents. The northern section is walkable all the year round and offers extensive views of Red Down and the Marlborough Downs. Near the top stands the disused, sturdily built golf shop with paved terrace which might be converted into a cafe for the summer months. But its main attraction is that it has been allowed to remain wild. Thanks to the diligently maintained paths, walkers can enjoy the tranquillity and beauty of the surroundings: its trees, hedges, shrubs, wild flowers and grasses. I walk on the OGC most days.

Dear Planning Officer & The Clerk (HTC),

Highworth proposed Neighbourhood Plan

We are delighted to endorse Highworth Council's proposed Neighbourhood Plan and in particular Policy 10, Pg 64 with the designation of the former Golf Course and surrounding Country Park as publicly accessible local Green space (hatched green) & Open space (coloured green) on plan pg.6. Highworth County Park (former Golf Course) has been used by our family for over 30 years where we have enjoyed, family games, long warks, fruit picking from the Hedgerows, wildlife and the calmness of green space in this beautiful Country Parkland.

It is the only large parkland in Highworth close to the town centre and housing, suitable for use throughout the year and not water logged in winter such as Pentylands.

Highworth Country Park forms the Northern sector Country parkland and is critical to the wellbeing of so many who visits this parkland daily from both Swindon and local residents.

The land cannot be replaced once built on and the pressure for green space is ever more critical with both the lower rec and main recreational grounds fully used at weekends for football. The health benefits well documented with GP endorsement.

This Green space in close proximity to the town centre is good Town Planning and creates good environments for all people to live well and thrive. Without our Royal Parks in Central London, it would be a soleless, harsh environment.

We express our sincere thanks to Highworth Town Council for your foresight and endorsement to keep our Green Open Space protected and integral to the expansion of our townscape now and for our future generations. This area should be formally returned back to the residents of Highworth, the original owners and a Country Park Status granted in perpetuity.

Yours faithfully,

LGS application the top section of Highworth OGC
I have been a resident of Highworth for 30 years and in recent years have seen the reduction of green expanses due to housing developments. This makes the remaining green spaces extremely valuable . This is why I support the designation of the top section of highworth OGC to a LGS.

Green spaces help physical and mental health by way of
- Places to walk
- Clearer fresher air
- Quiet calm surroundings
- distant views, openness
- wonders of nature

The importance of these green spaces should never be underestimated. Indeed family and friends who use Highworth marvel at the OGC

Dear Sir/Madam,

Support of Policy 10 and the Old Golf Course becoming a local green space

This is a very personal message of my own experience and observations in regard to the lovely green space that has been publicly available since the closure of the old golf course.

In late October 2019, my lovely son tragically took his own life. Covid emerged soon after compounding the grief and feeling of isolation.

In late March 2020, my lovely Mother passed away, after a long battle with Alzheimers. In early April 2020,1 suffered a heart attack, requiring surgery.

Swimming against the tide of physical and emotional chaos and being confined by Covid restrictions, the one reassuring constant was the daily walk around the Old Golf Course with my partner and our dog.

The old golf course was a perfect fit, being level at the top with wide mown natural pathways, along with steeper areas and played a big part in my physical reabilitation

In addition to this the breath taking views offered an emotional balm during these troubled times. The unique topography and location mean you can imagine you are stepping back in time, to a less hurried way of life free from industrialisation.

Another development has been the rewilding process which encourages nature in all it's wonder in this relatively small patch of land.

1 am a retired garden designer, But nothing can compete with what nature has to offer with very little man made intervention.

Ranging from Red Kites, Green Woodpeckers, Swifts,deer, foxes, owls, swarms of butterflies,purple orchids and meadow flowers, the effect is sturming.

On Summer walks the grassland hums with various insects and a balanced ecology has evolved over a relatively short period of time.

This is not a manicured park, But a truly unique pocket of nature, giving a vital amenity to the people of Highworth and Swindon.

31 years ago Swindon Borough Council had the vision to support the creation of the Swindon Great Western Community Forest project which has proved priceless since it's inception. Surely this low maintenance, self created piece of paradise should also be encouraged in the same spirit.

Finally, what is also so very encouraging is the diversity of ages and use for this land ranging from dog walkers, ramblers, meditaters, runners, students, parents with babies and toddlers, picnickers, photographers, artists, poets, singers

The famous lyrics of Joni Mitchell's song come to mind: "Don't it always seem to go, That you don't know what you've got, Till it's gone, They paved paradise, And put up a parking lot"

Please appreciate and hang on to what we have got.

Hello
My name is and I live in Highwoeth together with my family (my husband and 3 children)

I heard SBC is planning to put 450 homes on our old golf course!

I would like to protest against this suggestion.

First of all my family and many people (our friends and neighbours) use the golf course as recreation park.

In Highworth we have no other parks available!

Its so important to keep the old golf course green for our environment for people at highworth for our future generations.

It's also important for peoples mental health to live near green spaces.

On social media, TV we alway hear talks about improving our ecology, environment, fight with rising temperatures on the planet Earth, protect wildlife...

What do we do towards it?

Build on green spaces?

There are not many left...

Please consider leaving our golf course green as a wild park for people of highworth.

Thanks you,

Views/Comments on Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 2021-2036

Re changing Crane Furlong from a cul de sac to a through road to access a new housing estate to the south of Crane Furlong.

OBJECTIONS

The proposed route via Folly Crescent and Drive, Henley Drive and Crane Furlong is already congested due to parked cars and can be difficult and time consuming to negotiate.

The hill into C/F is steep and not easy to come up/go down at most times due to parked cars - it is not good in icy weather.

The residents' enjoyment of relative peace and quiet living in a cul de sac (west end) will be adversely affected by becoming a through road and the change is bound to reduce property prices.

The road in C/F is not overly wide.

This change would not be popular with the residents of C/F.

COMMENTS

There would need to be a 20mph speed restriction.

Access from Pentylands Lane and/or the industrial estate or Lechlade Road (A361) would have less Impact on the local community.

Good evening I would like to confirm my opinion to support policy 9 and 10 in the Neighbourhood Plan. This space has become invaluable to myself and my family. We moved to Highworth not knowing anyone, but walking our dog on the Old Golf Course twice daily, we have made many friends along the way, so much so that we now feel a part of the Highworth community. Our children who do not go to school in Highworth have also formed friendships and met new people from being out walking our dog in this area. The change in the amount of wildlife that is now seen is amazing. The Barn owls, deer, monk jacks and variety of birds, we feel very lucky to have all this on our door step. I hope this space is kept for the generations to enjoy, just as much as we have enjoyed it. Many thanks
Good evening I hope this message finds you well. This message is regarding policy 9 and policy 10 I would like to strongly back the save are golf courses action group. Myself and family use this space every day of the year. We use it for dog walks, running and fitness, quiet time for reflection and homework. We have met many people who have become great friends . Some how with out this space my never have anyone to chat it makes me and my family very tearful to think this . During lockdown this place became invaluable it became a literal breath of fresh in very bleak moments in time The wildlife is remarkable the ability to see such amazing animals up close is mind blowing to sit an under tree with my children and take time to talk about life good and bad as they grown up is something I will never forget and just take in the breath taking views. I just hope with with all heart that you can find it in yours to save this space for not just my family but all familys and animals who are lucky enough to use it because what it offers are hopes , memories , dreams and freedom that will last for an eternity. All my hopes and wishes
To who it may concern. We are particuarly worried that we may lose our belived golf course in Highwoeth. We strongly object to loosing this piece of greenspace that is left for walking and dog walking. We are both 76 years old and have lived in highworth since the 1970s our children have all grown up here and enjoyed the golf course. Before it became a golf course it was all open space it gave us peace of mind and is good for our health to be able to walk around the lovely space we have left. We walk this open space with our dog about two to three times a week. Also there are other things to consider here. How wil the parking situation be monitored. How will the doctors surgery be able to take on more clients. How will the new housing estate affect the allotments, the childrens play area the young footballers club and swimming pool and rec. 400-700 houses is far to many we are only a small town. We hope you read this letter and consider your views on this matter. Yours faithfully

Dear Sir

After reading the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan I feel that I agree with the majority of the conclusions particualry the suggestion that the High Street should be reduced to one lane and made more pedestrian friendly however I also feel that the Community Golf Course should remain undeveloped as it is used by many residents for leisure purposes and also acts as a buffer between Highworth and Swindon.

Highworth is known as a hill top town and should remain so

John Betjeman commented: 'Highworth is extraordinary because it has more beautiful buildings than ugly ones', and 'I have never seen Highworth given due praise in guide books for what it is one of the most charming and unassuming country towns in the west of England',

Good Afternoon,

I live in Highworth and wish to make some comments in support of the Neighbourhood Plan, particularly policy 10 about LGS.

My main area of concern is our old golf course. Despite nearly half the population of the town signing a petition only a few years ago it still seems to be a major focus for development opportunities.

The old golf course is without doubt what Highworth currently uses and needs. It is, in my view, an essential space to preserve for the ever expanding population. I used to play golf there and since then have spent many happy hours in the tranquil space. I have also been involved with a number of initiatives to use the space for the betterment of Highworth residents, promoting greater community and mental well being.

I do understand that there is a need for housing, although there seems to be a disproportionate amount of this going on within the past few years. However, this should not be at the expense of losing all the beautiful green spaces that keep this growing population active, healthy and happy. There are other spaces in and around Highworth that can be used. Otherwise the town just becomes yet another urban sprawl, where people are forced to drive elsewhere to do something as simple as take a walk, they then become dissatisfied, stressed, unwell, etc.

My wife and I use this space often and have done this for years. It would be devastating for us and for the town’s community to lose it.

Best regards

Dear Sirs

Re: POLICY 10

With reference to Highworth's Neighbourhood Plan, I wish to draw your attention to the importance of retaining the Old Golf Course as an open green space for the community. This area is the jewel in the crown of Highworth's recreational facilities.

Not only does it provide wonderful vistas and habitat for wildlife, the area is valuable to residents of all ages. Parents can use pushchairs on the flat area at the top, as well pensioners and those with limited mobility. Flat walking areas in parkland are at a premium in a busy hilltop town.

On the other hand, when it snows, the slopes by the old club house offer families with youngsters the fun of safe sledging. A wonderful opportunity.

The wide mown grassy paths are valued by walkers with or without dogs and used by residents and nonresidents thanks to the parking facilities. I walk these paths several times a week and, whatever time of day, there are always other people also enjoying the scenery.

I welcome Swindon's initiative to install children's play areas in the town but surely we adults are entitled to convenient recreational areas too. I also read Swindon is to plant more trees but you can save on extra expense here as we have hedgerows and copses already. Picnics in summer under the trees by the clubhouse are delightful.

Although there are footpaths through fields outside of the ever increasing built up areas these are not maintained by farmers and are boggy in winter or overgrown by thistles and nettles in summer. The mown old golf course paths can be walked in all seasons.

Please do observe the wishes of Highworth residents.

Yours faithfully

Hi All
Just a short message to show my support to keep the old golf course as a designated open space ....
I use this space daily as I find it very beneficial to my mental health and obviously is very good exercise! It would be a tragedy in my view if this were to be turned over to housing .
We should I think, be increasing green spaces in Highworth not losing them .
Thank you for reading this and please consider my words
Kind regards

With reference to the above area in Highworth. The Old Golf Course should remain an open and green space for the residents to be able to enjoy. Having lived in Highworth for over 50 years I have been using this area, firstly as my playground and now as an area to walk my dogs on an almost daily basis.

Highworth is a town in its own right and needs to be separated from the ever rapidly increasing growth of Swindon by our hill. We have our own identity and as a town, I firmly believe, we are proud of that identity. It should not be swallowed up, in yet more development. There is more than enough of that happening elsewhere in our town

The wildlife that I witness on my daily dog walks is amazing. At dawn and dusk I regularly see the barn owl swooping low and hunting. Early in the morning you can see deer and rabbits. The stream and the pond give watering holes for a whole range of animals and birds to make use of. The abundance of old hedges and trees make the whole area calm and tranquil. The old hedge that runs down from Botany farmhouse has produced the best damson's for the 50+ years that I have been using this area. This area should be saved for the wildlife, for biodiversity, for nature as a whole. Spend a bit of time morning and evening watching the sky change colour as the sun rises or sets. Stunning.

Given the increase in mental health problems that we are facing as a nation and the fact that it is proven that being out in nature is of huge benefit to people suffering with their mental health, how can anyone even consider developing this area. Highworth needs a breathing space. A place to just be and let the mind relax and clear itself of the day,s stresses, worries and frustrations. Much cheaper and less invasive than using the NHS and medication

Yours sincerely

Forward planning officer/committee
It seems that after so much representation from the Town Council and the Residents of Highworth you are proposing to vote against Highworth retaining at least the top half of the Old Golf Course for recreational use.
This is a very important area for Highworth. More and more land is being lost to housing within the town. It is important to keep an area for everyone They can find solace if they need it they can find people to talk to. So many people of all ages use this area every day,. It could be used even more if people were able to develop it for recreation, the old golf shop could be opened as a coffee shop. The area is full of wildlife and Flora of all kinds. Some quite endangered. The town needs a buffer zone to protect it from encroachment. It is a vital part of the lungs of the town.
I'm sure many of the councillors must have seen the amount of support there has been and still is in Highworth over the last few years to retain this area They are Still there.
These people were expecting and hoping for support from our Borough Council

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This is a beautiful much loved area for the people of Highworth. The peace, tranquility and fresh air and nature are a must for our well being and mental health.
It is an important local green space for people to get away from the hustle and bustle of town and traffic.
Many people use it for jogging, walking and dog walking.
The wild life is amazing and the wishes of the people of highworth for it to remain an open space.
There are other sites in Highworth for example near Aldi so why would we build on this special green space.

Good afternoon,

I support policy 10 as it looks to secure local green space for all, being Highworth residents both myself and my wife use The Old Golf Course daily. It is easily accessible with ample parking, whilst walking around the old golf course we can observe the wildlife of which there is plenty. We are often joined by our grandchildren and during the summer months have picnics and it feels like a day out in the countryside the views are fantastic. It would be a great loss for all the users of the old golf course of which there are very many including the disabled to turn it into yet another urban sprawl.

Yours sincerely

I wish very much to vote NO to the proposed development of the area off of Crane furlong and also the old golf course...being a disabled (now) lady of 80+ I rely on the ares I have walked over the past 45 years or so with my late husband and now by myself especially for exercise, memories and to enjoy the beautiful walks and spectacular views around our wonderful Historic town..these views will be lost forever if this planning goes ahead...I am so upset as several of my late friends and husbands have had their Ashes laid to rest on their favourite site where they enjoyed an early morning jaunt and game of golf... the peaceful feeling when walking these fields is so very important to so many people it MUST NOT BE BUILT ON 'WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE GREEN BELT AROUND OUR LOVELY ANCIENT TOWN' I know there is thought to be the need for all these extra homes but not at the expense of ruining this peaceful, friendly Town too many of these small towns and communities are being swallowed up by the massive Urban Sprawl of Swindon, Please don't let HIGHWORTH join them by decisions made by Government officials who have no idea of the close knit community that is Highworth as it is ...and not an over developed and soul less jumble of houses that are not affordable for young Highworthians and therefore we will go on to lose the HEART of our town..
VOTING NO,NO,NO

Ref Highworth Plan Policy 10 The Old Golf Course

I am writing in support of the plan to keep the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space.

This area is the only open green space easily accessible from the level town centre and plays a major part in the well being of local residents. With more houses on the south side of the town there will be an increasing need for this facility.

It is used by all ages for exercise, dog walking and quiet refection. At a time when we are constantly being reminded of the vital importance of connecting with green space for our mental health it would be foolhardy to deny the local residents the opportunity to be able to enjoy this open space with the far reaching uplifting views, The effect on our health in body, mind and spirit is immeasurable.

I feel that it is very important that the Old Golf Course is designated as a local green space.

1 Highworth is the only hilltop town in Wiltshire. The north side has already been spoilt by previous large estates. Must the south side go the same way? Let us be honest. Once any houses are allowed then the rest will follow.

2 Even members of Swindon Town Council have said that Highworth has had more than it's fair share of new housing. Why allow more?

3 Pentylands open area has given people living on the north side a large open space. Room for children to explore and play. For older people to walk and for everyone to enjoy the wild life. The old golf course is that place for the south side. A trip down to Pentylands for older people or children means a car ride. Yet more traffic through the town.

4 The top area is the most widely used. Easy for older people who use it to walk and chat, dog walkers, children of all ages who run and play. (Try to do that in a 'green area' given by a builder.) This is really important for mental health and well being.

5. The roads in the town are already crowded. The 'answer' seems to be just take another field and build another road. The majority of the new houses being sold are to people working in Oxford. Are we to become an overspill town for that city?

6 The destruction of sites for wild life to survive is quite noticeable as more of our fields are built on. It would be wonderful if the site could be developed as a nature park. Open to Highworth and neighbouring communities.

To whom it may concern

With mental illness on the rise and an increasing population why would a caring forward thinking council take away such a valuable asset from so many people?
The OGC is a space that provides so much, not only to the people of Highworth, but to others from surrounding towns and villages. People come to exercise , play with children, look at nature, walk dogs, walk with parents and friends and families and people just come to be still!
In a world full of increasing technology that is taking over our lives, can’t we just keep some space.
What the OGC means to me, well in one word, everything. It provides me with a safe space of calm and freedom in an ever expanding town. It provides me with a place to exercise and to enjoy nature. It also provides the local school children I work with in Outdoor Learning a safe place to explore, enjoy, see nature and get muddy and have fun.
Things that not all children have access to when at home.
Pease think of the wider picture, of all the things that may be forgotten about that this beautiful open space provides for the wider community, do the right thing and leave us some room to breathe.

Regards

The following is with regard to the proposal to develop the OGC, the neighbourhood plan and Policy 10.

I am a resident of Highworth.

As far as destroying the green space that is currently the Old Golf Course I see no sustainable reason for it.

SBC will receive a large amount of money from the developer for the land, this money is only available once and will get swallowed up in the burgeoning social care budget and used within a couple of years, whilst the developer makes 10 times the money they gave for the land in profit from the houses they build. The developers only loosely abide by the planning rules and no concession will be given to improving the road network in the local area, nor will there be any meaningful investment into public services that the influx of people to the area require, inspite of what the proponants of the plan might say. I had a couple of first hand experiences of this where I used to live in Sussex where the brightly lit, all bells and whistles development turned into a 1 candle power damp squib where all that was built were expensive houses and nothing else.

The Labour governments' drive to build 1500000 houses in their term of office could easily be achieved by developing Brownfield sites across the UK, Swindon has its fair share of these, there are literally 100's of acres of brownfield sites that are ripe for development, many many buildings are empty and could be repurposed for housing. THERE IS NO NEED TO CONCRETE AND TARMAC OVER A GREEN SPACE in order to meet a target, this approach is simply not sustainable on any level.

With regard to Highworth, I've heard it mentioned that Highworth already has its 'green space', Pentilands.....this place is a bog for 2/3rds of the year, the top section paths wouldn't look out of place in a 1st world war battlefield, the lower section, is a stinking mess of mud and stagnant water where only the bravest of frogs try to survive. So whilst the space is green (and brown), its not of much use save for July and August, if one is lucky with the weather.

One might argue, why not develop this section of land and retain the OGC... but thats for another time

From the data that the action group for saving the old golf has independently gathered, a far greater proportion of people use the OGC than use Pentilands, Myself and my family rarely visit that area and most of the time we use the old golf course, it is traversable for the whole year, with my son we walk, fly kites, throw paper airplanes, play hide and seek in the grass, go nature hunting, birdwatching and on clear evenings we go stargazing.

So no, I do not give my consent to any housing development on the OGC, for the reasons outlined above and many more I've not mentioned, it is not in the interests of anyone, not the people of Highworth or the surrounding areas or Swindon as a whole. The only interests it does serve are those of the shareholders of the development corporation..

Yours faithfully

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to express the strong support of my husband and myself for the views expressed in Policy 10 set out in the new neighbourhood plan for the town, namely that the old Golf Course should be retained as a green space for use of the residents of the town.

From a personal point of view, having lived in Highworth for 25 years, almost opposite the golf course, we have enjoyed walking there, watching the hedgerows change with the seasons, sitting on the seats and enjoying the openness and the lovely views, picking blackberries, and meeting friends and acquaintances.

Recently the space has become even more important as the field directly behind our house, once the haunt of owls, deer, foxes, badgers, and sometimes, young cattle, has been built on, and is now a crowded housing estate of expensive, visually unappealing, houses. It is our understanding that a second phase of this development will take this ancient hill-top town ever nearer to Swindon. In addition to this development, the developments on the Shrivenham Road will house many families who will need somewhere for rest and recreation, where children can run safely and see wildlife and nature generally close to where they live. The old golf course is close to the town centre, accessible to residents on this side of the hill. The local WI walking group frequently use it, as do other groups.

In the time we have lived here, Highworth has become much busier and life more hectic. Facilities are stretched and parking a problem. To have a lovely green, open space, where people can enjoy the mental and physical benefits of peace and beauty close to where they live, is an asset which should be treasured and protected.

Yours sincerely,

Hello,

I have been living in Highworth since 2014.

I would like to write a few words in order to protect Our Old Golf Course in Highworth against the housing development.

My family and a lot of people I know love Highworth not only because it has such a friendly and vibrant community but also because of the main feature of Highworth – it is Green!
That is why my family very carefully chose this place to live 10 years ago.

Yes, We chose Highworth because it is Green and because of the Old Golf Course!

We love spending our free time on the Old Golf Course, not only at the weekends but also during a week. We come here to recharge our batteries, exercise and simply go for a short walk or 30 min run.

The Old Golf Course is an amazing place Full of Energy, enormous variety of wildlife, animals, birds, insects, old trees!

My family in particular visits the Old Golf Course 7 days a week. I run here after work every day with my husband and our friends. We take our son for a walk or cycle ride to the Golf Course every Saturday and Sunday. In summer on some occasions we even go there twice a day!

The Golf Old Golf Course is used by MANY people in Highworth.

Every day I see people of all ages and abilities: young people, old people, disabled people and older people who struggle to walk properly, mums with prams and kids of different ages, active people (running, Scandinavian walk), dog - walkers etc.

I have a neighbor, a man, who is a wheelchair user who comes to the Gold Course often. He can't drive a car anymore..

My son learnt how to cycle on the Old Golf Course and is still cycling and still learning. If I ask him where he wants to go when we are free, he says – “Down the Golf Course, of course”! 😊😊
In the picture is my son who is 5 years old with his friends. As I mentioned earlier, we are here most of the days enjoying and learning about Nature, breathing fresh air and exercising.
The mums of other free children don’t have cars and can’t travel easily to other parks within the Swindon area. The Old Golf Course is the only place they can reach by foot within a short period of time.

Just want to highlight how important it is for people of all generations and abilities to live near Green Spaces and be able to walk to a park (if you can’t drive or don’t have time to drive somewhere through busy traffic), recharge, exercise any time of the day and year.

Unfortunately, other green spaces (what is left) are not accessible during most of autumn, winter and spring. They are boggy and not suitable for cycling or walking, with a pram, for example (I tested them all when my son was younger, with a pram, balance bike etc).

Please also note the following points:

* Highworth can't take any more housing development as the roads are already super busy with traffic, especially in the mornings and evenings. We breathe horrible car fumes on a daily basis.

* The surrounding areas in Highworth are already over-built.

* We only have one doctor's surgery and I can never get an early appointment at our surgey. The waiting list is too long!

* We only have 2 schools and one recreation centre in Highworth.

* The roads can't sustain the amount of cars which go through Highworth on a daily basis.

*The last and the main point is - we don't have a Park in Highworth. How many parks are in Swindon??

Can Highworthlans/Highworth Community have at least one Park (Open Green Space)?

Leaving Our Golf Course Green is my number one wish on the list.

I am sure lots of people in Highworth can say the same thing.

Please, Swindon Town Council, don't take it from us...

Once it is gone it is gone forever...

Best Regards,

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing specifically to support Policy 10 in the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan in particular making the Old Golf Course a local green space.

My wife and I used this green space once or twice on a daily basis since we moved to Highworth in 2012. Initially the golf course was open and we used the public footpaths around the perimeter and through the course as appropriate but when the course closed we were able to enjoy the whole of the open space.

It is the ONLY decent size public green space within a sort walking distance on the south side of Highworth for people to walk, cycle, run and generally exercise to get away from the constant traffic passing through the town. This will be even more important with future housing developments at Redlands and Shrivenham Road where several hundred more houses are being built.

It is a safe place where we could go walking with our dogs in a setting with beautiful views, abundant wildlife and fauna and meet other people also out walking and exercising.

Sadly my wife passed away very suddenly in July 2024 and I personally now find this green space an essential part of my life - I still use it once or twice a day walking the dogs in all weathers, but need it more than ever for my general well being and the memories and reflections of 12 years of walking there together and 50 years of being a couple together.

Personally, I'm not sure what I would do without this space on our doorstep and I'm sure there are hundreds of others who love its tranquillity and find it a calming place for their mental health

and well being as well as their exercise and fitness.

I fully support making the Old Golf Course a local green space

Yours sincerely

Dear Sirs

I have read your Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 Policy 1-Housing Provision and the only part I am interested in is F - land at Crane Furlong.

In the spring of 2021 (S/OUT/19/1195/TB) this piece of land was debated. Access to/from the site was a major concern. In my letter to dated 26/4/21 I listed the sites in Highworth already built or planned. The 50 at Wrag Barn have been removed, the 238 in Shrivenham Road have been approved (see Swindon Adver dated 14/6/24) This site will cause major traffic problems in the area. A traffic survey was carried out during Covid !! Hardly the best time when schools were closed and residents working from home. How about another survey before schools break up for the summer, or is it too late.

I would draw your attention also to my letter to Tom Buxton dated 7/9/19. All the arguments still remain and now the new Aldi has been built traffic down Pentylands Lane has increased.

The 'potential' new entrance/exit in Crane Furlong is a non starter. The roads around this site are narrow and have many cars parked on the roads. Also it comes before the famous pinch point on Grove Hill.

The only sensible and safe answer would be on to the A361 Lechlade Road and a possible left turn down to the roundabout and back up the A361 rather than a right turn across traffic.

For your convenience I am enclosing copies of the two letters I mentioned. You do not seem to have taken any of the previous concerns into consideration.

Yours faithfully

To those involved in decision making.

We moved into Highworth in 1971 with two young children and quickly had two more. We have absolutely loved living in this very special community; it is small enough to have a very strong and caring heart whilst being big enough to have many amenities and facilities that are needed by growing families. We love Highworth

Coming into the area with no family or friends anywhere near to support us, we had to find our way around and put down roots. Regularly we would go into what we called the ' rec field' and enjoy the swings and slide etc end facilities for children. This was really important as we settled here. Having the open space where the boys could play cricket or football or just simply run around was vital for us as a family. We would take our sandwiches over and have picnics over there. We would always take our visitors there, we would meet friends and have flasks of coffee in this beautiful open space. How blessed we were to bring up our children here, a space where youth groups could come for games evenings or even church gatherings and picnics, and we still treasure this open space now.

The years passed, but the value of and appreciation for this open space has only increased. The world has changed so much, there's so much more stress and worry, frustration and sadness now. If it was essential to my family's well-being during their growing up years, how much more essential is it in today's increasingly demanding and scary world. Our children have moved away but they have brought their children here and they have also gone to walk or play on the rec field, (OGC) and it has continued to be really important to the next generation.

Now, more than ever, space and countryside are proving to be very important to the mental health and well-being of the people in the UK, and that includes us and all our friends in Highworth.

We often walk around the old golf course, we often take photographs of the wildlife and the vegetation with the different seasons , the glorious timeless views, and we send them to our family. One of our sons lives in Sweden and when he and his family come to stay with us, which they do regularly , they go for a run each morning, and round the old golf course is inevitably their chosen route. My husband and I so much value the opportunity to walk there, and appreciate the great beauty and privilege, the peace and quietness and opportunity to breathe deeply and feel at peace.

We know that we are not alone in our longing that the treasured open space should continue to be available for the people of Highworth for generations to come. It would be extremely difficult for some of us older people to have to drive in order to get to a similar place to go for a walk ! We don't want to have to do that, we don't want the stress of driving, nor the expense, with its detrimental effect on the environment.

We would love to see the Old Golf Course turned into a nature park - it would be such a great addition to the town and bring the fulfilment of the longings of so many Highworthians. There are so many advantages as well.

We care about this area, we care about this beautiful town and its people and we ask you to please confirm The Old Golf Course as a local green space as listed in Policy 10.

Thank you.

Dear Sir or Madam,

As a resident of our lovely town, Highworth, for 13 years, I would like to comment on the proposed Highworth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2.

The comments that I wish to be considered are in support of Policy 10. Local Green Space. Prior to this version of our Neighbourhood Plan, I signed and petitioned, with 4,600 other residents of Highworth to preserve and protect the Old Golf Course openness so that it can be continue to be enjoyed by us all. I fully support and endorse Policy 10 in applying to designate the top section of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space.

This is a stunningly beautiful and special space with simply wonderful views. The only remaining accessible space like this that Highworth has now. It is the most unique and special area of our 5 proposed designated local green spaces and an absolute haven for a very wide diversity of wildlife, plants and trees.

I still work but make time on several occasions a week to take a walk in this space. Personally, it calms me and is an essential for my physical and even more so mental well-being in today's demanding world. If we lose this space, I can't think of a replacement that would work for me in reality. After 2 hip operations and another one likely necessary in the next 2 years, this space is my accessible, local get away. It truly encompasses the aim of helping myself and other local people to 'lead healthy and fulfilling lives.'

I am active in supporting our town in many ways, organising the Advent Window Trail, being a member of Highworth Climate Friends and having been a local Dementia Friends Champion and I want to be part of helping to develop the Old Golf Course into a Nature Park to support the wishes of our community.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Yours sincerley

I use the Old Golf Course every single day. It is so important to me to have a green space where I can walk safely in a really lovely green area rather than walking around the streets.I can walk there easily from my house to the Old Golf course without needing to use my car. The walk around the OGC helps my physical health by walking daily which is something all experts involved in promoting good health say we should do. The walk around the OGC also helps my mental health, which is another thing the Government and health experts keep promoting.The area is such a valuable area for the people of Highworth to have. We do not need more houses. There is not enough infra structure for the population and houses we already have.
The government say how important it is to have green spaces for people to use but by Swindon BC trying to build even more houses on the OGC is going against the government wishes . Green space for a town and its population is so important and there isn't any other green space in Highworth.
Keep The Old Golf Course for the people, not development.

Whilst I feel that the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 is acceptable I am concerned as to the future of the Old Golf Course.

This area is very special to the residents of Highworth, I walk there at least two or three times a week and more in the summer months. It is a very calm and tranquil open space with wonderful views towards the downs, perfect for people to escape the pressures of current day life of which there are many. It is also a place for nature to flourish and with the will of Highworth Town Council and the local community it could be made into a superb nature park engaging all ages and encouraging even more wildlife, fauna and flora than exists at the moment. We see and read in the media how important it is to encourage nature, particularly pollenating insects and declining butterflies, so to build on this land would be a great loss to both locals and nature.

PLEASE be mindful of the impact to humans and wildlife when any planning decisions are made.

To whom it may concern,

The good people of Highworth had thought this matter of the old golf course being used as an open green space for leisure and wellbeing was settled - and it should have been.

We had support from the Labour councillors at the first protest but now they are in power they want to take it away from us again - which is absolutely immoral and disgusting!!

The old golf course is the only area in Highworth that can be used all year round, particularly the top bit as it doesn't flood and stays reasonably dry.

We use it every day for exercise and walking our dog.

It is vital for our health and wellbeing.

We meet some lovely people and have a chat.

The wildlife, hedgerows, trees and wildflowers are very important and the open space for them is being squeezed ever smaller by the building of houses everywhere without any accountability for nature at all.

Older folks love to do the short walk along the top, sit on the benches, look at the wonderful views and chat to passers by - it makes the world go round.

This space is the only place for people in Highworth to walk to and enjoy the tranquility and beautiful views. It was invaluable during lockdown for keeping so many people, including us, sane.

My husband and I have lived in Highworth all our lives - we are in our late seventies, and seen many changes to this wonderful Market Town. There is so much building going on around the town at the moment that soon it will lose its status as a market town, where everyone says "good morning" and passes the time of day.

We CANNOT lose this beautiful open space and breath of fresh air for the people of Highworth. The town is growing and people, more than ever, need a space that becomes a park for them to relax in and feels safe to walk in and enjoy themselves.

Yours faithfully,

Dear Team,

We are writing with regard to the 'Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 10', and the designation of the 'Old Golf Course' area of Highworth as a 'Local Green Space'.

As a resident of Highworth, and living on the south side of the town, we truly value this open area, regularly walking there enjoying the surroundings, views, nature and tranquility that it offers, all within easy walking distance of our home. No matter the weather or season, this open, green area is used daily by dog walkers, young families, short and long distance walkers - old and young, couples and retired people or lone walkers, all given the opportunity say hello/interact with others, out and about in a natural space.

It is critical that we offer further protection to the Old Golf Course area, as it is now the only remaining local green space, constantly used in this way, that is within easy walking access from the town. With the combination of recently completed housing and already approved further housing developments, we are seeing challenges to the towns identity, character and overall life balance/mental health for Highworth residents.

The second issue is the continual displacement of wildlife. Each new housing development, no matter how carefully planned, does this. Highworth, geographically, is a hilltop town going downwards to areas of farmland/river, including areas that regularly flood in winter. If new housing is approved on every side of Highworth, the wildlife will, in the end, be displaced into areas that simply cannot support the current biodiversity and geodiversity, that is essential to life. There must be a preservation of wild, green areas.

Hopefully new green spaces are included in the new housing development plans, but why take away an already existing, highly valued and much used, biodiversity rich, wild, green space, as part of that plan? It doesn’t make sense, even in terms of new town planning?

With the right protection given to the surroundings we live in, we can and should, secure for the future, even in new town planning, the qualities and values that the town enjoys currently, for both its residents and wildlife.

I am a resident and active volunteer in highworth.
I have read and fully support the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2
I would like SBC planning controls to take special note of the highworth design codes in future to ensure the character of highworth isn't damaged by unthoughtful our of character developments.

open spaces and views are also very important to me in preserving the character of highworth as a hill top town.
The old golf course should be preserved as it is the heart and lungs of highworth town giving easy access to open spaces important to ongoing mental and physical health.
building on the old golf course would also put in jeopardy some annual community events held there like the wrdup festival, firework nights displays and annual circus, as new residents would most likely complain at such events on their doorsteps. these events not only provide entertainment to highworth residents but also to the wider swindon community

regards

l I would like to respond to the consultation on the Neighbourhood plan for Highworth. I am not a native but have lived here for 24 years and I have come to realise just how special and unique this little gem of an wrde is with its long history, its charming town centre and its open and welcoming community. The town has changed during my time here but the spirit of the place remains. We still have “sun and stone and old brick and garden flowers and church bells”

I support the aims of the neighbourhood plan and find little to disagree with but I would like to make a couple of points.

Policy 7 design

I feel that stronger guidance and codes to make new developments blend in visually with existing buildings is needed. Some of the newer housing has been built in a horrid spotty grey brick and it doesn’t sit at all comfortably with our existing beautiful buildings .

Policy 10 the old golf course

This needs the strongest protection we can give it. It is easy to overlook the need for green space when considering the many demands on land but we learned during the CoVid lockdowns the value to mental and physical health of this nondescript parcel of land. It is well used and not just by Highworth residents - it is usual to see several cars parked next to the football field as people from other parts of the local area or indeed further afield visit to enjoy fresh air and open space. I understand that an ecological survey found nothing special (they didn’t see the bats, the owls, the insects, the orchids…) but only preserving the bits of habitat that support critically endangered species ignores the wider threat of loss and isolation of the ordinary flora and fauna. Experiencing the natural world close to home - within a few hundred metres of the town centre - is to my mind an important part of growing up, and as adults there is little doubt that having access to green space is beneficial to mental health. I would support the designation of it as a Local Green Space or stronger protection for it if such were available. It is greatly to be regretted that the protective covenant put in place when the land was donated to the community of Highworth was not renewed when it expired. I appreciate the need for housing but our town has already absorbed substantial numbers of new houses and I feel that we have done our share. Once we lose this precious asset to more housing it will be lost forever.

yours faithfully

To whom this may concern,

Ref POLICY 10.

I am writing to you in regard to HTC's neighbourhood plan which includes the application to designate the top section of the 'Old Golf Course' as 'Local Green Space' (LGS).

I strongly urge you to NOT oppose this plan when it goes to the Government Examiner for review.

I use the 'Old Golf Course' every day to walk my dog (Mac) and it is very special to me to be able to do so for many reasons. I have become healthier; it helps me relax whilst walking through the beautiful green space surrounded by wildlife, other walkers, and dog walkers. This immeasurably helps my mental health. I often walk with two or three of my best friends their dogs, my son, and my partner, we ALL feel the same way about this wonderful area of natural beauty.

As I walk around the 'Old Golf Course' I've often seen various wildlife and have personally taken photos of Shrews, various birds, Muntjac, Fawn and adult Deer.

With the addition of many new builds and our growing population local greenspace is very important for people to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and relax in this beautiful space. As mentioned this helps my mantal health and this day and age it is very important subject. I'm sure many other people use this space to get away from the worries of everyday life for an hour or two, relax, walk, and look around. Where else would we be able to walk if this area is taken away from us?

Your sincerely,

To the Independent Government Examiner

I am a resident of Highworth and I would like to express my concern that the Old Golf Course could be lost as a designated green space. And I'd like to express my concern at the plan to build houses on this space.

Since moving to Highworth 7 years ago, the Old Golf Course has been a staple and crucial part of our lives.
I have photos of our child from a tiny babe in a pram on a first push round with proud parents, up to riding a first bike, flying a kite, riding a bigger bike, being chased by an auntie and uncle in a game, and picking blackberries with a grandparent.
It has been such a core part of our lives that it is difficult to write about it without emotion and reflecting on the feelings of joy and hope that it brings. We visit at least once a week as a family, and my husband goes there daily for his walk. My husband works from home and the Old Golf Course being close to the town and our home, provides a welcome space for him to walk on his lunchbreak.
It is our place to head to when family from out of town visit, and the place we head to for our Christmas Day and Boxing Day and New Year's Day walks.
None of our family will ever forget the time a friendly labrador pup stole the egg sandwich from my toddler's hand on a picnic here!
It was a lifeline in Covid, and I am sure it goes without syaing how essential a space it was then.
When I recently had some time off work due to stress the Old Golf course provided a safe and calm haven for me to walk, breath fresh air and bring some balance to a chaotic time of life.
Through our experience of 4 miscarriages The Old Golf course was the one space we felt we could walk together, find peace without words and use the views and tranquility to heal. We were able to leave some flowers by a tree of our choosing, and sprinkle a packet of wildflower seeds. It was a space to acknowledge pain and loss and to grieve in reflection, before heading back home and facing normal life. And it continues to be a place where we can go together or separately to remember these memories if we need to. I cannot imagine another place in Highworth where we could have done, and where we could continue to do this.

I acknowledge that my views of the Old Golf Course are deeply personal, however I can't be alone in feeling the significance of this space. I genuinely feel that there would be a huge loss for Highworth and Swindon without this space.

In thinking about the future how great it would be if it could be saved and developed into a Nature Park. How fantastic would it be to recognise the value of this green space and to let it remain as a shared space. Surely there must be a value in leaving this green space as a beacon for wildlife, for space to walk in nature, for space to breathe fresh air, for a place to use nature to heal, and as a safe green space to be just you.

Please accept this as my voice to make the Old Golf Course a designated LGS.

Yours faithfully

Hi.

I have been a resident in Highworth for the last 27 years and want to share my dismay at the continued attack for development on this space. The amount of green spaces in Highworth that are within 3 mins walking distance from the town centre being pillaged by the council and developers. Already we have had some massive developments in the town and have another starting in Wrag Barn. The town does not have the resource for more developments…..

We are fed up a constantly having to justify why this space is needed – but here goes again.

• Myself, my wife and our elderly dog use this space at least every other day for exercise and as somewhere to go to breath fresh air and admire the views from the benches at the top of this amazing space.
• Joggers, teenagers, elderly people families use this space regularly and is safe and clean.
• I work shift work for the police and this space is a lovely place to think and get away from all the rubbish the world throws at you.
• It’s a place where my dog can roam off lead and you get to meet different people using the space and its lovely to chat and socialise. After the trials and tribulations of COVID etc people need these spaces for their mental health and to get out.
• If we are constantly growing as a town – which it appears we are. As a town we need these spaces to encourage health activities and more over social interaction. Which has been lost in recent times.
• There has been many good suggestions for this space – but taking it away from the town just for more housing. When there are lots of other areas in the surrounding farm land that is not used is idiotic. And Swindon Borough council should be aware of this.

I think back to the days of the suggested development on coffin close for an old people home!!! Come SBC please do better. We have told you what we want for this space. Please give it back to the town….!

Yours Faithfully

With regard to Highworth Neighborhood Plan 2 I would ask that Swindon Borough Council consider the following points.

Highworth is a beautiful hilltop town with a lot of character and history, the loss of surrounding open land will erode the character which is important to protect this ancient town.

New housing is already underway and with further plans having been submitted, one hopes any planning decisions will consider the visual effect of such developments, unlike those at Redlands which are totally inappropriate for the edge of the town. They should also consider the amount of pollution and traffic problems (most households have two cars these days), particularly with the already very busy A361 which runs through the town.

Most importantly with regard to the old Golf Course, it is such a beautiful and well used area of Highworth. It is in walking distance for many residents and is accessible all year as it is flat and free draining which also makes it accessible to those less able residents such as those in wheelchairs etc. I use this area most days, it is such a quiet and calm place and makes one feel much better to be away from the pressures of life especially those of us who tend to have depressive tendencies, being able to enjoy the quiet and the view across to the downs. Another important aspect of the Old Golf Course is as a habitat for wildlife and the beautiful fauna and flora. As one of the most nature depleted counties in Europe we should be encouraging nature and with the will of the residents of Highworth (4,600 having signed a petition to save this area from development) it could be made into a beautiful nature park for all to enjoy and encourage the next generation to learn and get involved.

For all the reasons above the Old Golf Course SHOULD BE DESIGNATED LOCAL GREEN SPACE.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you today to strongly object to the possibility of a housing development on the Highworth Old Golf Course.

As you are aware, Highworth residents with minimal support from HTC have objected strongly to any form of housing development on this open space.

This area is paramount to the wellbeing of all residents and visitors to allow them to exercise, enjoy the wildlife and meet up with other locals. There is so much potential for the old golf course to continue to belong to Highworth and its residents. Green spaces are being eroded by greedy councils who are unable to budget their funds, so selling off green spaces to even more greedy developers is the only option for SBC, I think not.

This open space is frequented daily by a huge amount of people, walking their dogs, allowing children to roam safely, its such easy access to all of Highworth. As Highworth is designated as a hilltop town, the views from the hill top will be completely depleted by yet another inappropriate housing development, which is not needed and will cause many problems for all residents in Highworth, namely, traffic problems, serious lack of GP facilities (which we already have), pollution, poor water supply (which is depleted already by the new building sites opposite the golf course). All in all this is a absolutely ridiculous idea by Swindon Borough Council. It is common knowledge that SBC have already agreed with several developers to submit an application for development, surveys have already taken place. SBC continue to let down the current residents of not just Swindon, but all its surrounding villages and towns.

Yours sincerely

Hello and good evening

I'd like to express my support for Policy 10 in relation to Highworth Towns "Old Golf Course" becoming a local green space.

I have always known the Old Golf Course (OGC) as nothing but a green space. It has never been built on since it was given to the Town by the owner of the old farm land a very long time ago.. I can walk to it in less than 5 minutes and I and my whole family go and walk on it 16-20 times a week. It is my life line. I was a paramedic for 42.5 years and have suffered from flashbacks. The OGC is quiet, even tranquil and its ability to support mindfulness and wellbeing is the perfect medicine to me. The views are stunning in three directions and I love the flora and fauna that support so much nature and wildlife. I am a knowledgeable ornithologist and take my binoculars with me in all weathers to see so many creatures, obviously the wonderful birdlife, but have seen foxes, deer, rabbits, a hare or two plus numerous bats in the twilight of an evening.

Pentylands (not near most of the town) is a five fields of mud and so the exceptional need for a great space with easy access from the town and parking by the football pitches for those with limited mobility is just brilliant. I was born in North London and moved to Highworth many years back to enjoy this medieval hilltop town.

I am super keen to support a real nature park and set some of the land for rewilding building on the work of real conservationists to expand a set of natural lungs to allow animal reptile and bird life to grow and develop, some of whom are on the verge of being driven further towards extinction.

I am a photographer partly to photograph birds and wildlife but also to capture the beauty whilst we still can. Designating this glorious green space as official and protected area for nature is more than a request, it's a plea for sanity and its based on mine and many other lived experiences that assessors from other oversize urban sprawls can only imagine knowing their own cities and town bulldozed them into oblivion in the past.

Please please recognise our heartfelt support for Policy 10. It's NOT us being NIMBYs, it's just our deep concern that you are Cherry picking an outstanding area of loveliness and ticking a poorly thought through policy.

Look elsewhere, leave the Highworth OGC alone

Sir/Madam,

I am writing to support the initiative to classify the Old Golf Course as a local green space. Both when it was a golf course and now that it is a green space, the Old Golf Course plays a vital part in the life of the Highworth community. It represents a rare way of getting out into the countryside for those who live in the centre of Town. This is especially so for those who are less mobile that others - the Old Golf Course can be accessed from the town over flat ground without the need for a car. The opportunities for this elsewhere have vanished and it would be a crime if this last possibility was taken away from residents. The space is a haven of tranquility and calm and a huge boost to the mental health of those who regularly walk there.

Please keep this space green and accessible to all.

Regarding the above - the people of Highworth need this piece of land to enjoy nature and relaxation. Please don't take it away from them.

We have been residents of Highworth for 25 years and are very concerned about the potential loss of a significant proportion of the old golf course.

Highworth has seen a number of developments built over the last few years, with more currently in construction. This has already reduced the number of green spaces in our market town, meaning that retaining the old golf course in its current form in line with Policy 10 (local green spaces) becomes more vital.

As dog owners, we use the whole area at least twice a day, and even before we owned our dog would take daily walks, admiring the views and enjoying nature through the seasons. The views are spectacular and the tranquility it offers lifts one’s spirits.

Development on this land would not only adversely affect all these benefits, but as nature lovers we are also very concerned about the loss of habitat. We would therefore urge you to reject any proposed housing development on this beautiful area.

Yours sincerley

I strongly support the section of the new Highworth Neighbourhood Plan that provides additional protection to stop the development of this area, which represents a beautiful piece of English country side near the very centre of Highworth.

Sincerley,

Dear Forward Planning Team at SBC,
I am writing to express my strong support for Policy 10 and the designation of the Old Golf Course (OGC) as a local green space. This area holds immense value for our community, and I believe it is crucial to preserve it for the following reasons:
Firstly for recreational needs, the OGC is indispensable. I frequently use it as a walking and exercise space, and it has become an integral part of my routine. As a member of the local dog walking community that regularly uses the OGC, I can attest to its importance for social interactions and community bonding. This space fosters a sense of camaraderie and belonging, which is vital for our collective well-being and enhances the friendly character of HIghworth Town.
The mental health and well-being benefits I receive from spending time in this green space are immeasurable. It provides a sanctuary where I can unwind, reflect, and rejuvenate. The tranquillity of the OGC is another significant aspect that I deeply value. It offers a calm and serene environment, perfect for reflection and mindfulness. In today's fast-paced world, having such a peaceful retreat is invaluable.
The beautiful views and the big skies afforded by the hilltop location of the OGC are truly stunning. Whether it's the rolling hills, the lush greenery, or the serene landscape, these vistas provide a sense of joy that is hard to find elsewhere. The visual beauty of this space significantly enhances my well-being and offers a much-needed respite from the daily grind.
Additionally, the OGC serves as a crucial habitat for wildlife. It is home to a variety of species, including bats, owls, deer, and muntjacs. The presence of rare orchids and rare insects further highlights the ecological importance of this area. The old trees in the OGC provide essential habitats for these species, contributing to the biodiversity of our community. I fully support the local community's wishes to develop the OGC into a nature park, which would further enhance its ecological value and provide a haven for various species.
Furthermore, the OGC contributes significantly to addressing the climate crisis and promoting carbon neutrality. Green spaces like the OGC play a crucial role in sequestering carbon dioxide, thereby reducing the overall carbon footprint of our community. The old trees and diverse plant life in the OGC act as natural carbon sinks, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. By preserving and enhancing this green space, we can contribute to a healthier environment and support global efforts to combat climate change.
With our local population growing, the importance of preserving local green spaces cannot be overstated. If this green space is taken away from us, we will lose a vital area for recreation, companionship and relaxation in our expanding town. Moreover, the OGC plays a vital role in protecting the hilltop town status of our ancient town. Preserving this green space helps maintain the historical and cultural heritage that defines our community. It is essential to safeguard this area to ensure that future generations can appreciate and enjoy the unique character of our

town.
In conclusion, I urge you to support Policy 10 and the designation of the Old Golf Course as a local green space. Preserving this area is essential for the well-being of our community, the protection of our heritage, and the conservation of our natural environment.
Thank you for considering my views.
Sincerley,

I would like to register how this space is important to me

I have a dog and we both enjoy exercising in this green space that seem to be disappearing. We use this space everyday.
It is vital to keep green space for people to enjoy and utlise as mental health conditions are on the increase and I have seen this working in health care. If we continue to lose green spaces, there will be consequences for these people.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am very much in favour of further (affordable) housing in Highworth and the Old Golf Course presents a perfect location for this.
We NEED houses in Highworth, especially ones suitable for the younger generation.

We have enough Local Green Space (LGS) already in the form of Pentylands Country Park (which is extremely boggy and prone to flooding making Pentylands unsuitable for housing).

I've lived in Highworth over 40 years and walk the green spaces regularly. Despite what the local Action Group proports the Golf Course is not "well used" (however one quantifies that?) except predominately by a number of dog walkers who let their animals defecate all over the area making it unsafe to walk without paying close attention to where you're stepping, and particularly unsafe for children to explore.

Like the vast majority of Highworth residents I live in a house built on what used to be open fields and farmland. Highworth is an aging town with far too many NIMBYs who oppose EVERY development no matter how sensible, perhaps desperately clinging to the past, failing to recognise/accept the critical shortage of housing in the UK, or more focussed on their own selfish needs (e.g. price of their house or "their" view) rather than what is best for the Town, it's youth, and the Country as a whole.

I urge you to OPPOSE the LGS application and press on with encouraging sympathetic AFFORDABLE housing development in Highworth.

Thank you for your attention

Dear Sirs

Please find below my comments on the HTC Neighbourhood Plan 2.

I am writing in favour of all of Highworth Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan 2 which is a great plan and just what our lovely town needs for now and the future.

In particular, I believe that Policy 10, making the top section of the Old Golf Course into a Local Green Space is vital for residents, people in nearby villages and Swindon Borough as a whole. My reasons for this are as follows:

• This section, particularly the part abutting housing lies on open level ground with the most beautiful view in Highworth. It stretches across the bottom end of the Old Golf Course (OGC) right up to the hills and the Ridgeway in the distance.
• We walk our dog on this section several times during the week. We live close to Pentylands Park but that is very boggy for half of the year making it just too muddy.
• It is also level and available for people with most types of ability. I have seen people with wheelchairs using part of it.
•The OGC is close enough to most parts of Highworth for all residents to access it on foot. The bus stops close by enabling access throughout Highworth and many parts of Swindon.
• I get a feeling of tranquility when I'm there. My wife and I often take a flask of tea and just sit in peace in the surroundings.
• Highworth is a hilltop town and this piece of land just helps to maintain this important aspect of the town.
• The wildlife in the park is very varied and extensive with an enormous number of species. I have personally seen lots of deer, muntjacs, foxes, frogs, toads, squirrels, barn owls, kestrels, buzzards, red kites as well as orchids, primroses, cowslips and a whole host of other plants and animals.
• Highworth is growing at an alarming rate. Houses of course need to be built but we are losing a lot of green space. Current residents as well as people moving into the town need places to go for recreation and leisure. This important piece of land needs protection from development to ensure that we and our children have somewhere to relax and connect with nature.
•The North West part of the Borough already lacks access to green space compared with the rest of Swindon. With 000's of extra houses being built in Highworth, Blunsdon, Eastern Villages and South Marston as well as refurbishment of the Honda site where will people go to exercise with their children and dogs if this special piece of ground is used for yet more housing.

Kind regards

Dear sir /Madam

I implore you to keep this beautiful area as a designated green open space for the use of the pole of Highworth and it's surrounding areas

We have enough areas in Highworth for houses to be built and there are many in progress so we can and need to keep this area as a green park and not build
Any houses on it

Kind regards

Dear Sir,

I write in response to the recent publication of Highworth Neighbourhood Plan.

I am particularly concerned about the future of the Old Golf Course, and having read Policy 10, am in agreement with it's recommendations that it is designated a Local Green Space and free from developement.

I live just a few minutes walk from the golf course and frequently walk there for exercise and to enjoy the plants, trees and diversity of wildlife. Whenever I visit, I encounter several dog walkers, runners and people enjoying the fine views and fresh air. With so much developement taking place within the Highworth area, it is crucial that this open space is left undeveloped for all to enjoy. The positive effects on mental health are not measurable but obvious to all who use the Old Golf Course.

We must fight to preserve it for ourselves and future Highworth residents.

Yours faithfully

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to confirm my strong support of Policy 10 and the Old Golf Course becoming a local green space.

It is lovely to have such a large green space located just over the road from my house, but also in close proximity to the town centre. It is within walking distance for many Highworth residents.

I walk there several times a week, either on my own, with my husband and sometimes with a walking group on Thursday afternoons. The walking group includes friends, who don't live in Highworth, but enjoy walking around the OGC and find it very beneficial to their wellbeing. We all enjoy the exercise, spectacular countryside views and the diversity of trees, hedgerow and wildlife.

It would be devastating if the OGC is not protected as a green space for the local population now and the generations to come.

Dear sir/madam,

I am writing today in support of the Neighbourhood plan and the application to designate the top section of the Old Golf Course as a Local Green Space (Policy 10)

My husband and I are lucky to enough to regularly walk round the course especially the top part as the bottom part is often far too wet.

With the creation of new housing estates in the are, it is even more essential we keep the dwindling green spaces for residents. Access to nature is linked to wellbeign

both physical and mental health wise for the young, old and the inbetweens.

The area is ideally situated in the centre of Highworth meaning mums, children or the elderly do not need access to a car in order to enjoy the space. It can be used

in so many ways, picnics, games, community groups or just to enjoy taking a walk with the lovely views, the peace and quiet and the bracing fresh air.

I do hope on reading our letters, you will understand the strength of feeling there is in Highworth

for the Old Golf Course. Yours faithfully,
It is imperative that this space in left for the residents especially the elderly living at the top of the hill. Also the new developments are bringing in many more residents who can enjoy this lovely part of our town. Apart from the marvellous Rec Centre there are few activities people of all ages can enjoy.
With reference to Policy 10, the Highworth old golf course should be supported as a local green space (LGS) because: - it is the only accessible large green space which is wheelchair and restricted mobility accessible. Removing it will be disadvantages disabled. • Easy walking distance from the town centre – 400 to 600 metres. Forms part of the NHS Green prescribing mandate. It is free to park, access and accessible from bus, cycle and walking routes. It addresses ACEs, obesity and mental health requirements from government and NHS policy and mandates. • The beautiful views from every direction benefits the historic beauty of the ancient hilltop town and benefits mental and physical health. It is held in high regard by hundreds of visitors each day. • this green space is important to protect the hilltop status of our ancient town • it is important it is for recreational needs. I, my family and friends use it as a walking/exercise space, and recieve mental health and well-being benefits There are only 2 large green space in town that are walking distance from town and free to access by under 18s. Exercise and freedom to walk in nature are core rights of children in the UN mandate of human rights. I am part of running, walking, nature and dog walking groups that use it. It is an area of tranquility providing calm and space for quiet reflection? • it is important as a habitat for wildlfie. I have recorded bats, owls, foxes and deer on the site. I support the wishes of the local community in developing the OGC into a nature park. • With such a growing population, it is important to retain local green space for people to get away from the hustle and bustle of the town centre and traffic. Where else will we walk in a rapidly expanding town if our nearest green space is taken away from us? Sincerley

Hello

Re: The Old Golf Course, Highworth POLICY 10

The Old Golf Course is hugely important to the residents of Highworth. My family would certainly be devastated if the old golf course was developed and the lovely open space was built upon. It's one reason I chose to move to Highworth. It's an amazing space where so many people can walk without being in another's personal space. It's a breathing space away from anything else, which in today's society with all the hustle and bustle makes it an invaluable addition to Highworth. Yes I could get in my car and drive somewhere else, but how is that right today, when we are trying to reduce emissions, Swindon is also far too busy without more people from Highworth having to travel to other areas. Not to mention some people might not have the ability to travel elsewhere. Being able to walk there easily from home is part of the appeal. It's a motivation to exercise and get fresh air, overall having a positive impact on mental and physical health. It's a wildlife haven which is amazing. The views and green space make me feel like I'm somewhere else and I would like to continue visiting this place daily.

Kind regards

We would like to add our support to policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, in respect to the designation of the top section of the Old Golf Course as a Local Green Space.

This green space is in very close flat walking distance to our home and the majority of our neighbours' that live in the Hill top area of Highworth, where you will find the traditional roadside cottages which have no front garden and no or very small back garden space.

The Old Golf Course is an area where we enjoy spending time in the fresh air for walking, exercising, time with family enjoying the beauty of the open space with the amazing views across the meadows.

This is of huge benefit to all the family for both health and wellbeing, away from the noise and pollution from the busy road and traffic that is constantly queued on the road outside the front of our house.

This is the only large open green space at the top of the town.

This area has already seen a significant amount of development on the Shrivenham Road, adding to further congestion at the roundabouts and along the main routes in and out of Highworth, with new building work about to commence around the Wrag Barn Area.

Many of the roads in and out of Highworth are narrow b roads and are already busy and in bad repair due to the increase in traffic, large lorries and huge farm vehicles that make our house shake.

There is already a parcel of land for sale adjacent to Aldi, which is on the main thoroughfare through the town between Swindon, Highworth and Lechlade. This is also where most of the expansion has happened with the developments off St Michaels Avenue and Roundhills Mead. Many of these houses benefit from green space around their houses, as either garden, grass verge areas, play parks and the large open green space Pentylands.

We would be prepared to volunteer to help with the upkeep of this most valued asset of our town, as I am sure many others would. We feel that the Old Golf Course should be protected from any future development as it is an integral feature of Highworth as an historic Hill Top Town.

I am writing in support of policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan to make the top section of the old golf course local green space.

I have lived in Highworth for 33 years and I have walked on the old golf course on most days during those 33 years. I've walked, run and played there with my children and now I walk there with my grandchildren who love it just as much as I do. I belong to a walking group of up to 20 retired ladies who meet up to walk there every week. It means the world to me. It is my solace and my happy place.

Just in the past year I've seen such amazing wildlife there including countess species of birds (including barn owls), bats, deer, foxes, hedgehogs, shrews, rare orchids and listened to the crickets in the long grasses buzzing in the summer heat.

I have made good friends whilst walking on the old golf course. Everyone says a friendly hello and often starts a conversation. People sit on the memorial benches to gaze at the beautiful views and chat to total strangers. People tell me they feel safe as there is always someone else within sight due to the lovely open vistas stretching all the way to the Wessex Downs.

It would break my heart to see all this being destroyed by heavy machinery and concreted over for houses. I understand the need for new houses, but Highworth already has 800 new homes either being built or in the planning stage and this precious, public, open, green space will be needed by our new residents all the more.

Having had a long career as a nurse and Health Visitor I am keenly aware of the importance of exercise for health and wellbeing and the benefits of connecting to nature for young and old alike. The top, flat, dry and easily accessible section (even to buggies or wheelchairs) provides a unique resource for exercise and nature not just to Highworthians but the countless people I meet there who come from other parts of Swindon. We simply cannot afford to lose this immeasurable asset. It would deeply and adversely affect so many people if it was lost to us now and for future generations.

The old golf course feels to me like the heart and soul of our community in Highworth. Please I beg you do not destroy it.

To whom it may concern

I have been a Highworth resident for over 40yrs and I have seen many changes to the town.

In recent years we have seen a considerable amount of land being built upon in and around Highworth.
The Old Golf Course provides local people and visitors to the town with tranquility and natural beauty. I enjoy the walks and meeting people.
It would be fantastic if the old golf shop could become a cafe to improve social well being.

Please don't destroy the natural beauty of this area, it really is a lovely place to walk, reflect and enjoy the outdoor's without worrying about traffic etc.
People who work from home need this more than ever for their own well being.

Kind regards

The old golf course is an essential part of Highworth.

It's a place where residents can breathe, especially now we have all these new builds around us.

It's good for mental health.

When going through traumatic times I have used the golf course to calm myself down and have often practiced mindfulness on the bench.
My son who suffers from schizophrenia walks/runs around the golf course daily and keeps his thoughts at bay.
When we had our Jack Russel the whole family regularly walked around the course.
My husband, son and grandson love flying kites there.

There are numerous other reasons for keeping this space but these are mine and my family who have lived in Highworth since the 70s.

Dear Sirs

Once again this development has raised it's head. When the Neighbourhood Plan 2 was published I wrote to the chair of that committee, our Mayor Julie Murphy, and actually handed my comments to her personally at the Saturday morning meeting in the Highworth Council offices. I never received a reply !!

I am writing once again about the problems that would occur when using Crane Furlong for access. Entrance and exit via Pentylands Lane is also a No No.
As I have said before the only safe and sensible entrance and exit would be via the A 361.

I shall be posting copies of all my previous correspondence to you at Swindon Planning Department. PLEASE take time to read it and send one of your officers to actually look at the proposed area. I would like to think I would receive a reply to my comments

Yours Sincerely

Dear Sir /Madam

I am writing to support policy 10 of the Highworth neighbourhood plan. It is vital we protect this part of the town as a local green space for generations to come.

My dog and I walk at the old golf course at least once a day. Toby my dog loves making new friends there and running in and out of the long grass. For me it gives the exercise I need and also a safe space to de stress from what life throws at us. We love spotting the deer and squirrels. Toby loves digging for rabbits which he has no chance of catching.

Thd old golf course enriches both our lives. That is why we are supporting policy 10.

Yours sincerely

I am writing to rspond to potential plans to develop the Old Golf Course, Highworth.

This is a space I regularly walk with my dogs, friends and children. I walk over regularly from Stanton Fitzwarren, and when my son is playing football or training at HTFC, I walk round each time. This is a magical space on the edge of a busy town, vital for escapism and peace.

The area is a haven for wildlife-I have seen hares, deer, squirrels, red kites, buzzards and many birds, etc on the site. The area is peaceful, and a wonderful place to esacape the stresses of daily life. It is easily accessible for children, buggies, wheelchairs, etc and well used-rarely are there not many other people wandering around when I am there.

With an ever expaning urban area in the local.area, this is one space we can aĺl enjoy. It is very much loved, used and at the heart of Highworth life. Without it we would be at a loss, with nowhere to congregate and relax.

I hope common sense rules over finances and we can keep this space. I would be lost without ut snd it would affect mine and my families life negatively to lose it.

Yours sincerely,

The town council's neighbourhood plan aims to preserve the open space in our town. Policy 10 delineates the upper portion of the former golf course as open local space.

Rarely a week passes that I have not walked on the land subject to Policy 10 and shared it with other walkers. I have used the former golf course for exercise and contact with nature since coming to Highworth 30 years ago. Even as a municipal golf course it provided much needed open public space for residents. Clearly, because of its proximity to the town centre and the grand view offered to the south, the northern, elevated portion would be considered prime real estate for housing development. But at what cost to the local community?

Since Swindon Council announced its intention to invite residential development of the former golf course, local people have objected vociferously. This is because of the special nature of the site for the mental and physical wellness of residents who use it, as well as the abundant wildlife and vegetation on the site. This, together with a petition by about half the population, has all been well documented by others.

I do not object to housing development in the town. But Highworth is surrounded by abundant other lands that are less contentious and more suited to housing development.

While it is desirable to retain Highworth's hill-top credentials, it is inevitable that housing must creep out into surrounding lower ground. But all the more reason to preserve this unique hill-side land for the perpetual recreational benefit of the town's and borough's residents.

Once developed and sold for expensive homes, it will be lost for ever. Therefore I urge that Policy 10 be accepted and incorporated in the borough's local plan.

Dear Sir or Madam

The old golf course is within easy walking distance of our house and is an extremely beautiful peaceful south facing park with lovely views that we use all year round and at least twice of week for regular walks. In our opinion a public space for relaxing and exercise is essential for my families wellbeing and this park provides 365 days a year use unlike many other parks across the Borough that regularly flood or are sodden over the winter. During Covid lockdown the park provided so much space and tranquillity for all of us on a daily basis that allowed us to get through these extremely challenging times. The park is used by many people, but this critical green space still provides our own space for reflection on your own or with the family. In terms of wildlife we have regularly seen deer , hawks, kestrels, barn owls , huge range of insects and some beautiful flora across the seasons. With increasing development across the borough and the modern stresses of life we must retain these precious green spaces for people to enjoy , relax,

think and recharge . Hopefully the Borough will consider this request to preserve this special park with sympathy and compassion for the future of the residents of Highworth and Swindon . Best Regards

Sirs/Madames

I wish to firmly oppose any plans put forward by SBC to nullify any part of the neighbourhood plan put forward by Highworth Town Council.

It has been brought to our attention that a member of SBC planning team is planning to oppose the proposal to designate the top part of Highworth Old golf course as Local Green Space.
This opposition to what is a much used green space, used by people from all over the Swindon borough, not just local Highworthians , is a travesty and an infringement of our human rights to enjoy open green spaces. It is vital for our health, mental and physical, social well being to be able to continue to enjoy this green space, as we have done for over 30 years.

I would like my name added to the list of people who oppose any alteration to the Highworth Plan.

Thank you

Hello,

I am emailing in regards to Policy 10 on page 64 of Highworth's proposed Neighbourhood Plan, regarding the old golf course.

That green space has been a refuge for me over many years as a Highworth resident — somewhere I would exercise, socialise and relax. It's been incredibly important to my physical and mental health, and I feel very strongly about it staying a green, open space. The resident's of Highworth need such spaces dearly, and I implore anyone that opposes protecting the land to reconsider for the sake of the town's residents and future.

Regards,

Good Evening,

I am e-mailing you in support of the proposal to designate Highworth Old Golf Course as Local Green Space under Policy 10.

I live a short walk from the Old Golf Course and use it at least once each day to walk my dogs enjoying the physical and mental health benefits of walking, fresh air and meeting people who are enjoying the Old Golf Course at the same time. If I have had a busy day and walk the dogs at night, it's a great place to de-stress and the darkness of the Old Golf Course permits incredible views of the moon and stars. It's a magical space and it's such a privilege to have access to it.

In the warmer months when the ground is drier, I also run around the Old Golf Course as do two of my daughters. We are members of Highworth Running Club who use the Old Golf Course for Wednesday night and Saturday morning runs and I often see other club members using the Old Golf Course for a run - much nicer and safer than running on roads.

The availability of public space for health and recreation is so important. Once sold the public never get the space back and the developers do not invest their profit back into the town. In my view it is wrong for a public body to choose to take away public space, there are clearly plenty of land owners in the Highworth area who are willing to sell their land for development. I accept that

we need more houses, but build them on land the public never had access to in the first place. Please save the Old Golf Course by designating it as Local Green Space.

Kind regards,

To whom it may concern

I am writing to express my strong support for keeping the old golf
Course (OGC) in Highworth as a vital green space for our community. This area is not only a beautiful and tranquil place but also an essential part of our towns identity and well-being.
The OGC is within easy walking distance from the town centre, making it an accessible and much-needed escape for many residents. The open views from every direction are stunning, providing a deep sense of connection to nature that is increasingly rare in growing towns. These views are part of what makes Highworth special, preserving its historic hilltop status and unique character.

Personally, I walk my dogs there daily, and each visit reinforces how important this space is not just for exercise but also for mental well-being. It is a place where I can slow down, appreciate the wildlife, and connect with others in the community who use the space in the same way. Since the golf course closed, I've noticed a real increase in birdlife and other wildlife, making it an even more valuable natural habitat.

With Highworth's population growing rapidly, it is more important than ever to protect and enhance local green spaces. If we lose the OGC, where will we go to walk, exercise, or simply find peace away from traffic and development? This space has the potential to become a dedicated nature park, benefiting both people and wildlife for generations to come.

I hope you will support the wishes of the local community in preserving the OGC as a much-loved and irreplaceable green space.

Kind regards,

To whom it may concern. As long standing Highworth residents, my wife and I , in unison with nearly 5,000 other like minded individuals, realise the true value of the above in terms of health and well being versus a monetary value to SBC to sell to developers.

My wife is recovering from Cancer and ongoing medical and mental issues that cancer brings with it. We use this facility on a daily basis as do many others with similar issues. The impact on the general health within the town will suffer should this facility not be available!

Can Swindon Borough Council please put the welfare and health of Highworth residents that bring more to the coffers that many other depleted areas of the borough first for once. The town's infrastructure cannot withstand the impact of this site being redeveloped. The traffic situation is currently intolerable and needs urgently making good just to serve what we already have.

We've had street lights out all over the winter that have caused injuries and a public danger for all..Sort your priorities SBC and cut the Greed element that you've become noted for!

This green space is a wonderful area, that provides vital benefits to all those who use it.

Families, dog walkers, ramblers and nature lovers in fact people of all ages, use this space on a regular basis, benefiting from the beautiful views, fresh air and the outstanding support for mental health.

How brilliant that this space is within walking distance to all the residents of Highworth and easy reach for surrounding areas to enjoy, bringing visitors to the local shops and the chance to have coffee and cake after a walk.

Please rethink the plans and consider the real people who love this area as much, as I do, when I am out walking my dogs in the peace it provides.

Thank you

This facility is a vital community asset, much used by many different people, some for their mental health, many dog walkers, people who just want to walk in a safe environment.

The Labour run council have gone back on arrangements made by the previous council. They see the old golf course and Highworth in general as a cash cow. The infrastructure is not good enough to support more housing, enough building is going on around the Shrivenham road area. Building more houses is not going to enhance the town centre as there is not enough parking to support the businesses.

The old golf course is a necessary recreational facility and should not be stolen from Highworth. Taking this facility away will leave the town with nowhere to just go for a walk, watch wildlife and generally enjoy the fresh air in a safe and relatively flat environment.

I strongly object to it being taken away from Highworth.

To whom it may concern

I would like to formally submit my strong desire to retain Highworth's Old Gold Course as a local green space.

This is an area rich in biodiversity – newts, owls, bats, foxes, deer, hare, hedgerows rich for foraging and much more. It is vital to helping to maintain the feeding and transport corridor that these animals rely on. Without it, the animals won't just simply just stop visiting that space, they will lose access to the neighbouring spaces, which jeopardises their ability to thrive in this locale. There is nothing as peaceful and enriching than watching the barn owl hunt as the sun rises, while the deer graze in the field. It is a very special place, and one that I, and many others, use as a quiet place, to escape the stresses of work and home, and to enrich my mental health.

I also use it as a safe space for walking. Without it there is nowhere else to walk that is not either residential, or subject to significant flooding. It is made even more special because it is in walking distance. Highworth does not have the walking tracks that are available to the rest of Swindon, os cut off from surrounding areas, as a pedestrian or cyclist.

This is our space to walk, to relax, to escape (or socialise), and to connect with nature. Please do not take it away. There is nothing that replaces it. Highworth would be significantly less without it, especially as it becomes increasingly residential.

Thank you

To Whom it may concern

I am writing in reference to the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, and more specifically in relation to the future use of the Old Golf Course.

I walk on the Old Golf Course almost every day of the year, to walk my dog, and so I am very familiar with this area, and the value of keeping this as a green space, under the Local Green Space application in Policy 10.

I have recently heard of one of the Swindon Borough Councillors objecting to this application, and this sickens me, quite frankly. They would rather Highworth be concreted over, building houses on any green space there is, than allow the residents an area of peace and beauty.

Highworth is already seeing hundreds of new housing being built, from the Backhouse development, to the building opposite Wrag Barn, and the areas earmarked alongside Roundhills Nead and also the site by Crane Furlong.

The facilities in Highworth, the roads and the doctor's practice, are already creaking with the weight of an increasing population, and another 500+ houses from the current plans will add even more pressure on these facilities, so they will be at breaking point already without an unnecessary further building on the Old Golf Course.

It's obvious to see that Swindon Borough Council just sees Highworth as a cash cow, to use to top up their funds with complete disregard of the effects that this has on the population of Highworth and the surrounding area.

For me, personally, the Old Golf Course helps enormously with my mental health. Working from home the majority of the time, this provides me with the change of scenery, fresh air, and exercise that I find really helpful.

I see many of the same folk daily, a quick chat, nod, smile and wave, plus many others that come and go, for a walk, walking their dog, or a jog round the fields. This provides a good source of positive social interaction and helps to build the community.

I am conscious that Highworth does have the Pentylands fields available, but due to where these are positioned at the bottom of the hill these fields are boggy, flooded, and unavailable for walking much of the year.

The importance of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, specifically Policies 8, 9, and 10, cannot be

underestimated.

This is why I am writing to you today, to strongly request that this application be granted, to help keep the Old Golf Course green, and to keep the people of Highworth and the surrounding areas healthy, both in terms of their mental health and physical health.

This is, and will be a facility available for use not just for the people of Highworth, but also for the whole of Swindon.

Therefore, I ask you decide with you brain and your heart, and not with your bank balance in mind, and choose the right option; to support the application for the Old Golf Course to be a Local Green Space, and be a valuable asset for all for many years to come.

Yours Sincerely,

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing with reference to the Old Golf Course in Highworth, in support of maintaining it as a valuable local green space (Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan).

I have recently moved to Highworth from a large city (Southampton) in order to benefit mentally and physically from the greater rural environment. I now live near the Old Golf Course and have been regularly walking there and exercising my dog there too. It is a wonderful space for dog walkers but also for anyone who has had mental health issues like myself.

In terms of close distance to the town centre it balances the urban area wonderfully, enabling anyone to enjoy nature and the open air in a peaceful environment. Since the roads through Highworth are increasingly busy with very fast moving traffic (A361), the Old Golf Course is a haven of calm with wonderful views across the surrounding countryside. Already there is much new commendable house building in Highworth (Backhouse etc) without allowing the Old Golf Course to be transformed from this natural setting.

If the OGC is to be re-used in some way, please maintain it as a natural park which all inhabitants of Highworth can continue to enjoy.

Yours faithfully

To whom it may concern.

As a (life long) local resident, a voter and tax payer I would like to express my extreme concern regarding the future of the Highworth Old Golf Course.
I have regularly walked, ran and fully enjoyed the land that is now known as the old golf course firstly as a child with my parents, then as an adult with my wife, siblings and friends and then with my own children for over 35years. I cannot believe how we are now facing the prospect of loosing this invaluable local and accessible green oasis. Highworth is a rural town, surrounded by green, however it's not until you look more deeply that you realise most of the green area around our beautiful historic hilltop town is farmland, and therefore generally inaccessible to the public.
As a town with a higher proportion of, "more mature people" accessibility is a key consideration when the urge/need for nature, contemplation or/and exercise arises. The Highworth Old Golf Course is the perfect spot; close enough for able bodied people to walk there, plus it has ample parking for those that can't (including the elderly, those with restricted mobility or those visiting from outside of Highworth, which there are many). Our only alternative is the Pentylands country park situated North of the town, however that has no parking, therefore remains off limits to many, even during the few months of the year it is dry enough to walk on.
The Old Golf Course has flat areas that people with less mobility can get to, providing them with invaluable access to nature that otherwise would not be possible.
Of course, this green, open space isn't just for older people, it's a real pleasure to see many young families and also groups of young people enjoying this beautiful environment. Also let's not forget "mans best friend", without this invaluable area, dogs I'm sure would be more frequently exercised on the adjacent football pitches or the streets, which of course brings issues of it's own.
The land and it's diverse inhabitants (I believe some rare or endangered species of flora and forna have been recorded) has recovered and flourished since being left mainly to re-wild, it is now truly a gem of a place.

The beautiful views seen when approaching Highworth, until recently have changed little for many decades and the Western and Southern aspects always invoke a strong and warm "coming home" feeling in me and I'm sure many many others, not including the new development near to Redlands close, that is) further reinforcing Highworths need to remain an historic hilltop town. Please come and see it for yourselves, before making any decisions.

Please, please also consider future generations and their dwindling access to green, open spaces. Cast your minds back just a few years to the COVID lockdowns where we all had a reminder of our real priorities, family, friends and personal wellbeing, all positively influenced by access to nature and community spirit. Surely we can't just write that off so quickly?
Short-term financial benefits (albeit considerable) of selling the Old Golf Course land for housing may seem enticing, but there must be alternatives to the desecration of such a beautiful and truly valuable accessible open/green space.

I appreciate that SBC need to consider how this land is used as part of their "best consideration duties" however I strongly urge everyone involved in the decision making process to consider the long term benefits, which I believe to be: environmental, ecological, human health (both physical and mental. We all have a real, undeniable, hardwired need to be connected to nature, and nature of course needs us to protect it more now than ever before).

Highworth Council, in conjunction with the local community, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the National Trust, have presented a proposal for the long-term retention of the town's Old Golf Course (policy 10 of the new Neighbourhood Plan) as accessible, local, open green space adjacent to the town for the benefit of all borough residents. This policy is supported with a petition signed by 4,600 people, the equivalent to approx. 50% of Highworths population (2021 census = population 8,300). That clearly shows the strong support for policy 10 and as such, the will of the people, the voting people, who are served by the local government.

Please help Highworth Town Council deliver the will of it’s inhabitants, not just for Highworth residents but for your constituents, friends, families and all of our future generations, Well all deserve to enjoy the Highworth Old Golf Course as an accessible, open and green space.

Thank you.

Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 3

References:
1. Page 35, “Town Centre Improvements”, paragraph 77
2. Page 37, Table 6, “Town Centre improvement plan” - Swindon Street and Figure 6.

There is a lack of parking spaces on Swindon Street in Highworth for local residents.
There should be parking spaces specifically designated for residents along Swindon Street.
When we return home in the evening, there are usually no parking spaces available within easy reach of our home. People picking up takeaways from food outlets on Swindon Street are regularly parking outside our home on double yellow lines and often, on the footpath outside our house because the curb is so low. There has been one occasion when we had exited the front door of our own home when a car had mounted the footpath and had almost run into us.
We do not accept the proposed plan to introduce herring bone parking on the East and West sides of Swindon Street near the junction with the High Street. Planting trees there will only further remove much needed parking spaces for local residents.
We demand that at minimum, the double yellow lines on Swindon Street should be re-painted because in many places they have been worn away and are not clearly marked.
Also, we require the introduction of resident only parking spaces along Swindon Street.

Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 10

References:
1. Page 64, section 10 “The Local Green Space”, paragraph 117 to 119
2. Page 66, Table 11 “Local Green Spaces” - 1: Old Community Golf Course
We Consider keeping the whole of the Old Community Golf Course as a local green space as very important to us.
We often go for walks on the Old Golf Course because it is close to where we live on Swindon Street. It is the closest large green space to us where we can walk and appreciate the natural countryside. It is important to our mental health and overall wellbeing as it peaceful, quiet and away from the heavy traffic that runs through the centre of Highworth. Taking away this green space would have the detrimental effect of people not wanting to live in the heart of Highworth, thus reducing the upkeep of many historical properties and also destroying the lovely community spirit that exists here.
We have tried walking in Pentylands Country Park but is further away from us and it also is quite inaccessible in the winter when it often gets water logged.

INTRODUCTION

This representation is duly made as a local resident of Highworth, having lived and worked in the town for nearly 25 years. The comments made relate to certain policies.
The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 makes reference to the NPPF in a number of places. This is based on the version published in September 2023 and not December 2024, and so the paragraph numbers need to be updated.
A number of changes to the wording of the policies is suggested. The amended wording is duly underlined.
Due regard has been given to the advice in the NPPF (Paragraph 16). The changes made to the wording of the policies have sought to make sure they are both clearly written and unambiguous.

PAGE 5, MAP

OBJECT

This does not appear to have a title. Should it not be:-
"Key Diagram of Neighbourhood Plan Area"?

VISION

OBJECT, SUBJECT TO AN IDENTIFIED CHANGE

The "Vision" is intended to describe the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan Area at the end of the plan period i.e. 2036. As such, its wording needs to reflect this.
The first paragraph of the "Vision" is acceptable. It includes reference to the NPPF and its policy expectations and requirements.
The wording of the second paragraph of the "Vision" needs amending to be NPPF compliant. It should be reworded as follows:-
The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan Area is a place where everyone has the opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives, enjoy its rich cultural heritage and are safe and secure in their homes and on the street. It is a strong, supportive and inclusive community that will preserve the built and natural environment, protect and improve biodiversity, contribute towards combatting climate change and protects the countryside and open spaces for the health and
Page 2 of 7
wellbeing of residents and visitors. It is a sustainable community that offers lifestyle, work and education opportunities, in pleasing surroundings, that meet the needs of local residents, businesses, visitors, and nature.
The Highworth Neighbourhood Area recognises the importance of a positive and proactive approach to sustainable economic growth. All local businesses are supported.
The Town Council of Highworth proactively works with organisations and community groups for the betterment of the local community as a whole. They have, collectively, excluded poverty and exclusion, and removed environmental degradation.

POLICY 3: HIGHWORTH TOWN CENTRE

OBJECT, SUBJECT TO AN IDENTIFIED CHANGE

The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 refers (Tables 5 and 6, and Figure 6) to improvements to certain streets within the Highworth Town Centre. These need to be referred to in the wording of the policy itself.
The wording of Criteria D of Policy 3 should be revised to refer to these works as follows:-
D. Proposals for improvements and enhancements of the street scene to allow for a café culture to establish, develop and evolve on the High Street are supported. Traffic and other environmental improvements will be sought to all streets in the town centre, as described in Tables 5 and 6 and identified in Figure 6, that contribute positively to the pedestrian and visitor

experience and the commercial vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.

POLICY 5: BLACKWORTH INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

SUPPORT

The economic strategy of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 effectively seeks to improve the Self-Containment Rate (SCR)of the town of Highworth. When the first Neighbourhood Plan was adopted (in 2017), the SCR was given as 13.2% and where, at the time, it was seen as being "extremely low compared with other towns in the area" (Paragraph 4.2.12). The 86.8% (Non-Self-Containment Rate) confirms Highworth's status as a "dormitory town" and its over reliance on Swindon as a place of employment. The economic strategy of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 wants to make Highworth a "standalone town" so that its residents both live and work locally. In early July 2024, the Borough Council confirmed their intention to support an outline planning application (LPA Ref: S/OUT/23/0489) "for the erection of a mixed-use scheme to include a 75-bed care home (Class C2), up to 90 No dwellings (Class C3) and 0.25HA of employment space (Class E) - access not reserved". This is subject to the Applicant (Hopkins Estates Ltd) signing a s106 agreement, although the particulars of the submitted planning application indicate that:-

• there is no published marketing evidence, justifying the loss of the protected employment allocated land, that can be scrutinised by relevant parties for its completeness and robustness; and
• there are a number of issues still outstanding to be resolved, including the design of the development, the accessibility of the site, the impact of development on ecology and the need for clean/waste water infrastructure.

It is noted that the NPPF refers to planning decisions reflecting changes in the demand for land. This is dependent upon the local planning authority undertaking regular reviews of land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability (Paragraph 127). The Borough Council's website indicates that the Swindon Employment Land Review was published in March 2017. It also indicates that a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment is being progressed but has not yet been published to inform decision-making.

It is notes that the NPPF requires local planning authority to take a positive approach for applications for alternative uses of land. This relates to land that is not allocated for a specific purpose in development plans (Paragraph 128).

The land to the north of the Blackworth Industrial Estate was promoted as the "Highworth Business Park". The situation would seem to be that the Applicant was not prepared to build out his permitted scheme speculatively.

The Applicant's (very disappointing) gesture of retaining 0.25ha of the allocated land for employment purposes must be protected at all costs, otherwise that too will come forward for residential purposes within the plan period. The provisions of Policy 5 achieve this by ensuring that the "Vision" of Neighbourhood Plan 2 is fulfilled i.e. sustainable economic growth is recognised through a positive and proactive approach.

The Borough Council's support for the above residential development will undermine the economic strategy of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2. This means that the SCR will fall/flatline rather than improve to the detriment of the town of Highworth.

POLICY 7: DESIGN

SUPPORT

The NPPF supports well designed places (Section 12). It requires due regard to be given to the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code (Paragraph 134).
The NPPF states that "these national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes" (Paragraph 134). The Highworth Town Council, as part of the public consultation on the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, have produced and published (as a Supplementary Planning Document) the Highworth Design Guidance and Codes.
The provisions of Criteria A of Policy 7 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 specifically refer to the "locally produced design guide/code". This means that as a locally produced design guides or design codes is present (not absent) then it should be given due (significant) weight in the development management process.

POLICY 8: LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS

OBJECT, SUBJECT TO AN IDENTIFIED CHANGE

The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 is not supported by a Landscape and Visual Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan Area undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect. In saying that, it is accepted that such a document would be more likely to be commissioned for the preparation of a new Neighbourhood Plan rather than the review of an existing Neighbourhood Plan.
The policy requires due regard to be given to important (public) views, as shown on Figures 9 and 10, and identified as Images 9.1 to 9.8 and Images 10.1 to 10.13 respectively. There is no indication given as to what criteria, if any, was used to determine the exact location for taking the "image", and it is clear that taker of the photographs was standing on the public highway/public footpath. The suggestion that the chosen location was a "nice spot" is subjective and up to interpretation.
The term "Image 9.1" etc should be changed to "View 9.1" etc., An indication of location and direction should be given.

Example:
View 9.1:
View taken from Footpath HH16, looking northwards towards Highworth, with the Rec in the foreground and the spire of St Michael's Church in the background.

POLICY 10: LOCAL GREEN SPACE

SUPPORT

The NPPF, in seeking to assess the impact of new development on land designated as Local Green Space, stipulates that "policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts" (Paragraph 108). It advises that certain types of development are inappropriate in the Green Belt and are harmful to it, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (Paragraph 153).
The supporting text (Paragraph 118) to Policy 10 indicates that the Old Community Golf Course, in particular, is valued by the local community for recreational purposes. Within land designated as Green Belt, the NPPF identifies types of development that it considers is exceptional and thus appropriate (Paragraphs 154). The NPPF indicates that the acceptability of such development is dependent upon the "openness" of the designation being preserved.

The term "openness" is specifically referred to within the advice of the NPPF but is not defined by it. The (National) Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) indicates that assessing the impact of a development on the openness of the landscape designation (and thus applying it to other designations, such as LGS) is a matter of (professional) judgement based on the circumstances of the case. It indicates that relevant matters to be taken into account include the spatial and visual aspects of the development, the duration and remediability of the development and the degree of

activity generated by the development (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 64-001-20190722)
The NPPF states that within land designated as Green Belt, the development of homes, commercial and other development is regarded as inappropriate unless certain criteria are met as a whole (Paragraph 155). This includes the designation of the site as "grey belt", the "need" for the development, the sustainable location of the site and the development meeting the "golden rules" requirements.

The definition of "grey belt" (NPPF Glossary) refers to:
- it being previously developed land;
- it checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- it preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another; and
- it preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

The above bullet points include 3 of the 4 purposes for identifying land as Green Belt.

The Old Community Golf Course cannot be described as "grey belt". This is justified on the following grounds:-

Previously Developed Land

The NPPF (Glossary) gives a detailed definition of previously developed land. This includes the presence of a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it (hardstanding) but excludes undeveloped open land such as excludes parks, recreation grounds and allotments.

The former golf course comprises of a small building, used as a shop, and a 9-hole course. The holes are varied (uphill/downhill/blind drives) with water to shoot over, worked greens and very long fairways. The golf course, as a whole, measures 102 acres in area and, given the above, is deemed not to be previously developed land.

The former golf course was established in the 1990's through the submission, by Swindon Borough Council, of two planning applications on the land forming part of Botany Farm. These include the following:-

<u>T/88/1705</u>
Change of use from agricultural land to golf course
Granted 21.10.1988

<u>T/89/0187</u>
Construction of nine-hole golf course, pitch and putt, practice area and ancillary landscaping
Granted 27.02.1989

The designation of the Old Community Golf Course as LGS is made on the basis that the land is permitted for leisure and recreational purposes. It should be protected for these purposes in that the golf course could open again, within the plan period, under new (private) management. The ability of the site to be a community facility again is an important material consideration.

Sprawl and Merging of Towns
The Key Diagram of the Neighbourhood Plan Area indicates that the hamlet of Hampton is located to the west of the town of Highworth. The settlement does not have a Rural Settlement Boundary but does have a Conservation Area with a few listed buildings.
On the north side of Cricklade Road, the gap (buffer) between Hampton and Highworth includes a former nursery (being converted to residential use), a cemetery and open countryside, as well as it being designated a Nature Recovery Area. These existing features ensure that Hampton does not coalesce with the built-up area of Highworth.

On the south side of Cricklade Road, the gap (buffer) between Hampton and Highworth includes a golf course and open countryside, as well as it being designated a Nature Recovery Area. These existing features ensure that Hampton does not coalesce with the built-up area of Highworth.

The designation of the Old Community Golf Course as LGS is made on the basis that it should remain undeveloped. It helps to prevent the merging of Hampton with Highworth, thus respecting the individual identity of both settlements.

Setting of Historic Towns
The Borough Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) (April 2006) for Highworth refers to it being an ancient "hill-top" town. It indicates that Highworth stands 133m above sea level, being deemed to be the highest town in Wiltshire.

The CAAMP refers to Highworth being set in rural surroundings and occupying a pre-eminent position above the Upper Thames Valley on a Corallian ridge that runs roughly east-west. It identifies the tower of St. Michael's Church as being a local landmark from where there are extensive views stretching to the Wiltshire Downs, the Vale of White Horse in Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire.

The CAAMP refers to Highworth's elevated position not being readily apparent from within the Conservation Area. This is because of the views to the wider landscape being restricted by recent housing estates on the west, north and east slopes of Highworth hill.

The CAAMP refers to the open space to the south west of the Conservation Area being used for recreational use as sports ground and golf course. The former golf course, as a small tract of land within a much more extensive tract of land (The Rec), makes a valuable contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area

The designation of the Old Community Golf Course as LGS is made on the basis that it should remain open. It helps to protect the immediate and wider setting of Highworth by being a clear and distinct feature of the peripheral landscape to the town's historic core.

In seeking to confirm what development is appropriate/inappropriate for all 5 of the LGS designations, the wording of the final paragraph should be amended as follows:-

"Inappropriate development on any of the 5 areas listed above will not be supported except in very special circumstances. The sense of openness must be protected and preserved at all times".

PART 4: MONITORING

<u>SUPPORT</u>

It is acknowledged that the policies and proposals of Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 will be monitored by the Highworth Town Council Planning Committee, and which meets on a monthly basis. It refers to this monitoring being done every 4 months (quarterly).

In order for the monitoring of Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 to be effective, it is important that it is a specific agenda item at the Planning Committee and a report is prepared and published for discussion purposes. The result of these discussions, and actions, should be duly minuted and shared with the appropriate meeting of the Full (Town) Council.

To whom it may concern,

I am contacting you to fully support the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan. In particular policy 8,9 & 10. In relation to the Old Golf course, this land must remain a green space not just for the residents of Highworth but for those of Swindon and the surrounding area that come here to visit as well as the wildlife that now inhabits it.

Kind regards,

I am writing to confirm and support the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan which I understand comments can be made until 7 February.

After living in the town for over 46 years I can wholeheartedly support the Highworth Parish Council in their proposal for designated Local Green Space (LGS) of the top half of the old golf course land and Open Space (OP) for the bottom half. This area has been a haven for flora and fauna even before the golf course was built and still continues to contribute to the wellbeing of not only residents of Highworth but for anyone visiting this mentally and physically rewarding area. I must say that this is one of the main reasons I have continued to reside in the town along with the great friendliness of the people.

I for one would be very shocked and upset if the designated areas were changed dramatically.

Regards

Hello,

Please find below my comments on the HTC Neighbourhood Plan 2.

I am writing in favour of all of Highworth Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan 2 which is a great plan and just what our lovely town needs for now and the future.
In particular, I believe that Policy 10, making the top section of the Old Golf Course into a Local Green Space is vital for residents, people in nearby villages and Swindon Borough as a whole. My reasons for this are as follows:

• This section, particularly the part abutting housing lies on open level ground with the most beautiful view in Highworth. It stretches across the bottom end of the Old Golf Course (OGC) right up to the hills and the Ridgeway in the distance.

• We walk our dog on this section several times during the week. We live close to Pentylands Park but that is very boggy for half of the year making it just too muddy.

• It is also level and available for people with most types of ability. I have seen people with wheelchairs using part of it.

• The OGC is close enough to most parts of Highworth for all residents to access it on foot. The bus stops close by enabling access throughout Highworth and many parts of Swindon.

• I get a feeling of tranquility when I'm there. My wife and I often take a flask of tea and just sit in peace in the surroundings.

• Highworth is a hilltop town and this piece of land just helps to maintain this important aspect of the town.

• The wildlife in the park is very varied and extensive with an enormous number of species. I have personally seen lots of deer, muntjacs, foxes, frogs, toads, squirrels, barn owls, kestrels, buzzards, red kites as well as orchids, primroses, cowslips and a whole host of other plants and animals.

• Highworth is growing at an alarming rate. Houses of course need to be built but we are losing a lot of green space. Current residents as well as people moving into the town need places to go for recreation and leisure. This important piece of land needs protection from development to ensure

that we and our children have somewhere to relax and connect with nature.

• The North West part of the Borough already lacks access to green space compared with the rest of Swindon. With 000's of extra houses being built in Highworth, Blunsdon, Eastern Villages and South Marston as well as refurbishment of the Honda site where will people go to exercise with their children and dogs if this special piece of ground is used for yet more housing.

Kind regards

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to give my support to Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, in that the Old Community Golf Course is designated as an Open Space.

I strongly believe that this local area of outstanding natural beauty is unique with its' exquisite views, especially from the top of Wrde Hill looking towards the fields and vice versa. This engaging area is so close to the hill top centre of town, that not only is it within easy reach by the community who live there but those who reside in the surrounding villages and towns. Nowhere in Highworth is there such a vast and beautiful piece of green space where one can roam throughout the year on the majority of it without becoming bogged down in mud. At the other end of Highworth, Pentylands Park is very difficult to walk on during the wet winter months and after any heavy rain, where it is too muddy and boggy underfoot. This has been exacerbated with our climate being subjected to far more frequent wet weather over the past few years.

Not just local walkers, runners and dog walkers, but other people come from various communities to enjoy the exercise in a peaceful environment of the Old Golf Course which is easily accessible to everyone. This genuinely amazing natural piece of land works extremely well for both the two legged and the four legged alike.

The true health benefits experienced in this open space are not only for our physical but for our mental health also, which is becoming increasingly more prevalent, especially as we age. Should I not have this unspoilt part of nature to help me understand and unwind from the general mayhem of life, I too may be added as a statistic for our ever expanding healthcare. For me alone the benefits of being able to use the Old Golf Course for my recreation are immeasurable.

The ongoing conservation of this amazing natural piece of land has encouraged various species of wildlife. I have seen different birds species as well as deer, foxes, rabbits and hares plus numerous butterflies and bees, just in a short space of time when walking along the paths. It is so important to keep this natural habitat for wildlife and to help keep our fragile ecosystem balanced between humans and animals alike.

There are no other towns or villages within a 5 mile radius of the Old Golf Course who offer such a lovely open space in which to be able to enjoy the tranquility of its surroundings, away from the noise and pollution of the roads. This, all within a short walk from the centre of Highworth.

Please help Highworth maintain a stronger, healthier balance between the environmental benefits, nature, pleasure and general enjoyment by making this undoubtedly unique landscape a forevermore sanctuary for humans and animals alike.

Kind regards,

Dear Forward Planning Officer,

I am strongly in favour of supporting Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, to designate the Old Community Golf Course as an Open Space.
My reasons are as follows:

The proposal of building anything on the old golf course will impact massively on our already very fragile ecosystem.
We are extremely lucky to have had this built up naturally in this area with having the woodland, grassland, wetlands and hedges already in place. All this diversity has generally evolved over many years with very little or without human intervention.
Having all of this on the very edge of a historic town, conservation is what should be the aim when speaking of this beautiful open space.
Due to the natural gradient of the surrounding land there are areas within this old golf course where it is easy to blot out a large amount of street lighting from the surrounding area and Swindon. This area is an ideal location for gazing up to the open skies at night to see the massive amount of stars and planets that are in our amazing solar system. The open sky expanse here is enormous, be it day or night.

I don't have a dog, l don't have children or grandchildren, l can't walk my mother along the flat top anymore but what l can still do is have this place where l can reflect on the good of this world. I believe that taking a moment to appreciate the things in life that are fast becoming untouchable is important. Even in the rain, on sunny and snowy days it is a joy to watch, listen and take in the wonderful view that the old golf course affords. I have struggled with my own personal anxiety and depression and rather than going to the doctor for pills and a chat l believe what we have on the door step is truly worthy, free of any prescription.
I walk over this land very nearly everyday, almost wearing my own personal path in the grass on my way to my allotment.

The possible destruction of this impressive area will undoubtedly affect the human element immensely who enjoy the peace, tranquility, recreation and the love this area brings to so many people.
This land is solace to people who just want to sit and marvel on a beautiful unspoiled place of nature that is within easy reach for so many, not just from Highworth but the surrounding villages. Many parts to this land are dry walkable areas even immediately after heavy rain.

My father would tell me as l ran around acres of his farm land, "if you don't look after the plants and animals you will not have humans". "If you don't have humans you will not have plants and animals". I think of his words often as they are so important.

This acreage should be used for the purpose the former farmer and landowner Mr Frank Hares GAVE to the people of Highworth in the 70s/80s. He knew the importance of preserving this particular south side of Highworth. The generosity to GIVE land away for future enjoyment to generations showed Highworth was definitely dear to his heart.

This area seems to have come up for discussion and been knocked back and forth for quite a few years now. PLEASE see it is saved for future years to come and preserve this for all humans, all plants and animals alike.

Please respect and do all you can to protect this area of land.

Kind regards,

Dear Sir

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining the old golf course in Highworth as a protected local green space. This area is a vital asset to our community, offering numerous environmental, social, and health benefits that should not be overlooked.

Firstly, the former golf course provides a crucial habitat for local wildlife, supporting biodiversity in an increasingly urbanised area. Preserving it as green space will help maintain the delicate balance of the local ecosystem, ensuring that flora and fauna continue to thrive.

Secondly, this space serves as an important recreational area for residents. Many people use it for walking, jogging, and other outdoor activities that contribute to physical and mental well-being. At a time when public access to nature is more important than ever, maintaining this area as green space will help promote healthier lifestyles and community well-being. I walk my dog there on a daily basis and for me during Covid lockdowns, was particularly important.

Additionally, protecting this land from development helps to mitigate an already sizeable Highworth, which does not have the infrastructure to support more residents and housing.

Given these benefits, I urge the council to recognise the value of the old golf course and ensure its continued protection as a local green space for current and future generations. I appreciate your time and consideration of this matter.

Best regards,

I am writing with reference to the above and my desire to make the Old Golf Course a local green space in support of Policy 10.

I walk in this green space virtually every day with my dog. I cannot stress enough how important the Old Golf Course is for exercise for myself and my dog. Not only is it important for physical health, but also mental wellbeing. It is an area where you can find space and tranquility and also a place to meet with others to chat and socialise. For many people, this is their only opportunity to speak to another person during their day.

This green space is also incredibly important for wildlife. All kinds of creatures thrive here, from deer to owls to woodpeckers to caterpillars. We live in a world where nature needs all the help we can give.

I see people of every age group using the Old Golf Course: children running and playing; older couples strolling hand in hand; runners training; dog walkers; nature lovers.

There are very few places to walk in Highworth as it is and with house building growing exponentially, our green spaces should not be taken away from us.

I would therefore urge Swindon Borough Council to designate the Old Golf Course in Highworth as Local Green Space.

Yours faithfully,

I am writing to express my concern that the Highworth Town Council's neighbourhood plan is likely to be opposed by Swindon Borough Council, specifically on the point of preserving the character of the Old Golf Course.

I have just purchased a home in the Backhouse development next to the Old Golf Course, and use the open land every day for walking my dog. It was a major incentive for moving to Highworth. Having an open space to walk our dog was a critical feature of the neighbourhood we considered when we chose to relocate to Highworth.

It is important to maintain the current character of the land because there is no other significant parkland in the south end of the town. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty (IMHO) with astonishing views over the hills to the south. Losing this feature would be short -sighted and disappointing. I understand the need for more - and better - homes and there is certainly scope for development around Highworth to accommodate more residents. However, to put houses on this particular plot of land would result in the loss of one of the town's most beloved natural features and threaten its historical character.

I respectfully ask that the designation of Local Green Space be retained and the wishes of local residents be respected.

Yours sincerely,

Dear Highworth Town Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 10, which seeks to designate the Old Golf Course as a protected green space. Preserving this area is essential for the well-being of our community and the environment.

The Old Golf Course serves as an invaluable space for exercise and recreation for both the elderly and younger generations of Highworth. Many residents rely on it as a safe and accessible place for walking, jogging, and other outdoor activities, which contribute significantly to their physical and mental well-being. In an age where green spaces are increasingly under threat, safeguarding this area ensures that future generations can continue to benefit from a natural and healthy environment.

Beyond its recreational benefits, green spaces like the Old Golf Course play a crucial role in mental health. Numerous studies have shown that access to nature reduces stress, anxiety, and depression. The presence of this open space in Highworth provides an essential retreat for those seeking peace and relaxation in a natural setting.

Furthermore, protecting green spaces is vital for maintaining biodiversity. The Old Golf Course is home to a variety of wildlife, including birds, insects, and small mammals, all of which contribute to a balanced and thriving ecosystem. Allowing development in this area would not only destroy their habitat but also diminish the natural beauty of Highworth.

While we understand the need for housing and infrastructure expansion, it is crucial that this growth does not come at the cost of our environment. Expanding the town into the Old Golf Course area would compromise the natural landscape and reduce the quality of life for residents. Once green spaces are lost, they are nearly impossible to reclaim. Therefore, we must act now to protect this vital community resource.

I urge you to uphold Policy 10 and officially designate the Old Golf Course as a protected green space. Doing so would demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of Highworth’s residents, the preservation of our natural environment, and the sustainable growth of our town.

Thank you for considering my support for this important policy. I hope you will take the necessary steps to ensure that the Old Golf Course remains a cherished green space for generations to

come. Yours sincerely,
I would like to support fully the Plan as proposed by Highworth Town Council. In particular, I would like to support making the High Street one way, (Section 80, table 6). This would also enable the traffic lights at the junction of High Street, Swindon Street and Cricklade Road to be reconfigured. This would improve traffic flow particularly from the North, which is often queued back down the hill to Turnpike Road. This would benefit the whole community in terms of less pollution, both air and noise pollution. I fully support the proposals on Open Space (Section 9). The Plan makes excellent points regarding the necessity for keeping the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space (protected under policy 10) and Open Space (protected under policy 9). These proposals are well thought out and fully supported by the whole community as evidenced by a petition of 4600 signatures. One issue not discussed directly in the plan is that of houses. As the planning authority, SBC should insist that all new housing in Highworth and the Borough MUST fully insulated, have triple gazing and solar panels. This must be the way forward. In Policy 1, the provision of housing for older people is discussed. There is no discussion on provision of single storey buildings eg bungalows. As the population grows older, people wish to remain where they have grown up, but also to downsize and wish to be independent. In none of the new developments built over the last 10 years (Coffin Close, Fitzgerald Road, the Backhpuse development) have any single storey units been built. Can the Planning Department insist on a proportion of such units be accomodated in every development. I urge Swindon Borough Council to implement this Neighbourhood plan as put forward by Highworth Town Council.

Regards,

I am a resident of Highworth and have read the plan. Here are my personal comments on three policies within it and some general remarks for the Examiner.

Policy 8- I support this. Valued views towards and away from the hilltop town should be a strong consideration in the assessment of development proposals.

Policy 9 - Open Space. I strongly support this proposal, and the reasons are combined with my next comments.

Policy 10- Local Green Space. I strongly support this proposal. I am a user of the old golf course land, going there about 3 times a week to walk, maybe alone, with friends or with the dog. I really value the contact with nature and the wonderful views from the site, which is an easy walk from my home. Even if there are quite a few people out there, it's still a quiet area, much appreciated in our busy time of traffic jams etc.

The idea that this is Local Green Space seems perfect to me. I observe so much of the community using the land, and conversations reveal that it's very important local green space to them. I've read the criteria for LGS in the latest NPPF and the northern half of the whole site seems a perfect fit. In addition, classifying the southern half formally as Open Space is suitable for me, as I am walking there frequently. The whole site is registered as an Asset of Community Value.

With a fast growing local population in the N and NE sectors of Swindon (eg, New Eastern Villages 8000 homes, Highworth taking around 1,000 new homes, 1,700 at Tadpole Village, 1,500 coming at Kingsdown, etc) there is real imperative for maintaining valued accessible open Green space within these sectors.

In addition to my personal views, I would like the Examiner to know that
• ca 4,500 residents signed a petition that there be no housing on this site (in a town with ca 8,400 residents)
• 1,300 residents are supporters of a Facebook Group dedicated to saving the old golf course as accessible Green open space
• a 'count' of users of the land recorded 434 and 514 people on two consecutive days in 2024.
• Surveys reveal over 300 species of flora and fauna recorded on the site (including major survey by Wiltshire Botanic Society)
• there is no plan for development on this site in the current Swindon Borough Council Local Plan.

Therefore there is no 'clash' between the Neighbourhood Plan and the LPA's Local Plan.
• as far as I can see, the Borough Council does not have an LGS policy. So that Council would have no basis for objecting to Policy 10
• in 2024 Highworth Town Council submitted to the Borough, a wonderful costed Business Proposal for the whole site, basically an accessible Nature Park for recreation, exercise and limited sport, and including a schools and young people programme
• The current NPPF para 104 says that this land should not be built on
• NPPF para 107: yes the land is demonstrably special to the community and is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.

As a Highworth resident I am most concerned to learn that an officer has said he will contest the designation of the top of the above site being designated as a local green space.

There have been numerous indications of the will of the majority of Highworth residents. 4500 signed a petition.
I was at the town council meeting with over a hundred others when we were told that the options were 1. All area designated green space 2. A smaller percentage to be built on the and the rest green space 3. A larger percentage to be built on and around 40% to be kept as green space. Many of us would be very disappointed by decisions 2 and 3 but the idea that the whole of the upper area might be built on with the possibility of 700 houses is outrageous given the promises that have been made by councillors, the views of residents, the Highworth community plan, the plethora of species identified there, the wide use of the area.

The top area is the section which is most accessible to Highworth residents, it borders the numerous communities amenities such as the football pitches and the allotments. It is widely used and if built on makes a mockery of Swindon Borough's alleged commitment to sustainable development, the health and well-being of its residents (open green spaces being fundamental for physical and mental well-being), nature conservation, working towards net zero etc. etc.

Most importantly If any councillors support this officer's total disregard for the views of residents it will be a travesty of democracy. The OGC was the least preferred site for housing development in a public consultation, many of us refused to rank it at all for obvious reasons.

In my opinion this latest news exposes hypocrisy and potential abuse of power. I have voted Labour all my life, but I will never vote Labour again if a Labour controlled council makes a decision to build on the top half of the OGC.

To whom it may concern

I express my support for the designation of the Old Golf Course as a local green space:

I have lived in Highworth since 1990, close to the Golf Course. In those days I ran and quickly joined Highworth Running Club, which met at Highworth Football Club. This meant that Club runs often started or finished crossing Highworth Golf Course. I would run on my own or with others about 3 times a week. Relatively often I would go for a 'short' off-road run when I arrived home from work doing a simple or figure-eight circuit of the Golf Course. I found it very therapeutic, in sun or rain, summer or winter, dry or snowy or muddy underfoot. One stretch I enjoyed was running up the Swindon Road side of the 'practice field' in late summer and enjoying the aroma of the white clover. Eventually, I had to stop running, but I do still visit the Golf Course with a camera. Over the years, I and my family have harvested sloes, blackberries and mushrooms from the Golf Course. My daughter found the opportunity to come to live in Highworth about 7 years ago. She quickly adopted the Golf Course for her walking and running routes. Although there are many routes in the vicinity of Highworth to run on and partially off-road, there is nowhere else quite as safe, from various perspectives, and enjoyable like the Old Golf Course.

Dear Sir/Madam

Golf Course being designated as Local Green Space.
Whilst acknowledging the need for housing especially affordable housing for the younger people of Highworth it should also be incumbent on us to ensure that the growing population is afforded access to adequate and quality green space for their recreational enjoyment and the subsequent health and wellbeing benefits which are impossible to value.
The Old Community Golf Course is a unique and perfect space for recreational purposes given it's proximity within easy walking distance for the vast majority of Highworthians. Also there are adequate parking spaces for the numerous people from surrounding areas who can be evidenced using the OCGC on a regular basis.
The space has "rewilded" since the golf course was abandoned and has become an array of flaura and fauna which is unmatched locally and could be further enhanced by being developed into a nature reserve. When this is considered together with the beautiful views - extending to the south as far as the Ridgeway - it does make the area of special significance worthy of protection.
Personally I use the OCGC every day for exercise and can say this is the same for a considerable number of people - evidence of this is the well worn pathways that criss cross the area and the people who I see and speak with daily.
In summary there are other more suitable areas for housing development, some where building is already underway and others subject to planning applications which together would satisfy the housing need without destroying the OCGC. Conversely there are no other easily accessible areas of a similar size and nature when compared to the OCGC within the town boundaries.
The character of this ancient market town is in danger of being lost due to seemingly never ending expansion and will future generations forgive us for covering this area of natural beauty with tarmac and houses - once it is gone it is gone forever.

Regards

Dear Sirs,

If you yourselves lived in Highworth you would realise just how important, and in fact necessary, it is to keep our old golf course as an open space.
We need it for our sanity.
Every where you turn new buildings are springing up; more traffic, fumes, rubbish. We need somewhere open and green to walk, exercise and generally feel good. The views are exceptional and makes one feel 'this is real England - as it always has been, and should still be'….
Please consider the feelings of the present inhabitants of Highworth - we wish to keep that special open space.

Thank you,

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express that the Old Highworth Golf Course must remain as a local green space as discussed in policy 10 of the Highworth Town Neighbourhood Plan. I'm a keen runner and walker and I love that within 10 minutes walk from my home I have access to green space. This has proven essential for my mental health in recent years. Yes I can run the pavements, but it does not offer the same freedom or delight that the old golf course gives me. Whenever I'm there I am always amazed by the number of people also out to enjoy the much needed freedom of space. For those less able to walk great distances then the joy of the Old Golf Course is there is plenty of parking and I am well aware that this green space is not just used by Highworth residents but that many choose to travel out of Swindon and enjoy it too. It's been a delight to watch this space rewild itself since the closure of the golf and pitch & putt course and as a resident of Highworth I am most appreciative of the fact our Town Council have mown pathways through the meadows during the growing season. Lastly, as a mother of young children, the Old Golf Course offers a big space which provides children the freedom to run and be joyful. My children have loved our walks here as there's always so much to spot, learn and identify.

Thank you in advance for your time

Dear sir/madam.

I'm writing to you today to express my concern that the land of the Old Golf Course may be built on or become no longer a place for residents of Highworth to use.
The Old Golf Course Highworth, has become essential for the people of Highworth. The population is still growing with more houses being built as I write, therefore it is even more essential to be kept for the residence to use for recreation.

I live across the road from the OGC and I've enjoyed taking walks there.it's been great to take friends for a safe walk and it's been lovely to walk through the old golf course and up to Stanton Fitz Warren. I've taken my grandchildren there and it's a safe place for the children to explore nature and to know we are safe from the traffic. It is also been good to take friends with their dogs when they visit, again a safe space to walk with their dogs.
I've noticed many of my neighbours taking their dogs there every single day for a nice safe walk,and so it is a very popular place for residence of Highworth.

When my son lived in Highworth. He used to go over there for walks because it was safe and he met nice people, my son suffers from mental health problems,and lived in a flat,so at least being able to go to the old golf course meant that he had a safe environment to go. He got lots of fresh air and he met friendly people.
There are many people in Highworth that I know who have mental health issues and for those that live in flats with no gardens, it's even more essential.

To have a safe space to walk freely in the fresh air is good for us all.

Building on the old golf course is as bad as saying we don't need a leisure centre! We all know that doctors recommend and prescribe people to go to the leisure centre to get exercise. Even more so,it is good to go out and get exercise in fresh air and enjoy a safe environment, and this is what the old golf course provides for the residence of Highworth.

I've really enjoyed going over there and being free in nature enjoying just a walk, without worrying about being run over by a car or being told off by farmer because I'm walking through their land. Although Highworth is surrounded by fields, you can't take your dogs freely walking and your grandchildren freely walking through private fields,because many of them are impassable or you are trespassing.

so I would urge you to keep the old golf course as a safe green space for the residence of Highworth.

Thank you for reading my letter and I hope that you will take into consideration my thoughts.

I note the heading - forward planning- and I agree for a place to continue to thrive plans need to be made for the future of that place. This includes all aspects, jobs, housing, roads schools, doctors, variety of shops parking , recreation, Services, community halls of a size relative to its population, well being of the inhabitants to name but a few and whilst some these issues are being covered in the neighbourhood plan there are omissions and other points on which your Borough Officers do not agree with Highworth

One point of disagreement is over Highworth's desire a very, very strong desire that the nearer, northern part of the Old Golf Course should be left as accessible open space,Local green Space, a suggestion with which I agree.
Why?

In Highworth, which is a hill town, it is a rare piece of land under discussion ,that is relatively flat and near a parking area This allows older or less mobile people to use the area to walk. A walk which is not taxing and importantly is not boggy and slippery for the vast majority of the year. It is a place where bereaved people come and sit and remember, flower tokens on the benches show this is important. Highworth. I believe has a relatively high proportion of older people.People tend to stay on here,

Its ecology,over 300 species of flora and fauna have been recorded and it would be interesting to see and consider an ecology report.

I use this land daily and see all ages using and enjoying from individuals to groups

The paths are well cut and maintained and you can close to be sociable and greet and chat to others or take a different path and enjoy solitary walks. It must improve the mental health of it users and save the NHS being involved

Land left like it is at present encourages groundwater percolation, the stream at the bottom already is much bigger than 50 years ago and i doubt this is due to climate change rather increased run off through concreting. This leads i am surety the problem with flooding below the Hampton turn on the Highworth to Blunsdon road, again this is a relatively new event and is really dangerous

I am writing to express my support for the proposal to designate the Old Golf Course in Highworth a local green space.

Given that under Policy 10 the area meets the requirements of the NPPF ,I and my family are keen to support the creation of an open green space covering the top section of the old golf course.

We have lived close to the area since 1984 when we moved to Highworth.
It has been a place of rest and respite after a long days work ,a play park for our children and for the last 17 years somewhere to walk our dog twice a day every day.

It is a recreational facility available close to the main town and has a stunning view across the valley towards Blunsdon.
It could serve as a hub similar to the one recently created at the old golf course in Moredon.

The area acts as a green buffer protecting the hilltop status of the town.
It supports a variety of wildlife. We see deer and owls most days and birdlife is abundant.

Above all it is a place of calm and

Dear Sir/Madame

Id like to write in objection to the proposed plans for the development site at the fields north of Crane Furlong. The proposed site is unsuitable for a number of reasons, some of which have been highlighted in the Highworth Neighbourhood plan and some of which have been omitted. I have no desire to go into a long and drawn-out E mail about my objections, only to request that the points I raise are investigated thoroughly.

Unsuitability issues acknowledged in the Neighbourhood plan:

• Smells and odours from the adjacent sewage works.
This is a very real concern from an environmental health point of view. Like a number of Highworths residents I will often walk my dogs down Pentylands lane. This is more frequent in the winter due to the extremely boggy nature of the fields in this area during winter. As I walk past the sewage works the smell is significant at least 50% of the time. If 42 homes are intended for this development a large number of homes will need to be situated close enough to the sewage works for the residents to be affected by the odours. I live on the South boundary of the proposed site and I can occasionally smell the odours from the sewage works. Its really not a pleasant smell and I would urge you to put yourself in a residents position who is confronted by these odours on a more regular basis because of their closer proximity to the sewage works.

• Noise from the adjacent Industrial Estate.
Again, this has rightly been acknowledged in the neighbourhood plan as an environmental health issue. I can hear the warning signals from reversing trucks and forklifts from my own property. Which is on the south boundary of the proposed development. The industrial estate was there when I bought the property, and I understood that the noise from it was one of the negatives but accepted it as part of my properties location. I certainly wouldn't want to live any closer to the industrial estate as the noise would become genuinely intrusive.

When you look at these two issue alone its clear to see why this area was effectively designated as a buffer between residential properties and industrial activities. Unless action is taken to reduce both the smells and Odours from the sewage works and the noise levels from the industrial estate then the site is in my opinion unsuitable for residential development. Properties built within the proposed site would be genuinely unpleasant places to live based on current levels of odour and noise pollution. If the site is to be visited to investigate the levels of these pollutions, I would urge that it is on more than one occasion as the levels do fluctuate.

Unsuitability issues not acknowledged in the Neighbourhood plan:

• Site access.
The site access currently identified in the Neighbourhood plan are unsuitable for several reasons. Crane Furlong was developed after Henly Drive. The access roads to Henly Drive were originally developed for the traffic requirements of Henly Drive alone. The additional traffic volume created by the current Crane Furlong development was considered at the time of its development to be a limiting factor because of the need for access through Henly Drive. The current development was approved but the traffic for residents of Henly Drive was significantly increased. The new proposal identify access as through Crane Furlong via Henly Drive and at the entrance to Pentylands Lane. Henly Drive simply can't cope with the additional traffic generated by the 42 new homes proposed. Pentylands lane is a single carriageway access lane to the sewage works, a couple of small holdings, a farm and a couple of houses. The single carriageway is narrow and only allows a passing point at the entrance to the sewage works. The width of the lane is limited by the drainage stream that runs alongside it. This stream is crucial to the drainage of the area and has been close to overflowing in the past few years due to increase in extreme weather events as a result of global warming. In short, the proposed access points are in my opinion unsuitable

• Ground conditions

As previously mentioned, the fields in this area of Highworth become extremely waterlogged during the winter months. The adjacent Parkland to Pentylands lane becomes virtually unusable during the winter due to waterlogging. These conditions appear to only be getting worse due to the adverse weather events caused by global warming. I appreciate that drainage for the area will be considered as part of the development, but the area currently struggles to deal with the water that drains from the hill that Highworth sits on. Couple this with the sewage works and industrial estate effectively boxing in the proposed site and the limitations for drainage solutions for the area become obvious. Pentylands Park, the proposed site and the leisure area next to the proposed site and north of Crane Furlong are essentially soak aways for the water that drains from the North West side of Highworth and to build on one of these areas is a risk to the future residents of the development and the drainage of the town in that area.

To sum up the above in a slightly dramatic but entirely possible conclusion, if the Crane Furlong site is developed the future residents could very possibly be stood ankle deep in water whilst being driven mad by the smell of sewage and the sound of industry, all whilst having created traffic misery to get there.

Best Regards

My comments on proposed local planning affecting Highworth Golf Course.

This has already been proven an important and valued open space for the town. The level of support for keeping the whole area as a public open space is already proven.

It is vital for all residents to have a local green space that they can access without using a car, if they feel the need to be more ecologically ‘green’ .

The land has huge further potential as a public amenity if properly managed and already draws in many people from surrounding areas.

The unique views from the highest point of the Golf Course are some of the best from the town, and should be preserved at all costs, and any proposals that part of this land should be used for building would seriously affect the perspective of Highworth being a hill top town, as it is often described.

This space was always intended, by the original benefactor, to be used by the people of Highworth as a green leisure facility; this intention should be honoured by SBC on behalf of the residents of Highworth.

As already has been demonstrated by the OGC Action group, this green open space should be designated as a green open leisure space in perpetuity and returned to the people it was intended for, with responsibility for it taken by HDC.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for Policy 10 and to advocate for the preservation of the old golf course as a designated local green space. This area is a vital part of our town, offering a unique and much-needed natural environment that benefits both residents and wildlife.

For me personally, the golf course plays a crucial role in maintaining my mental well-being. The open space, peaceful surroundings, and accessibility provide an essential escape from the pressures of daily life, allowing me to exercise, relax, and reconnect with nature. Losing this green space would be a significant blow to the community's overall well-being.

One of the key reasons my family and I chose to move to this area was the presence of this green space. It serves as a central point for the town, bringing people together for walking, recreation, and social interaction. Its value as a community asset cannot be overstated.

I understand the need for new housing, but there are numerous unused fields around the town that would be far more suitable for development. Sacrificing an established and well-loved green space when alternative sites exist would be a short-sighted decision that undermines the long-term health and character of our town.

I urge the council to uphold Policy 10 and ensure that the old golf course remains a protected green space for current and future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Good Afternoon

I would like to express my support in making the Old Golf Course in Highworth a local green space in support of Policy 10. I believe that the Old Golf Course should remain a local green space for the following reasons:

• The main reason is that I am a local dog walker and use this area every day to not only walk my dog but meet other people who are like-minded. We all value the wide-open space for this and have a good community of not only dog walkers who interact with each other on a daily basis but also those people that just like to walk this area for recreational purposes.
• I do a lot of volunteering cantered around listening to others and giving them time to explore their feelings on how their mental health is and how they can recover from trauma. As part of their recovery, they value walking in the open air and exercising daily. The Old Golf Course is an ideal space for this type of recovery and I believe this is vital, especially in this day and age when so many have a heavy burden to carry.
• The number of animals and birds that have their habitat in this area is also something that should not be destroyed. There are many types of flowers, trees and green growth that are vital for this area especially as so many other green areas are built on and accessible areas are fast disappearing with the increase in residential building work.
• The fact that this area is so near to other facilities making it a good space for people to use is another factor. The recreation ground and all the facilities are within a short walk and the town centre with all that it has to offer enables people to use this area as an extension to their other recreational pursuits.

I think that it would be a crime against humanity if this area was not to remain how it has been for the use of the local community and the surrounding area.

Kind regards

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for Policy 10 in the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, particularly regarding the designation of the top section of the Old Golf Course (OGC) as Local Green Space (LGS).

The OGC holds special significance for me and my family:

1. The OGC is easily accessible and within walking distance from the town centre (400 to 600 metres). It's a convenient green space for my family and me, including my spouse, who relies on the OGC for exercise and well-being due to their disability.
2. We frequently visit the OGC for walks, and it's a favorite spot for our dogs. The open space allows them to run freely and safely, while we enjoy the fresh air and natural surroundings. This routine is essential for our physical and mental well-being.
3. The serene environment and beautiful views offer a much-needed escape from the daily grind. The OGC provides a space where my spouse and I can relax and enjoy the tranquility, which is crucial for our overall health and happiness.
4. The OGC is a hub for local residents, fostering a sense of community and connection. It's a place where we meet fellow dog owners and nature enthusiasts, building bonds that strengthen our community spirit.
5. The OGC is an important habitat for local wildlife. We often encounter various species of birds and small animals during our walks, which adds to the richness of our experience. Preserving this area as a nature park is vital for maintaining biodiversity.
6. As Highworth continues to grow, the OGC offers a necessary escape from the hustle and bustle of the town centre and traffic. Protecting this green space is essential for ensuring that residents have a place to connect with nature and find solace.

I urge the independent government inspector to consider the overwhelming community support for Policy 10 and the designation of the OGC as Local Green Space. Preserving this area is crucial for maintaining the quality of life for Highworth residents and protecting our town's natural heritage.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely

Dear Sir/ Madam,

It is with great sadness I am writing this letter. I moved to Highworth 5 years ago after a long search for a friendly safe town that had character and charm. As you would expect there were a number of”must haves” and a wish list.

As Highworth is steeped in history being an ancient town with the most magnificent church and square it was immediately appealing however it was also important to have necessary vital amenities such as GP, opticians, dentists, chemist, post office and local shops, all passed with flying colours. A strong sense of community and friendship was also clear in the local pubs such as TheRose and Crown and the Saracens head. Free parking and a Leisure centre were also must haves. Whilst quite busy it’s not over crowded for current amenities for the vast majority of the year.

As I am particularly blind I sadly have never been able to drive and walking is a huge pleasure to me particularly in green open spaces that lends itself to natural wildlife. This I believe is vital for all age groups health and wellbeing. I walk my dog at least twice a day and in fine weather often spend several hours there. My grandsons love going over on their bikes and both learned to ride over there. I love seeing all the families, children and retired folk over there. It’s such a hugely popular place and extremely beneficial for both physical and mental well being. The old golf course sealed the deal for me. And I bought my lovely home. I plead with you to reconsider

robbing this community of such a beautiful and tranquil space that without doubt has huge health benefits.

In addition to this Highworth just does NOT have the infrastructure to deal with 100's of additional homes. There is much green space further a field without ruining this community.

Yours sincerely

Dear Sir

My comments on the above document are as follows:

(1) I am in complete support of Policy 10 and the Old Golf Course becoming a local green space. My reasons are as follows:

• This is the 'go to' green space which is accessible by foot from my house in Priory Green near the centre of Highworth and my family has used it regularly for over 30 years.
• The experience has been enhanced recently by rewilding and the introduction of carefully located mown paths. I love the spacious feel and the views across the countryside. I have seen an increasing range of wildflowers as well as deer and other wild life. It makes you feel alive to be there. I support the concept of turning this area into a nature park.
• I have led a number of walks, including Wellbeing Walks through and around the Old Golf Course. Without the Old Golf Course there would be few opportunities for people living near the centre of Highworth to walk in green space.
• I consider that access to green space is essential for good health, both physical and mental. In recent years I have walked in the Old Golf course as part of my recovery from surgery.
• I note that cities, and towns such as Swindon, are blessed with green spaces. Surely the people of Highworth should also have easy access to green spaces?
• With the increasing development of Highworth, some ongoing and others in the pipeline, surely the case for retaining the Old Golf Course as green space is even stronger? It would be wrong to build more houses in our town and at the same time reduce the green space available within the town for health and recreation.

(2) I support Policy 9 that the bottom half of the Old Golf Course be classified formally as Open Space for the reasons stated in Version 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
(3) I support Policy 8 that the landscape and views must be taken into account as part of the required Landscape and Visual Assessment of any intrusive development proposals.
(4) Part 3, Section 6, Table 8, under 'Highworth Churches Together' there is a reference to activities in St Michaels Church hall. St Michael's Hall is no longer available for hire which severely limits the number of spaces available in the town for large public events. The Neighbourhood Plan should be updated to record this loss.
(5) Part 3, Section 6, para 96 needs to emphasise retaining GP services within the town with reduced reliance on other surgeries managed by the practice.
(6) Part 3, Section 6, para 98, needs to emphasise that the surgery is already close to capacity and

the need to accelerate planning for augmentation to keep ahead of development.
(7) Part 3, Section 6, paras 120 to 123 need to mention that A361 is already congested, in particular in vicinity of Fox roundabout. The layout is problematic because:

• Local roads cannot be widened
• Junctions at Cricklade Road/A361 and Fox roundabout are difficult to improve capacity owing to limited space and multiple feeder roads
• Very limited redundancy on access in and out of the town, meaning limited alternative routes when key junctions are (frequently) blocked for installation and repair of trunk services and roadworks

Hence there is need to seriously consider how proposed developments will exacerbate an already congested network.

Regards,

Hi HTC and SBC

I recently moved to Highworth from Reading because I was interested in living close proximity to the country side, with easy access to green space. As such, the OGC has been an easy walking distance from my house and the short walk from town has allowed me to get away from the stresses of everyday life.

My partner and I like to go for walks there 3 times a week - we sometimes take our indoor cat to OGC as the tranquil space allows our pet to enjoy the space with us.

The OGC has also made me appreciate the wildlife and therefore support the wishes of the local community in developing it as a nature park.

I'd also like to stress the importance of this green space in protecting the hilltop town status of our ancient town which was a reason why we bought our house here!

TLDR: I like to petition to keep the OGC an open space and turn it into a nature park.

Kind regards,

I wish to add my support to Highworth Town Councils Policy 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Highworth cannot afford to lose it's Local Green Space. I regularly use the Old Golf Course for walking and running. I am a member of Highworth Running Club, and the Club use the Old Golf Course for club runs. The Old Golf Course is well also well used by dog walkers and is a site of outstanding natural beauty and a haven for wildlife.

Over many years the green space surrounding Swindon and its satellite villages has been eroded and as Highwoth develops it's important that Local Green Space is preserved for the benefit of it's residents. In this respect I firmly believe that the Old Golf Course would be best serve the local community if it became a nature park.

Yours faithfully,

May I register my thoughts regarding Policy 10 and the Old Golf Course.
Since May 2020 this space has taken on a significantly greater value to me, my family and friends in Highworth. We disregard the value of open green space with established trees and grass at our peril. The scent of the May and Lilac definitely contributed to my mental health within Covid times and has sustained me from then on also.
Everything we as a family and as a community hold dear has lead to seeing this peaceful place as a place of refuge. It is also close to the town centre (a short walk) which in itself is a remarkable achievement blending the daily bustle with a calming space full of nature and wildlife.
As Highworth continues to grow this space will benefit more and more residents with beautiful views which lift the spirit and must be an aid to good mental health, money cannot buy.
Life has to be connected to our origins; this requires the correct level of protection in the interests of all parts of the community.

Yours truly

Dear Sir/ madam,

I wish to record my objection to any development on the old golf course land, and by association, support for the designation of the northern part of the land as a Local Green Space.

This land has been extant public open space for over 30 years, and was widely used as recreational space before the community golf course was constructed. It is important to appreciate that the use as a community course meant that it was widely used by many residents as open space even if they were not golfers. Since the demise of the golf course use the land is more heavily used by residents as the primary open space in the town.

The designation of the site, identified in the new Neighbourhood Plan, is important to strengthen the protection of this land from any future development; and such a designation should lead to the Local Planning Authority allocating the LGS area - together with the remaining area of the old golf course - as public open space in its formal review of the Swindon Local Plan. Designation as LGS will support Policy 10 of the new Neighbourhood Plan.

My views are strongly held as a resident of over 40 years whose children, and now grandchildren, regularly enjoy the open space and freedom that this land provides. In summary I consider the land has the following characteristics;
• it provides an essential setting and foreground to Highworth which strengthens and retains it historical character as a hilltop town,
• the proposed LGS site is closest to the town and its existing residents; this is important in providing easily accessible recreational space (retaining the rest of the old golf course site is also important but it is less convenient for residents who cannot walk longer distances),
• the land provides essential informal open space (as opposed to the necessary but less characterful playing fields) where people can enjoy the extensive views to the south as well as the countryside character of the land,
• the land is rapidly regenerating natural vegetation to supplement the existing trees and

hedgerows which in turn supports an increasing variety and number of wildlife - barn owls, muntjac and row deer, together with finches, tits and other songbirds now feed and live/nest on this land,
• the land has potential to be managed as a country park for both people and wildlife,
• Highworth is experiencing a large increase in new homes, and further Local Plan allocations makes it even more important that the golf course is protected from development.

Please take this letter as formal support of Policy 10 of the new Neighbourhood Plan and the designation of the identified land as Local Green Space.

To whom it may concern

I would like to express my support for the designation of the Old Golf Course as a local green space.

I will provide three reasons: one from the past, one in the present, one for the future

First, the OCG was an invaluable resource during the Covid lockdowns: a place for exercise for the adults and for the children to run free and forget all the restrictions, a much needed space for a conversation with a friend. Every time I walk there I remember my late best friend who I walked with then - come mud or sunshine. It is there that her memory is most alive to me.

Second, it is a rich and safe area for my bees to forage - free of insecticides and tolerant of weeds. I see them rise and take off in that direction most summer days and I can taste the clover and the blackberries in their honey. They come laden with yellow pollen in late summer when there is little but ragwort to find. I am so glad this maligned plant is allowed to grow somewhere.

Third, I have loved watching nature take over the formerly pristine lawns of the golf course. The grass has grown lush and we see biodiversity increasing: more birds, more plants (orchids!) and insects. The hedgerows are growing out and the bramble thickets provide much needed shelter and food for birds. My hope for the future is that one day I will hear a nightingale there.

Please, if you can preserve this wonderful space, do.

Sincerely

It’s disgusting that the people of Highworth have to pay the price for the borough council mismanagement of public finances.
Destroying a beautiful part of local land to help pay for the council debt is probably the worst thing that you could do and I hope you are all ashamed.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing in response to Highworth's Neighbourhood Plan and specifically the application to designate the top section of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space.

I am referring to Policy 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan and wholeheartedly support this proposal. I have lived in Highworth all of my life - nearly 50 years . I was married in Highworth, so were my parents and grandparents . I feel intrinsically part of this community and all that makes it a special place to live. The people , the market square and the open green space and surrounding countryside. The area of the Old Golf Course we use, as a family, two or sometimes three times a day. It is a tranquil place , a place to meet friends , a place to unwind and find head space - it has proved invaluable to supporting all of our mental health and positive well being after busy long working days . Indeed, one of our teenage daughters experienced significant mental health difficulties during the Covid pandemic and the subsequent years - the golf course space for us literally became a 'lifeline' and a way back to good health. We are keen and active dog walkers, so many miles have been walked over the years in this area of breathtaking beauty. Despite seeing this space every day we are always taken in by the open-ness , the wide range of nature and wildlife and most of all captivated by the changing seasons we feel privileged to be party to. The area is within easy walking distance , on the flat, from our house. The views back to Highworth from the bottom half of the golf course highlight to me the uniqueness of Highworth as an ancient hilltop town. I strongly feel this space must be used to protect the town and it's history for future generations. From our home in Highworth , it is very difficult for us to access any other green space without a significant walk to reach it. I simply cannot imagine life without the green space of the Old Golf Course . This area is vital for the health and well being of not just the myriad of local wildlife that live there but the local community for whom open green space to relax and reflect are, I believe, essential .

Thank you for taking the time to read and carefully consider my views

As invited, I am writing to make representations on the above. I am a Highworth resident.

I wish to add my strong support for the Local Green Space (LGS) designated in Policy 10 and the statements set out in paras 117 to 119 in respect of the upper part of the old golf course. The LGS attribute is absolutely appropriate for this valuable piece of land. The level proximity to the centre, plus convenient parking for the less mobile, has no equal in the town (or possibly the Borough), It is a fantastic place to be - beautiful meadowlands have emerged from the old golf course and are blessed with far reaching views beyond. The area is also vital to the view back to the town from the southern side - ensuring it remains a hilltop town rather than just a town on a hill. The space is accessible to all to exercise, enjoy nature and experience general wellbeing. I want to see it further enhanced for nature.

This is a unique resource for the town and requires the protection afforded by the green space status.

Dear Swindon Borough Council and Highworth Town Council,

I am writing to you in response to the new Neighbourhood Plan, in particular the proposed plan to designate only the top part of the Old Golf Course (OGC) as Local Green Space (LGS).

I am a resident of Highworth, having bought a property here last year seeking a quieter, slower pace of life close to the countryside. My partner and I loved Highworth from when we first visited, and the OGC was one of the reasons we chose to settle here with plans to build our family. The area is very peaceful, beautiful and we walk there 2-3 times a week, even in these last few winter months we have tried to get out there and brave the mud for the fresh air and incredible views!

I have a very stressful job in the NHS and I really enjoy the tranquility of the OGC to wind down and relax. I plan to run there as the evenings get a little lighter again in the coming months. Our friends who are not as local also comment on how wonderful the area is, and enjoy walking and spending time there with us.

I am worried that by not protecting the whole area, we will lose it bit by bit to building development. I am from one of the largest towns in the country - Reading - and the very few large green spaces we had such as Prospect Park were strongly protected to preserve them and keep them accessible to local communities and visitors.

I'm not necessarily opposed to developments, but I have noticed a couple of these already in the area and I'm not sure why the town could not be expanded and developed whilst the OGC is preserved and protected. I don't think it is an either/ or choice. I support the plan to protect the OGC by designating it in its entirety as LGS.

Many thanks,

Dear all,

Here is my response to the Neighbourhood plan and notably to Policy 10.
I heartily endorse an application to designate the top section of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space.
The old golf course is within walking distance from the town centre and very accessible. I have seen parents pushing buggies, dog pushchairs and people using mobility scooters all accessing the top section of the Old Golf Course.
I walk through the old golf course daily , enjoying the views and watching the wildlife. The OGC is a very important habitat for wildlife. Sadly the UK (see reports by the RSPB and other bodies) is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. We sit in the bottom 10% globally for biodiversity. It would be wonderful if the OGC could become a nature park allowing wildlife to thrive.
My daily walk on the OGC is for my physical, mental and spiritual health. It is easier to get life in perspective in this calm and tranquil Green space.
It is also helpful in protecting the hilltop status of Highworth . Building nearby- Redlands and opposite Wrag Barn - make the OGC an even more vital green space to get away from traffic fumes and the hustle and bustle of the town.
I hope that the top section of the OGC can become a Local Green Space as mentioned in policy 10.

Good morning,

We DO NOT support Policy 10 and the Old Golf Course becoming a local green space.

To hear that you are planning building on green space in our town saddens me greatly
Highworth is struggling with doctors schools and roads as it is
The community needs this green space for mental health needs alone
I agree we need more houses but please utilise brown areas and houses that are run down and empty also old buildings that can be converted
Please don't take our lovely green space and over stretch are very much stretched public services.

We moved to Highworth in 1978 after buying our first home but remained in service with the Royal Air Force. Highworth appealed to us as a perfect place to bring our young girls up and so many years later, now with grand children and a great grand child, it was the right decision. We loved the cosmopolitan feel to the hill town, the friendliness and job opportunities and have never contemplated moving anywhere since. The green space which was the old golf course has become so important to us as a family. My husband and I have walked miles with the dogs over the wonderful green and pleasant land and cannot understand why it is under threat , contradicting the wishes of the residents in Highworth. What gives you the right to change the neighbourhood plan? Unfortunately my husband now has Alzheimers Dementia and cannot walk his loved space any more but why deprive our family of it? As you try to squeeze more people into our town don't you think the need for this green space becomes even more vital? You need to listen to the Highworth population, remember we have long memories and if you go against our wishes, come the next election, you will be out!
Hello The Highworth Old Golf Course is so important for the recreational, mental health and wellbeing of Highworth residents. The beautiful views from all directions make me feel so relaxed, away from life's stress and strain. My dogs and I use it often throughout the year and it's so easy to walk on to shops from there. It's so important to be kept as a habitat for wildlife. I completely support the local community in developing the OGC into a nature park. It would be such a loss if we didn't have it. Regards
Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 states that the northern area of the Old Community Golf Course should be designated as Local Green Space. I agree with this for the following reasons: a) various studies have identified an abundance of biodiversity in this area, which would be lost if it were to be developed in any significant way; b) the area is widely used by members of the Highworth community for the purposes of recreation and relaxation, as well as the promotion of health and wellbeing; c) this amenity is readily accessible on foot by much of the Highworth community. Losing it would be detrimental, not only to those who would have to drive to Pentylands or further afield, but also to the wellbeing of everyone due to the increase in polluting road traffic.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write to support the above policy which includes an excellent application to designate the top section of the Old Golf Course as a Local Green space.

The need for preserve this parcel of land as a Local Green Space for public use is vital for the character of Highworth as a Town. Highworth is presently developing rapidly in all directions from its centre and, whilst I fully acknowledge the need for new housing, the National Planning Framework and the Manual for Streets 3 make it very clear that the preservation of public spaces will be vital to the health and future welfare of the occupants of those future houses. In the same way, it is also vital for the needs of the present residents of Highworth who already frequent and use the Old Golf Course for leisure purposes.

The Old Golf creates the ideal opportunity to create an excellent Local Green Space which is only a very short distance of 400 metres from the heart of Highworth and its important Conservation Area. The purpose of the conservation area is to preserve the hilltop status of our ancient town for the benefit of everybody including our future generations. The Local Green Space proposed in Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan provides vital reinforcement of and will serve to support that laudable and very important long term aim.

Whenever the weather is pleasant enough my family and I make regular use of the Old Golf Course for leisurely and peaceful walks and the exercising of our small dog Bear. The beautiful and panoramic views of the surrounding Wiltshire countryside are quite something to behold. They compete strongly with anything that is on offer anywhere in the neighbouring Cotswolds but have the benefit of being right on our doorstep, thereby avoiding the need to travel. On a summer evening it is just a great and very tranquil experience to be able to peacefully sit on one of the benches looking down into the valley and watch the sun go down. If you are very lucky you can sometimes see Roe Deer grazing and Red Kites, Peregrine Falcons or Kestrels hunting for prey which are now much more abundant since the Old Golf Course has become less kempt than before.

My wife is a very keen runner, and the Old Golf Course has allowed her to train and prepare for the numerous marathons, half-marathons and other runs that she regularly takes part in. Whilst running on the Old Golf Course, she regular sees numerous other runners engaged in similar training. They all agree that using the Golf Course is highly preferable to taking your chances on the busy and dangerous roads linking Highworth to the surrounding world. This is particularly so because there are no safe tracks and cycle routes which runners can use to or from Highworth which would make a long run to elsewhere safe.

If SBC allow this parcel of land is allowed to be lost to development then it will only be to alleviate financial difficulties caused by lack of Government funding and poor management by the previous administration. Highworth residents are not to blame for all this and our present and future needs for Local Green Spaces must be protected as well as those of future generations of Highworthians to come. It is important to understand that the nature of the Old Golf Course and its position within the Town render it a site of such quintessential value and uniqueness that nothing remotely comparable will ever be found to replace it in future to meet the Local Green Space requirements which every growing Town needs.

Yours sincerely

Highworth's Old Golf Course needs to be protected as an OpenSpace, being left for the community in Highworth to use as an exercise area and other recreational needs. We walk here almost daily using the area to restore our mental health and wellbeing away from the hustle and bustle of modern living. The beautiful views in all directions are beautiful and a joy to see along with the wild life that resides in the ever diminishing green spaces around Highworth. As the population grows it is increasingly important to have these green spaces for people to have the opportunity to escape and reset away from traffic and buildings. It is within easy walking distance from the town centre making it accessible to residents of Highworth. If this area is taken away, where else will there be for the community of Highworth to visit and enjoy whilst taking in the beautiful views and wildlife found in this small haven. It is also important to keep this green space to protect the hilltop town status of this ancient town and the diversity of wildlife and nature that lives in it. Regards
I have lived in this lovely town of Highworth for nearly 60 years and it saddens me greatly to think we could loose the OGC. It offers so much to the people of Highworth being only 400-500 metres walking distance from the town centre, beautiful views from every direction and a lovely green space for all to enjoy. Having had dogs it is great for walking and enjoying the company of others, children having picnics etc. Exercising and group walking tooand just being on one's own. Very important is the peace and tranquility providing calm and reflection, something I have enjoyed over the years which we all need especially with the traffic and so many houses being built and planned. We also have the flora and fauna and habitat for wildlife making it ideal for a nature park. Where else would one go to be able to enjoy what is on offer here. Please let us keep this very important to Highworth piece of land.
I am in support of Policy 10 of the neighbourhood plan. As a local resident this space is the only suitable year round outdoor area that is suitable for walking. It is used extensively by many people. Regards,

There has and continues to be a very high response regarding what should happen to Highworth's Old Golf Course

The top part of the Old Golf Course was previously gifted to the people of Highworth as recreational land. This shows the previous owners' intent and wishes for the land. I think that in itself is a good enough reason as to why this piece of land should remain in the hands of the people of Highworth. I also believe that this top half has Roman remains as Time Team came to investigate. Roman remains were found in Wrde Hill and one of the roads accessing the OGC is called Roman Way.

Highworth Town Council are in the best position to look after this land for the people of Highworth. They have a plan to make the land make money so it can look after itself whilst enabling the people of Highworth to use it and to keep biodiversity by joining up with WWT.

Since the decision to close the golf course (earlier than the 25 year lease to Twigmarket) HTC have been mowing paths so that this beautiful space can be enjoyed by not only Highworthians but also many other people including some SBC councillors, dog walkers, various groups including running groups, oap groups, scouts, nurseries, school groups and of course the many dog walkers.

There have been over 4,000 objections to the original SBC Local Plan, since then there have been large developments in Highworth (without any changes to infrastructure) Backhouse on Swindon Road, Wrag View on the Shrivenham road and a further development opposite the Wrag Barn, another development is being built at Roundhill Meads (off the roundabout towards Lechlade,) plus a residential home and further properties by Aldi (to the left of the roundabout towards Lechlade) I am sure there are more that I am unaware of.

My point is Highworth not only is no longer a small ancient market town but this potential development would not only merge us with Swindon (as there are developments happening along the Swindon road near CatBrain farm as well as solar farms), take away from it's ancient hill top status, take away the recreational land that was gifted to the people of Highworth (when with all the current housing being built) it is needed the most. Surveys done by the Action Group show how many people actually use the land every single day.

The government have targets to improve wildlife, this piece of land could not only be available to all those people who already use it but the hundreds and hundreds more people who will be living in this town when these houses are built. HTC would in conjunction with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust improve biodiversity. Let's plant the much needed trees that SBC needs to do to meet its quota, The people of Highworth feel so strongly that I am confident they would help with a planting project. There is a large record of animals and plants on the land already and the help of WWT would only expand this.

Allow Highworth to have the recreational land it was gifted and use it as recreation for the people of Highworth whilst boosting biodiversity. It is about 500 meters from the town which means even the elderly, those on mobility scooters and the very young can continue to use it as the top half is always dry: giving a beautiful spot to sit on one of the supplied benches, take in fresh air and see the beautiful views from the hill top - what better medicine for treating people with mental and physical health issues?

It is such a sociable area that even if you have a bad day it makes you feel better as there is always someone to talk to or a friendly face to smile at. Hospitals are overrun with so many of these issues that a spot like this really does help keep people out of them. The community in Highworth is really quite something, everyone helps each other.

The size of the OGC is big enough to get 10,000 steps in and is great for overall fitness whilst being able to accommodate wildlife. Which is why the wider community are also using this much

treasured space. It’s not just Highworthians that use this special space. There is enough parking that it could become a park for all.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing as I am appalled at the news that SBC is opposing the new neighbourhood plan from Highworth Town council which designates the Old Golf Course as local green space.
I am fully supportive of HTC plans for the Old Golf course and in particular policy 10 which supports the area becoming a local green space.

My reasons for supporting this are as follows:
* the beauty of the area is outstanding, everyone who visits (including my relatives) are awe inspired by the beautiful views and solace of the place.
It is extremely important for anyone experiencing mental health issues , or sadness in their lives.

*the area is easily accessible by everyone in Highworth , most people can walk there but if walking is an issue the local buses to swindon stop outside the area.

*there are many different types of flora and fauna to be found , some of which are quite rare. This is extremely important as we are able to teach children about the importance of nature, conservation , and the different habitats of animals and insects .

* the area is very well used by local residents, dog walkers , and nature lovers.
People often also come from swindon and other surrounding villages to walk in this beautiful area.

*Highworth is expanding all the time with new housing developments. All of these new people will need a place to enjoy open spaces to walk and enjoy nature in. The Old Golf Course is the ONLY accessible area to walk in all year round. I live next to Pentaylands park , which lies at the bottom of the hill. The park is virtually unusable in winter as it is water logged.

We have lived in Highworth for 43 years very happy years and raised 2 daughters here. I love the community and the spirit of the town. Being a historic hollow top town it has over the years seen many housing developments . I understand the need for new housing but surely there has to be a balance?
I would urge SBC to re think its opposition to the new neighbour hood plan proposed by HTC for the Old Golf Course. We need to protect this last remaining beautiful area for the current generation, and all future generations to come.

Yours faithfully

Regarding the Old Golf Course and why it’s important to me.

This green space within our town is invaluable to many people. It’s a place to where one can easily walk - with children or dogs - for exercise or just to be somewhere quiet with extensive views. Good for mindfulness, a little peace or just ‘time out’.
I frequently visit the Old Golf Course to walk, on my own, with friends or with a walking group.
It would be a tragedy to lose this amazing resource.

We are writing to strongly support the proposal outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan to designate the top section of the Old Golf Course in Highworth as Local Green Space (LGS), as outlined in Policy 10.

It is important to provide long term protection against development in this area, a green, accessible and open space which is valued and well used. It supports the well-being of the residents of Highworth, provides important habitat for wildlife and is a critical aspect of Highworth's historical significance as a hilltop town.

The Old Golf Course provides the residents of Highworth with open countryside and rural views within walking distance of the town centre. There is an increasing body of evidence showing that exposure to such open spaces significantly improves mental health and wellbeing. As such, preserving this space should be seen as important as preserving the local GP surgery. It provides an area for recreation, for walking, for exercise, for a whole range of open-air activities, which is used and appreciated by so many of the residents.

The local community is keen to develop the Old Golf Course into a nature park, providing important habitat for wildlife. Over 300 species of flora and fauna have been recorded in this space. There are a number of areas of greenfield development currently underway in Highworth, making the preservation of this area even more critical, particularly given its proximity to the town centre.

From a historical perspective, it is important to preserve the nature of Highworth as one of Wiltshire's ancient hilltop towns, defined as "free-standing small towns set in English upland landscapes where, because of their siting on predominantly convex land shapes, the whole settlement [...] is visible from viewpoints and routes in the surrounding landscape". Indeed, as the highest town in Wiltshire, it is even more important to ensure Highworth is visible from the surrounding landscape and to preserve its free-standing nature. The Old Golf Course gives a valued view into Highworth and two views out of Highworth. Development of this hill side will distract from this and, given the location of the Old Golf Course on the outskirts of the town, could well result in development spreading towards, and joining with, Swindon's development, thereby losing the unique nature of Highworth.

We reiterate that the designation of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space is critical to the future of Highworth as a rural and ancient hilltop town and to the well-being of its residents and we fully support the proposal.

Yours sincerely

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for Policy 10 in the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, specifically regarding the designation of the top section of the Old Golf Course (OGC) as Local Green Space (LGS).

As a disabled person, the OGC holds a special significance for me:

1. **Accessibility**: The OGC is within easy walking distance from the town centre (400 to 600 metres), making it one of the few accessible green spaces I can use for exercise and relaxation. The terrain is manageable and suitable for my needs, allowing me to enjoy the outdoors despite my limitations.
2. **Well-being**: Spending time in the OGC is vital for my mental health and well-being. The beautiful views and serene environment provide a much-needed respite from daily challenges, contributing significantly to my overall quality of life.
3. **Recreational Use**: The OGC is one of the few places where I can engage in physical activity that is essential for my health. Regular walks in this green space help me maintain mobility and improve my physical and mental well-being.
4. **Tranquility and Reflection**: The OGC offers a peaceful retreat where I can reflect and find calmness. The quiet and natural beauty of this space are invaluable for managing stress and maintaining mental health.
5. **Community and Connection**: The OGC is a place where I can connect with nature and feel a sense of belonging to the community. It's a space that fosters inclusivity and supports the well-being of all residents, including those with disabilities.

I urge the independent government inspector to consider the profound impact that designating the OGC as Local Green Space will have on residents like myself. Protecting this area is crucial for ensuring that everyone, regardless of their physical abilities, has access to a place that promotes health, well-being, and community connection.

Thank you for considering my comments.

To who it may concern,

I'm writing to record my support for Highworth Town Councils (NEW) Neighbourhood Plan.(Policy 10 in particular)

I myself worked on the Golf course in the 90's & even then resident's took advantage of the open space for recreational walks using the rights of way around the course.

Since then the Golf course has been reposest by Nature , with the result being an uplifting area for Nature walks to experience the Wildlife & has huge potential to be turned into a recreational area for all, young & old .
It is the Only Accessible Green Space available to local residents without transport & the disabled.

On a personal level I myself gain huge benefit from just knowing I can go for a nice uplifting walk in the Tranquility there on a regular basis.

I also see the benefits my Children & Grandchildren get from time spent together there.
Highworth already has a Growing population especially in recent times which makes it more important than ever.

Yours sincerely

Hi I would like for you to please consider keeping this area green.
I agree fully with policy 10 in the Highworth neighbourhood plan in keeping the Old Golf Course area green.
This area is used by so many people, it's a place for peace and quiet from everyday life.
It's an area for exercise, dog walking, enjoying nature and all the wonderful wildlife.
It's home to a large range of wildlife.
We are supposed to be improving biodiversity, not making it worse.

When health services including mental health is struggling to cope, why take away areas that would help those conditions.
When the planet is dying because we keep removing our green spaces.

Houses keep being built, but infrastructure is failing.
The roads are in such a bad state, congestion on roads, the health services are struggling. Why add to the problem before fixing the existing issues.

Please be a council that listens to its residents.
We want this area to stay green.

Thank you

Hi,

I would like to add my voice to those of local residents and expressing my support for designating site 1, the northern part of the old golf course a local green space under policy 10 of the plan. This is despite the fact that one of the lead officers at Swindon council publicly stating they will oppose it.

As someone who actually lives in Highworth, unlike the lead councillor in question, I use this area frequently, as it seems to hundreds of local residents. For me it is both practical use, I walk my dog there multiple times a week, it is really the main convenient local area for walkies, but also it is important for my own wellbeing, I work from home, so it is easy to spend days at home, especially in winter. Having access to a vital green space just down the road is important, it gives a space to unwind, get fresh air, exercise and decompress from day to day life.

Loosing this space to potential development would be a terrible loss for Highworth and materially degrade the quality of life for many hundreds of people.

I appreciate the need for new homes and development in a growing town, but growth will also increase the importance and value this green space provides to the local community.

Kind regards,

Hi
I moved to Highworth with my family 4 years ago.
As a lot of people did during and post covid, we reevaluated our life and work balance to be more favourable.
So many things changed, none bigger than moving house.

There were several reasons for moving to Highworth, the accessible green space on the old golf course was amongst the top.
And since moving, we have made very good use of it.
I use this space at least twice daily on most days. Only in the winter and when I am working in London I don't, I simply run out of daylight hours.

I never in my life thought a green space would be such a big part of our families life, but it is.
The old golf course is a space where I exercise, reset my mind, meet friends and enjoy nature.
This place is a proper sanctuary and I would be devastated if it were lost in any form.

I have travelled a lot in the UK for work, have lived in several cities and towns.
We shouldn't be advocating losing spaces like this, we should try and encourage all towns and cities to make their own green space, like the old golf course, accessible for people.

Please don't build on it, I am more than happy expanding the town, we need extra housing right across the country.
But building here will create more problems for the community than it will solve.

Happy to discuss if required.
Many thanks

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am anxious to formally advise your office of my comments and concerns regarding the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan.

I recently relocated from Worcester to Highworth, in August 2025, having researched areas of Wiltshire that offer a small town with a sense of controlled protection of the local environment, which takes proper respect for the interests of existing local community. I believed that Highworth met many of the specific and general needs for my wife and me. The Neighbour Plan appears to validate my expectations.

It is therefore important that I register my support for the Neighbour Plan and specifically for certain policy issues as detailed below.

Policy 8. Landscape and views ..Important Protected Public Viewpoints looking from the Countryside to Highworth

My experience in Worcester was that the views around the city were a valuable asset to the area and to the community. I then was pleased with the viewpoints around Highworth, which must also be recognised as a valued asset to the town, to the local community, and the wider community enjoyed travelling into and through the town.
The views on first coming to Highworth certainly raised my expectations for the local environment,.....It is worth remembering just how influential and long lasting are these first impressions.
Living here in Highworth certainly provides us with views which lift the heart, enhanced each time I return from other areas with less attractive views
Viewpoints are fundamental to any area, one should remember how an area is considered when you travel.

Policy 9. Open Space Policy 10. Local Green Space

The Neighbourhood Plan Open Space in Highworth: areas of open space that fulfil important recreational, play and visual roles for the local community. Neighbourhood Plan includes the Former Golf Course Open Space designation to the south of the site whilst designating the northern area as Local Green Space

As such this will provide some protection for this wonderful asset to the community. We regularly walk over both the north and south parts of the land, initially with our dog at first, but since losing our dog we still enjoy our meanders over this treasure, helped by the extensive paths cut into the grass. The area is obviously enjoyed and treasured by the members of the local and not so local community, who enjoy walking alone, or with friends, partners, children or with their dogs. It is almost unknown to walk there any day, irrespective of poor weather conditions when one does not meet other members of the community. Even when not meeting anyone, the land offers so much Wildlife, Flora and Fauna to inspire good health. I love spotting the birdlife in the grasses, hedges and trees, and the occasional viewing of Hares or Deers.

It is vital to the interests of the community that the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted .
It is worrying that Borough Council Lead Officer has announced that he opposes designation of the Top Half of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space, nor to properly consider Ecology Consultant review of the "Highworth Town Council costed Business Plan"
I hope that a reasonable measure of pressure be applied to the Lead Officer, in order to recognise the considerable response of the community here in Highworth that will be directly affected by decisions made in Swindon. This should then lead to a fair and considered attitude to this issue, and not just a lip service response. I really is important that the interests of the community here is both heard, registered and properly taken into account

I trust that a formal response to this representation will forwarded to me

Yours faithfully

I am impressed with the depth and spread of the draft plan and look forward to seeing it being implemented for the benefit of the people of Highworth.

I have one specific comment. In Table 9 page 46 there is a list of community projects for which CIL money could be used, however in the list no mention is made of a possible new youth club building which the youth of the town desperately need. I see this as a major omission .

Even in the brief read of the Plan I found a number of typos which need to be cleared up for the final version eg The Chair's Introduction needs an apostrophe.

Dear Forward Planning Team,

The Old Golf Course at Highworth is a recreational and natural open space which has been used by the people of Highworth for many years, both when it was a local Golf Course and since the Golf Course was closed. This open space provides an ecologically diverse natural area in an increasingly built-up area. It provides excellent dog walking facilities and a place to take exercise. Among other things, parts of it are flat, allowing those who have to use wheel chairs and mobility scooters to enjoy it, with or without dog(s). It is 'eco friendly', supporting a number of insect species (my personal speciality) and increasingly rare plants. Overall, it is one of the important features of Highworth that contributes to the people's welfare and enjoyment of life.

It is one of only two such spaces in Highworth, the other being Pentylands, which is damp for much of the year, muddy and steep. Pentylands would not fill the gap caused by the loss of the Old Golf Course.

Yours sincerely

To whom this may concern,

I write to express support for the Highworth Neighbourhood Ddevelopment Plan 2, particularly in regard to policy 8, protecting views into Highworth, policy 9, designating the lower section of the Old Golf Course site as Open Space, and Policy 10, which designates the upper section as Local Green Space.

The Old Golf Course site is precious to the people of Highworth and to other residents of the borough who often travel to visit it. The site is well used throughout the day by walkers and runners, as well as those with dogs, and provides an important natural space to support mental well-being. It is easily accessible and I have connected with many age groups and abilities whilst using the space. The Old Golf Course is in itself a community hub, shared with an abundance of wildlife. On many occasions, I have watched as the barn owls hunted in the grasses, seen deer, rabbits and pheasants, or a carpet of cobwebs. As with many others, the site is part of the reason why we chose to move to Highworth and i feel strongly that it should be protected.

Kind regards,

Good evening,

In the Town Council's new Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, it's proposed that the top half of OGC be Local Green Space (a legal category that protects it) and the bottom (south) half, formal Open Space.

I strongly support the proposals for Local Green Space and the Open Space. I am the mum to two toddlers who I hoped would grow up in Highworth. I moved here two years ago and the Old Golf Course was the primary reason for us choosing to live here. I live in a new build, and understand the need for housing, but the Old Golf Course is not the place for it and building on this area would be a travesty.

The Old Golf Course is beautiful and significantly improves our lives through both our physical health and our mental health. Destroying this natural, beautiful space full of wildlife would be a a tragic mistake.

Policy 8 - Landscape and Views. The views are wonderful and make me so happy. Whether on a warm summer's day or a crisp winter morning, the views take my breath away and bring some peace and tranquility in an otherwise stressful life. Please take these lovely views into account as part of the required Landscape and Visual Assessment of any intrusive development proposals.

Policy 9 - Open Space - page 57, I support the proposal that the bottom half of the OGC be classified formally as Open Space (some protection).

Policy 10 - Local Green Space, p64. I very strongly support Policy 10, to preserve the top (north) half of the OGC as green, accessible open space, valued and well-used by Borough residents. Over 300 species of flora and fauna have been recorded on the OGC. Moreover, the Town Council has submitted, to the Borough, a costed Business Proposal for recreational use of the land. I support this business proposal.

I cannot put into words how special this space is and I implore you to do the right thing and preserve it for the people of Highworth, as was intended when it was left to them.

Kind regards,

Dear Sir/Madam

Please leave the Golf Course as is. We don't have the facilities for any more houses than are being built at the moment. Getting a Drs appointment is nigh on impossible. The roads are appalling. I doubt the sewage treatment works can cope with any more effluent. I'm not sure the schools have the capacity to cope with the extra children. If these are not enough reasons to stop building. I'm well aware of the current Govt's housing target but if the infrastructure is not there what are you expecting people to do. Our rivers will be full of excrement. Schools won't cope. The NHS will buckle, it's on its knees already.

A little bit of common sense wouldn't go amiss.

It is extremely important that this area remains open for public access. Though Highworth is surrounded by fields, they are not free for walkers. They are privately owned land with limited public footpath access. The golf course is the only all year round area for recreational walking and, in particular, for walking a dog. Pentylands is difficult to access from the centre of the town, extremely wet in winter and not accessible for those with mobility problems.

If dog walking was confined to the sports fields, I think it could cause real problems, especially when those fields are being used for sport.

If the golf course is built on, I would seriously consider moving away from Highworth to somewhere with proper access to open space. The Golf Course is one of the reasons we moved here.

Hi,

I wish to try and stop the building of yet more houses in Highworth on the old golf course. We don’t have any improvements in the required facilities, as in roads, schools and medical practices. We already have 3 building plots on the go and need to see how the town copes with these.

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of the Highworth area, I would like to register my objection to any form of building or development on the Old Golf Course. I am pleased to see Highworth Council’s assessment of the criticality of this beautiful space. It is an amazing area for local residents especially for dog walking and mental health. The wide open spaces and choice of paths make it ideal for getting exercise, appreciating local nature, and generally raising one’s spirits. I feel mentally better after a walk around the course as well as physically; it is a rare and lovely space that benefits from easy parking and access from the main road.

It is also the perfect dog walking spot. There’s plenty of space to avoid other dogs/walkers/runners if you wish and for my dog to run around and experience different inclines and spaces (flat, hill, woodland, some boggy areas, long grass). There are no prams or pushchairs to navigate or artificial play spaces to kill the silence, and it feels like an escape from the bustle of the everyday. Plus it’s well spread so you don’t have to walk next to the busy (unfenced) main road as you can walk the whole course by zig zagging through it.

Having recently moved from Reading where you have to drive further to reach less busy/crowded natural spaces, I can safely say this is a gem in Highworth’s crown. Building on it where there are clearly other options would deprive local residents of critical green space to walk, run, breathe, and exercise their lovely dogs. I hope the consultation will come to the same conclusion and reject any housing plans in this area.

The Old Golf Course is the only area in that part of the Town left to walk on for exercise, relaxation and tranquility. There will otherwise be no open countryside to benefit from.

Without it there is a greatly increased risk of losing the Market Town identity (chartered in the 13th century)

We would suggest the upper part adjacent to Wrde Hill and that lower down by Redlands be wooded, enhancing the walk through experience and encouraging many and varied forms of wildlife.
Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 states that the northern area of the Old Community Golf Course should be designated as Local Green Space. I agree with this for the following reasons: a) various studies have identified an abundance of biodiversity in this area, which would be lost if it were to be developed in any significant way; b) the area is widely used by members of the Highworth community for the purposes of recreation and relaxation, as well as the promotion of health and wellbeing; c) this amenity is readily accessible on foot by much of the Highworth community. Losing it would be detrimental, not only to those who would have to drive to Pentylands or further afield, but also to the wellbeing of everyone due to the increase in polluting road traffic.
Highworth Neighbourhood Plan. We have lived in Highworth for over 50 years and have always enjoyed and valued the green area of what is now called 'The Old Golf Cours'. We often use the side nearest the Cricklade Road as an area of natural beauty and exercise. It is not completely flat, as so many park areas are, but gives plenty of beautiful space for enjoyable walking. It is near enough to walk to so we do not need to use the car, which is a great benefit. The views in every direction are beautiful, and give us a real lift to our feelings. Although I understand the need for new housing I do not feel that this should be provided at the expense of a wonderful area of natural beauty, when so much of town planning does not take the needs of the local residence into consideration. With the trees, small stream, hedges and grass areas it is ideal as a natural habitat for a range of wild life, birds, animals and insects. When the weather has been dry, and the ground is dry it is so good to be able to cross the area and walk along what had once been, I think, the 3rd and 6th fairway of the old golf course. The whole area also includes cricket and football facilities but it is the old golf course that needs to be saved for present and future generations of residents. This is an area of natural beauty which many other areas could be envious of, ours for the keeping, and should not be ruined by modern housing. I thought that several years ago it had been decided to keep The Old Golf Course. Please do not go back on this decision. Do not allow Swindon council ruin Highworth amenities.

Dear Officer,
Subject: Expression of our desire to make the old golf course in Highworth a local green space in support of Policy 10.

Dear Planning Officer,
I am writing to express our commitment to designating the old golf course in Highworth as a local green space, in alignment with Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan. This policy emphasizes the importance of preserving public open space within the parish, recognizing its significant recreational and environmental benefits. It clearly states that the designated open space assets, detailed in Figure 14 of the plan, will be protected from any development, including the golf course.

The old golf course serves as a vital green space for our community, and its preservation is imperative for several reasons:
1. Its proximity to the town center enhances accessibility for residents.

2. It has ecological and environmental value that contributes to local biodiversity.

3. It offers opportunities for leisure activities and fosters social cohesion within the community.

Safeguarding this golf course amidst potential development is essential for demonstrating a respectful approach to the local context, as outlined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Access to this green space, specifically the golf course, will enhance opportunities for physical activity and foster a connection to nature, which can lead to reduced stress levels and improved overall physical and mental well-being among community members. Research has consistently shown that access to neighborhood green spaces is linked to enhanced well-being and positive mental health outcomes. Therefore, the preservation of the golf course is critical for ensuring community access and use.

Thank you for considering this important matter.

Sincerely,

Dear Sir/Madam,

Myself and my family support policy 10 in the new Neighbourhood plan that has been produced by Highworth Town Council, to make The Old Golf Course local green space.

We use it almost on a daily basis, this is what we use the area for and the benefits from doing so.

Dog walking, enables exercise of myself and our well loved pet. It also offers peace and a sense of openness for me, away from the stresses of life. I often stand at the top looking down across the field imagining I could fly, escaping for just a moment. The open space and far reaching views offer a sense of freedom for me and allows me to let go of my anxieties.

Family walks. The diverse and unspoilt area offers our family much more than just exercise and fresh air, but we explore the plants growing and wildlife we can see, discussing how and why they thrive there. The children follow grasshoppers or run trying to keep up with the birds. The children take their RC cars or amphibian vehicles to play in the stream. On wet days wellies are adorned and we head for the 'wetlands' part of the Golf Course to jump through muddy puddles and negotiate ourselves around without getting stuck! The fallen trees offer a great form for agility, helping to build confidence and learning their capabilities as they climb. Not forgetting of course the wonderful picnics on summers days.
Our Rugby team meet on the cut grass areas to play and practice. The cubs meet to carry out treasure hunts, earning their compass badges and learning to map read.
My children learnt to ride their bikes on The Old Golf Course as the slight slope helps them generate momentum, whilst the grass offers a soft landing should they fall.

Taking away all or even part of the old golf course would be like taking apart of our family away, as this area is fundamental to our family's togetherness, as well as our education, wellbeing and fitness.

Please don't take it and make it local green space.

Yours sincerely

Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm writing to share my response to the Neighbour Plan, with special interest in the designation of the Old Golf Course as a Local Green Space.

The Old Golf Course (OGC) is a cherished part of our community, and a vital green space that preserves the character of our hilltop town while offering a sanctuary for local wildlife. Its open landscape maintains the historical charm of our ancient settlement, and its natural beauty provides a peaceful escape from the pressures of urban life. That’s why I fully support the community’s vision to transform the OGC into a dedicated Local Green Space. Protecting this space would not only safeguard our heritage but also create opportunities for recreation and environmental education, ensuring its value for generations to come.

Why the OGC Matters:

Preserving Our Town’s Character
The OGC’s open space is essential to maintaining the town’s unique identity. It provides stunning panoramic views from the hilltop and contributes to the historical and aesthetic appeal of our settlement.

A Space for the Community
From walking and jogging to dog walking and picnicking, the OGC brings people together, fostering a sense of connection and well-being.

Environmental Benefits
Keeping the OGC as a natural area helps combat climate change by absorbing carbon and improving air quality, making it a vital resource for both people and the planet.

By protecting and enhancing the OGC, we can create a lasting legacy for Highworth —a place where history, nature, and community thrive together.

Kind Regards,

To whom it may concern,

I have deep reservations about this plan as follows:

The old golf course is an excellent facility for residents of Highworth.
It is an open space easily accessible from the Centre and surroundings of Highworth.
With a short walk from the centre, you are away from the traffic noise and vehicle pollution of Highworth, to a peaceful, pleasant, calming , tranquil and relaxing open air space with beautiful views in every direction.
There is also the attraction of wildlife and its habitat, as well as pleasing sound of birds singing.

It is well used by walkers; I know, as I see others when I go for a walk there.

My grandchildren ask me to take them there when they visit me. They love it: they have the freedom to run around and I do not have to worry about them.

There are several housing sites around Highworth and in Highworth itself, which increases its importance as a green space.

It also serves to protect the hilltop town status of this ancient town.

Pleas keep it as "a green space".

Yours sincerely

Dear Sir or Madam,
I write in connection with Policy 10 of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan. I understand the deadline for receipt of comments is today.
I very firmly support Policy 10 and its aim to keep the 'Old Golf Course' as a Local Green Space. This area is essential for the recreation, leisure, and general well-being of the residents of Highworth, who use it extensively. The presence of this green space is a major reason why my family moved to Highworth.

Any building development on this land would cause countless problems and remove a green space area which is not only essential for local people, but also for the flora and fauna which inhabit it. In particular, any building development would cause a huge amount of surface water run-off which would irrevocably damage the ecosystem of the stream and other watercourses on the site. The construction of balancing ponds to address this would only make the problem worse. In addition, the existing sewerage system cannot take any inflow from a building development, which raises the question of whether a new sewerage works would need to be provided, bringing with it all the attendant problems of changes to the existing ecosystems and the local environment generally.

Yours faithfully,

Dear HTC

I would like to express my support for ensuring Highworth old Golf course is kept as wildlife and leisure space. It is critical for sustainable space for the community and to support Highworth as a desirable place to live.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to log my strong objection to any development of the Highworth Golf Course whatsoever. The area is vital for the residents of the town to have a place of recreation in the countryside which is within walking distance of the town centre. Not only that, but it is full of trees, plants and animals, and we should be preserving such an asset to our town, especially when climate change is at the forefront of all of our minds. I walk on the Golf Course with my wife regularly, and have used it regularly for running also, and know that I benefit greatly in body and mind from being able to do so. For many in the town it is a lifeline. It would be a tragedy if this beautiful green space was swept away and filled with the concrete and bricks which so dominate all of our lives. Acknowledging that houses need to be built, surely there are much more suitable sites than this precious amenity.

Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have written before on this subject, but would like to object again in the strongest possible terms to any development of the old Golf Course in Highworth.

This most precious of green spaces is the breathing heart of Highworth, and is vital to the health and wellbeing of so many of the town's residents. Its proximity to the town centre makes it easily accessible to those who are older or of ill health, who may not be able to walk further afield or drive to the countryside. My husband and I walk frequently in this green space with its trees, shrubs, wild flowers, wildlife and far-reaching views, and believe that it is of immense benefit to our health and well-being. It is also vitally important, in these times of climate change, to not only preserve trees and other vegetation and wildlife, but to have spaces people can access without driving. The old Golf Course is so tranquil and calming for the mind, but also provides a place where walkers who might live alone, can meet other people without the need to spend money. As our town inevitably expands to meet the need for housing, a space like this will be of even greater importance for the burgeoning population to escape the roads, concrete, and noise which surround us all every day.

Please, please, don't take this beautiful green space away from us!

Yours faithfully,

I moved to Highworth in 2014, and was delighted to find a free, large (45minutes to walk the circumference) tranquil green place to walk, right across the road.Since then I have walked for three or four days very week, usually with my elderly neighbour's dog, who loves to run free and meet other dogs to play with.

There are benches were the older generation can sit and admire the scenic view, and a chat with passing walkers.It certainly a well used green space, used regularly by people alone, families, friends, children and groups.

In my own case, as a widow, and many others living alone, agree that a leisurely stroll here helps to reset your mental health, when you are feeling a bit down.

We know we are lucky to have this healthy space, which is an important part of our community.

Hi,

I'm writing to express my support of the new Highworth Neighbourhood Plan, specifically policies 8, 9 and 10. I spend a lot of time there with my adult daughter and it really is a special place. Preserving this by defining a Local Green Space at the top and an Open Space at the bottom would be the right thing to do. It is so beautiful and makes my mental health so much better as well as giving me space to connect with my daughter. Please don't let this change.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to inform you that we strongly support the Policy 10 proposal to preserve the top (north) half of the Old Golf Course(OGC) in Highworth and that it be designated as a Local Green Space/accessible open space.

Highworth as a growing town, like most other towns in the UK needs open accessible green space for recreational use. This provides physical and mental health benefits for both the residents and visitors to Highworth. Please note that the only alternative green space in Highworth is Pentylands which is largely unusable during the winter months due to poor drainage and boggy ground. Therefore Pentylands can only be walked through during the short summer months as long as it isn't too much of a rainy season.

We, as well as many other Highworth dog owners have to visit OGC every day during the winter months as Pentylands is a quagmire.

We feel it is necessary to point out that most towns in the UK have park facilities.
If the OGC is taken away this will be very grievous to all the residents of Highworth. In this day and age when mental health is very fragile, parks or a green open space is absolutely paramount to the well being of the towns residents.

The OGC is used by one and all, there is not a time when it is deserted of people. This shows how important it is to Highworth.

We all love our hilltop town and the views which it affords. By building on this area the most stunning views would be ruined. Please take into consideration our distress at the proposal to build on this land and preserve the OGC as accessible, open and green space.

Yours sincerely

Dear Sirs

I am writing to express my support for preserving the Old Golf Course in Highworth as a local green space, in alignment with Policy 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
This area provides the people of Highworth with a much-needed retreat – a peaceful, open green space. Personally, I frequently walk my dog there and have found it to be an invaluable resource. Since the Covid pandemic, the importance of green spaces has become even more apparent. They allow us to relax, enjoy fresh air, and support our mental wellbeing. The Old Golf Course offers an escape from work, traffic, and the hustle and bustle of town life. Without it, our options for walking and enjoying natural green spaces would be significantly reduced.

The Old Golf Course serves as a sanctuary for wildlife, especially as green spaces are increasingly being consumed by housing developments in Highworth. These developments bring more people, additional cars, and heightened pollution. Our town will struggle with so many new houses.
I hope you will take the people of Highworth's views into consideration and keep the Old Golf Course as a green space so that many generations can enjoy it for years to come.

Yours faithfully

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to express my support for designating Highworth's Old Golf Course as Local Green Space (LGS) - Policy 10.

Like many Highworth residents, I have walked and enjoyed Highworth's Old Golf Course ever since I was a child – first as a functioning golf course and then, much later, as a gradually rewilding area of local green space that has progressively become more beautiful and biodiverse. This piece of land is part of the fabric of the town, and it is unimaginable that it would be built on - particularly in the context of the climate crisis and habitat loss.

The Old Golf Course is – by a long way – the nearest area of public green space to my home. Should it no longer be there, I'm not sure where I would go to walk. Pentylands is quite a distance, and unthinkable for the many elderly residents who live on this side of Highworth due to the supported accommodation around here.

I enjoy the Old Golf Course daily, and it benefits my mental and physical wellbeing a huge amount. It's a beautiful space to walk, run or just sit and think – particularly in the summer when it is especially well used, and there is a real sense of community.

Speaking of the community, I have been really impressed by the local community organising that is behind the campaign to save the Old Golf Course. The support the campaign has received from such a small town has been staggering. It's clearly the wish of the overwhelming majority of Highworth residents that the Old Golf Course be kept green and I feel very strongly that this – and local democracy generally – should be respected.

Yours sincerely

My childhood was spent on the Old Golf Course. My Grandparents reside in Wrde Hill and my parents have remained in Highworth, the golf course provided an area for lovely walks with the dog and a place to play with my friends. I continue to use this space as a 20 year old when I return to Highworth from University.

I live in Priory Green and the golf course was and still is easily accessible and a great place to meet friends. I look forward to being able to use it with my own children in the future.

As a young person, I have spent many an hour on my X-box, however, I recognise the benefits of being able to be outside and have somewhere to go that helps my wellbeing. This is something that is crucial for all ages but particularly for young people and those that are now working from home. So many children do not get the opportunity to experience the freedom this green space gives to those of Highworth. Many know nothing about nature and its benefits, moving forward it will provide an educational space for children to learn and be part of a natural environment.

It would be devastating to loose this space, the opportunity to observe the beautiful views and the history that our ancient town hides under the earth. I really don't want to be part of the generation that destroys our environment.

Please understand that this would be a tragedy.

Kind regards

I BEG OF YOU PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT DEPRIVE HIGHWORTH AND OUR FUR BABIES AND THEIR HUMAN CARERS OF THIS BEAUTIFUL GREEN SPACE.

Not only is it necessary – speaking for my selfish reasons but to each and everyone the wellbeing that it gives to the residents of Highworth and all surrounding villages and towns. Families travel just to enjoy the wonderful scenery, knowing their children can run around and enjoy the nature and wildlife. It's a wonderful sound when walking around the OGC to hear children laughing and enquiring about nature etc. I know on occasions that there are some young people who do not respect the OGC but where would they go also.

We need this green space more than ever for our well-being and are you as a public body voted by the public going to deny this to humans that now more than ever need green space and areas that assists with mental health issues.

It is the only green space that I feel confident in walking around in the area on my own (being of a mature age) and where I can let my fur baby run free and know that he is safe.

I walk and enjoy the OGC every day in all winds and weathers.

Having lost my partner in 2017 I have made numerous friends walking around the OGC who have since become lifelong friends and who I know feel the feel the same as me about the OGC and where would I have been without this.

We most definitely need this facility in Highworth. It is a social area where you can make new friends and meet up with old friends.

I get very despondent and depressed wondering where can I walk with my fur baby and enjoy the fresh air, scenery and nature should we lose the OGC.

I am fully aware that a great number of people use the OGC for recreational purposes and thus bring trade to our coffee shops and small businesses.

The OGC belongs to the residents of Highworth not Swindon Borough Council,

Should further development on this beautiful nature area proceed Highworth cannot sustain the properties that we have. The housing stock has increased and properties that exist are not selling so why build more!

Our Medical Practice alone cannot cope with the residents that we have at this moment in time let alone more!

Our roads/Town are grid-locked whenever there’s the smallest of roadworks.

Please, please I pray that you don’t make this decision to proceed with development that cannot NEVER EVER be undone.

SAVE OUR GREEN SPACE

158

I am waiting in favour of Having / Keeping of Highworth neighbourhood plan, POLICY 10. It is very important to us, and the Highworth Community to have the green and open spaces.
We have lived here in Redlands close for some 32 years. We moved here as in those days it was a lot quieter, and we loved the green fields and of course walks over the golf course, as in those days still used for golf until the builders came and taking the fields to build new houses, which now has never stopped. Feel we wont have any greenery left or wild life as alot being killed off, on the Homes/ Habitats being destroyed.
The lovely open space of the Old Golf Course, which is just over from us, gives us and alot of others far and near alot of pleasure in easy walking distance off this busy A361 road (not good to walk by)
The Tranquillity and beautiful views and the green open space which is very important, also to protect all the lovely wild life that live and Breed there for future generations to come. Some housing yes but not so to destroy, all the nature and open greenery.
Its so important for all peoples mental Health and Bodies to have open green space. Also very important to us all in protecting the Hill Top Town status of our ancient Town; with such a growing local population now in Highworth.
So we are in need of increasing Local green space for people to walk and get away from the on going Traffic on the A36l, and the Hustle and Bustle. Alot of our lovely greenery ie fields and hedge rows and wild Life, have already been Taken away, with so many new houses built. So what would we all do if our nearest green space is taken away from us.
As we all get alot of relaxing tranquillity in sitting and walking in this lovely open space called “THE OLD GOLF COURSE”
So Hopefully the SBC will consider how very important this beautiful green open space is to us all, and the wild life that live there.

It is very distressing to hear that the Council (Swindon) is proposing to oppose the making of our old golf course into a Local Green Space.
We are urged on all side to get out into the country side, to have fresh air, listen to the birds and revel in the scent of blossom, blackthorn, may and lilac. All this the old golf course offers us.
I use it for walks, to get away from the traffic noise of Cricklade Road, and for sheer pleasure of the views. Have you seen it when it’s a sunny morning with the mist slowly lifting?
Incidentally, if there’s new hosing where’s the traffic going to go? The roads are dug up constantly as it is.
Finally, if Local Government is to mean anything surely the views of the local people should weigh very heavily in the balance?
If we lose this lovely open space there is nowhere near for people to let heir dogs have a good run. The bottom of the course is boggy, sometimes very bad, no good for walks.

159

As residents of Crane Furlong in Highworth, we are extremely concerned about a plan to direct traffic to a proposed new housing development in the field north of Crane Furlong.
We understand the route will be via Grove Hill, Folly Crescent, Folly Drive then into Henley Drive and down the northward slope to the residential road of Crane Furlong. Then west to the proposed new Development.
All the sections of the route listed create serious hazards.
Grove Hill Is a bus route yet vehicles, including vans, park on the T junction outside 17 and 19 properties most of the time. These block both the pavement and cause extreme problems to both through traffic and the large amount of traffic trying to leave all the homes in the other listed roads.
Grove Hill
On entering Folly Crescent, right up to the Grove Hill junction vans, and cars are constantly parked especially on the east side making it very hard to manoeuvre in and out the parked cars and block the view of traffic travelling on Grove Hill before turning onto it.

Then when bearing right into Folly Drive is another hazardous bend with a van and cars parked on both sides, of the bend. It is an accident waiting to happen.
Travelling along the length of Folly Drive is a slalom exercise again between traffic parked on both sides of the road.

On reaching the T junction with Henley Drive, again vans park on the bends and when turning left the bungalow, number 34, on the bend ,has a drive close to the bend. It is too close to the blind bend and if anyone leaves that drive when someone goes round the corn there is extreme danger of an accident. I think the access drive should be on Folly Drive not on Henley drive as it is in a blind spot on the near side of the road.

Crane Furlong the stretch leading to the field proposed for the development, also experiences blind spots whether turning left or right into the residential road. Again vehicles park on the road at the T junction at the bottom of the slope. Many park along it too.

The major other problem is that one can't travel along any of these sections at times. This is because a lot of delivery vans, builders, service vehicles, waste collections are numerous.
The emergency vehicles, ambulances and fire engines also have serious problems.

If only one access point through is this entrance to these new homes, we and they, would be very vulnerable to not only accidents but under health and safety to emergency vehicles too.

A much safer, more direct route would surely be off the Cricklade Road into the Recreation Field or continue down Grove Hill to Pentylands Lane, and in the entrance where the current gate into the field is, by the sewage works.

Preferably as the field being considered for development, is an important flood plane, it should remain so. It is waterlogged for much of the year. We need to consider Climate Change with wetter years and flooding to come.

I have been a resident of Highworth since 2005 with the rest of my family living in Biddel Springs. The old golf course is within easy walking distance of our house and is an extremely beautiful peaceful south facing park with lovely views that we use all year round and at least twice of week for regular walks. In our opinion a public space for relaxing and exercise is essential for my families wellbeing and this park provides 365 days a year use unlike many other parks across the Borough that regularly flood or are sodden over the winter. During Covid lockdown the park provided so much space and tranquillity for all of us on a daily basis that allowed us to get through these extremely challenging times. The park is used by many people, but this critical green space still provides our own space for reflection on your own or with the family. In terms of wildlife we have regularly seen deer , hawks, kestrels, barn owls , huge range of insects and some beautiful flora across the seasons. With increasing development across the borough and the modern stresses of life we must retain these precious green spaces for people to enjoy , relax,

think and recharge . Hopefully the Borough will consider this request to preserve this special park with sympathy and compassion for the future of the residents of Highworth and Swindon .
I support policy 10 as it looks to secure local green space for all, being Highworth residents both myself and my wife use The Old Golf Course daily. It is easily accessible with ample parking, whilst walking around the old golf course we can observe the wildlife of which there is plenty. We are often joined by our grandchildren and during the summer months have picnics and it feels like a day out in the countryside the views are fantastic. It would be a great loss for all the users of the old golf course of which there are very many including the disabled to turn it into yet another urban sprawl.
i was disturbed to see that the proposed building of 42+ houses (was 54 the last time) behind Crane Furlong, Highworth has raised its head again. Apart from having the houses built behind which would seem folly to me - loss of green space, displacement of many wild animals, the constant wetness of the ground, a sewage plant right next door and the increased traffic in a quiet area - the proposed idea of opening the end of Crane Furlong to provide access to the site is ludicrous. If the entrance to this is via Grove Hill then the small streets of the Folly's and Henley Drive will become so busy with a possibility of up to Nearly 100 cars (if 2 per household in new houses). The winding access roads, then the sharp hill to Crane Furlong (which becomes inaccessible when it's icy or has snowed), will ruin the relatively quiet roads they currently are. There is also the fact that the proposed access will also run through bungalows inhabited by mostly elderly people. I would like to put on record that I am fully against the proposed new road to the proposed new estate.

161

I write in complete support of the tireless work done by residents and members of the action group to protect the area known as The Old Golf Course, and in the hope that the area will be designated as a Local Green Space (LGS) in the near future.

As a resident in Highworth for nearly 15 years, who uses the site multiple times a day to walk my dog, meet friends, exercise, see a massively diverse amount of wildlife, I would strongly oppose anything else other than that proposed in Policy 10 as an LGS.

I feel exceptionally fortunate that I can walk to the site from my front door, and the access is easy for those of limited mobility.

I have a catalog of stunning photos (taken on an iphone, not even a proper camera) of the area through the seasons showing the diverse wildlife (barn owls, foxes, bugs, deer, hedgehogs amoungst others) that also call it home; I have grown horse chestnuts and oak seedlings from conkers and acorns I have collected with my niece that have grown with her.

As a dog walking site it is much coveted: as a vet in Swindon, many of my clients envy the space and will come here to enjoy the same open space as myself.

The ancient oak tree provided me with a space to contemplate during lock down and it continues to make me smile and breathe that little better when walking under it.

Should the site be used for anything other than a green open space for everyone, it would be a travesty.
It would diminish the historical reputation as the highest town in Wiltshire, a genuine hilltop town.

In a time of diminishing mental health, and increasing awareness of the multitude of benefits of fresh air and green spaces, it would seem counterintuitive to designate it as anything other than Local Green Space.

I sincerely hope that the voices of the local residents (and as 1 of the 4600+ who signed the petition) will be listened and heard.

We must do everything we can to preserve such a precious natural resource.

I am writing in support of the new Highworth neighbourhood plan. My daughter lives with her husband and 2 toddlers and they get so much joy from the space. It brightens their lives and helps their health and it will be so sad to lose that.

I heavily support the proposals for Local Green Space and the Open Space, specifically I strongly support Policy 10. The nature on the old golf course is incredible and to lose it would just be so unethical. I also support Policy 9, and the landscape and views detailed in Policy 8. The space is so incredibly beautiful, it’s magical.

I understand the council’s money issues but a decision to lose this space would be a huge injustice and irreversible. There are other options.

162

These are our reasons for supporting the proposal to designate Highworth's Old Golf Course" (OGC) as "Local Green Space", as stated in The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan.

Any development on the OGC would affect us significantly. On several days a week we walk on this land, which is only a few minutes away from our house. We have been using the OGC for regular exercise for many years, long before it was developed as a golf course. We enjoy the wonderful views, across to the Ridgeway and open farmland, with benches to relax and enjoy a few minutes' rest where there is peace (away from the pollution of cars and heavy good vehicles and the noisy roads). It's an important green space and the nearest quiet place to walk for many people living in the town.

Without any intervention the OGC has “rewilded” and is now a very special green space with beautiful swathes of grasses and wild flowers which attract bees and butterflies, as well birds not generally seen here before (such as green woodpeckers and two types of owl). As well as their aesthetic value, the trees in this area – some historic woodland and others planted about 20 years ago – make an important contribution in soaking up pollution; they can’t be replaced quickly. The OGC has been of benefit to everyone in Highworth to walk on for a long time and in the last few years this area has become an even more valuable peaceful green space, worthy of preservation. We’d all miss it if it was lost. Highworth is an historic market hilltop town and keeping the OGC as green space will also help retain its unique small town atmosphere.

The hedgerows on the golf course, bordering and crossing the site, were planted when the site was farmland. There is mixed vegetation such as blackberry, hawthorn (with its aptly named May blossom), wild rose, blackthorn (with sloe berries), honeysuckle, etc. Hedges provide nesting sites for a variety of small birds as well as food and shelter for birds and small mammals. Hedges also reduce soil erosion and the risk of flooding. Such hedges are quite rare in this area now as many were removed in the last few years to increase agricultural efficiency and many others (eg on the roadside) are regularly cut back.

With the increasing number of new houses and Highworth's rapidly growing population, the OGC has become even more valuable as an open space, which allows people to get away from the noise and pollution generated by heavy traffic. Where else would we walk in this rapidly expanding town if our nearest green space was taken away?

The Old Golf Course should be designated a "Local Green Space", to preserve and protect this land for the future use of Highworth residents.

163

I'm writing in support of the land known as the 'Old Golf Course' in Highworth becoming a local green space and Policy 10, as put forward in the Neighbourhood Plan.

I understand that Swindon Borough Council is managing enormous budget concerns, indeed many councils across the UK are in the same situation.

It seems this responsibility sits with the top end of government, and I think selling local assets as a sticking plaster for short term gain will end in further decline for Swindon and Highworth - due to the immediate and irreversible loss of quality of life, congestion and reduced productivity/GDP for the area and wider region (due to road congestion).

Good communities are created when a place offers a good lifestyle. Highworth is a good place to live, and the voice of the people is clear.

Walking is a main form of exercise for the residents in Highworth, the majority of whom are in their later years. And it's the only large accessible open space that can be used for recreation all year round.

Lack of exercise in the form of walking significantly reduces almost all areas of health, especially in a person's older age.

So any opposition to the LGS application, I would pose, could be seen as intentional neglect of a large proportion of Highworth/Swindon residents, possibly resulting in shortened life spans even.

This is inexcusable, particularly when it's Swindon Borough Councils job to safeguard quality of life and general good management of town assets for the long term.

And considering the recent Labour winter fuel decisions and taxes on pensions, plus higher energy prices - taking away the only accessible green space means taking away basic standards of living both inside and outside the home.

Nature, which is free, is now a luxury?

For myself, I've lived here for almost three years. It's the best place I've lived in my life.

I love it here because as a non-driver I have everything I need and access to nature on the Old Golf Course. From talking to other walkers, meeting friendly dogs, enjoying the stunning views and getting fresh air - it's one of the best parts of my week.

I also love the community here - and the Old Golf Course I feel is at the heart of the community.

People in Highworth love dogs, nature, art, the pub, the market, travel and each other. It's a lively village-type town and it deserves to be protected for future generations.

I suppose the only question to my mind is: does SBC have Highworth's best interests at heart, as the governing body over it?

I am very much in favour of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan proposal for the Old Golf Course. The area is important to me and other residents of Highworth as a tranquil place, within easy walking distance of the town, where we can find peace and quiet.
The views it offers, and the wildlife it supports, are equally important to me

I would like to add my opinion to Policy 10 regarding Highworth Old Golf Course. This space should have a permanent protection order placed upon it. I come from Kingsdown in Swindon to use this space on a regular basis. It has an amazing tranquil feeling and it has a wonderful effect on my mental health. The view is amazing, the openness and connection to nature is like no other space around the area and I think it should be preserved at all costs, not only the people of Highworth but Swindon and surrounding districts. I know many people from Swindon that also use this space. Hopefully it will be preserved as a Nature park forever.
I would like to indicate my support of Policy 10, the LGS designation of the OGC. It is near my house and I walk there regularly. When I had a dog I walked there every day. It is a calm, green space with lovely views over surrounding countryside and farmland. I have seen deer there and heard many types of birds such as Red Kites, chaffinch, greenfinch, woodpecker and kestrel. There are also rare burrowing beetles, many types of wild flowers and trees. I walk with friends and family, making it a social space too.
I am writing this letter in desperation that Swindon Borough Council does not destroy another part of Natures beauty. There will be nothing left soon. no where to walk our children to let them run and play on family walks, picnics. In the late summer evenings to walk through those fields is like a little piece of heaven hearing the birds sing the rabbits popping around and the community that go there just to walk the fields its a meeting place for our community. We have no where to walk our dogs Penty lands is a swamp from October till the end of May we will be pavement walking because that's all there will be if you don't have a car. Most of the out skirts of Swindon are now housing estates now once you destroy this part of Highworth to build more and more houses on remember you cant but it back once it has gone, there will be no where for family's to take there children dogs ..DO NOT LET THIS HAPPEN.
The Old Golf Course is an important space for me and my mental health more so since I was diagnosed with MS it has been a space of sanctuary and have met many like minded people. It is a great green space for the community.
It is a really valuable space for exercise for people not able to get down to Pentylands. We do not need anymore housing. It is full of old trees. It could be a wonderful area opening up the golf course.
The old golf course is an incredible space for the local community and holds so much importance for me and so many people. I personally use it for walking and running which positively impacts my mental health (which stops me from using NHS mental health funding). It is also a haven for wildlife and I have enjoyed seeing a vast array of wildlife on my visits.
Only lived in Highworth for 6 months but appreciate the value of such places as the old golf course. This area should be open to the public rather than being built on.
Love my walks with the dog – why do we have to change it! The views are amazing, the wildlife that lives there – it all seems unfair. Leave our golf course alone!!
I regularly use the old golf course as a place to walk my dog, get exercise, fresh air and generally for my own well being. It’s the only green space in Highworth that can be used all year round. The other green space “Pentylands Country Park” is under water for the whole of the winter.
Open grass land close by needed for relaxation, walking etc. Not more development.
I am very much in support if the LGS application. As an 86 year old resident, the golf course represents a green space within reach and which provides essential relaxation for the mind, combined with exercise for the elderly legs.
Beautiful views from all directions and top selection is flat and flood free which can move its wheelchair friendly and the green space is essential for exercising and relaxation.
Beautiful views from all directions, memories form walking my dog, breath of fresh air which is needed. Don’t take that away.

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I support Highworth Council to keep the old golf course as a much needed green park, its easily accessible from the Town Centre and it's a calm area which we are in dire need in these troubled times and we do not have the infrastructure to support any more housing etc. And I for one are fed up with HTC being overruled by SBC!
The old golf course is a vital resource in Highworth. Always used by residents for leisure. Only available safe, reasonably level, accessible are for walking. My children are now adults but used this space regularly. DO NOT ROB THE NEXT GENERATION.
Highworth must keep all green spaces!
Its vital that we do not build on the old golf course. It is regularly used for recreation and leisure and should remain available for that purpose.
Too many houses already. Inadequate infrastructure of roads.
I really enjoy walking on the old golf course and it really supports my mental health and wellbeing. It was amazing to see a barn owl there.
I regularly go for walks on the old golf course and enjoy the open spaces and the wildlife spotting. I have also seen a barn owl! And deer and many other species.
It is essential to keep this green space. Without it Highworth would be a significantly worse place to live. I love having this area to walk and decompress. Please don't spoil our town.
We want the green space there – we do not want more houses there.
The golf course is an accessible park on level ground from the town centre. Pentylands is not accessible.
We need fresh air pace to walk around as a pensioner we are told that 20 minute walk is healthy – walking streets with pollution from vehicles is not good for health.
Highworth Old Community Golf Course HTC Neighbourhood Plan Policy 10 (Local Green Space) We have lived in Wrde Hill since 1987, overlooking the Old Golf Course and the extensive views beyond. It is a real asset for the large number of locals and visitors who use it for exercise, rambling, dog-walking, fresh air, family picnics, and relaxation. It was a real godsend during the pandemic. Green leisure space is at a premium on the south of Highworth and is gradually being lost to further developments such as the Backhouse and Persimmon estates, not to mention the estates being built along Shrivenham Road. The expansion of Blundon and North Swindon has also created extra traffic on our already inadequate roads. The New Eastern Villages and the Kingsdown project will certainly add further pressure on the Highworth environment and our green spaces. Over the years we have appreciated the benefits of access to the Old Golf Course and hope that it will continue to serve the needs of future generations of residents and their families and visitors.

166

I am writing in support of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan policy 10, making the Highworth Old Golf Course a local green space.
I have been a resident in Bydemill Gardens for more than 50 years and have seen the way the Old Golf Course has been used. Although not a golfer, when this facility came to an end, the fact that it remained a green space was beneficial to me and my family as it's the only green area within striking distance of the High Street - there are others but they are at the bottom the hill and for many people not a viable option.
It is a popular place for people to walk short or long distances, dog walkers, runners. My late husband used it for daily walks and, until recent years, I enjoyed the opportunity to stroll (away from the main roads) and as a 92 year old, still do sometimes when my daughter visits, without having to drive anywhere. I may not walk very far but the benefits to me - fresh air, beautiful views, seeing and talking to other people - definitely indicate that it would be a travesty for Highworth if this green space were to be lost. The town continues to grow apace and people need somewhere local, i.e. within walking distance, to maintain good mental wellbeing and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Natural habitats are being eroded and to lose this green space would not only affect the wildlife but the opportunities for young children growing up in Highworth to appreciate and learn about the environment.
I have been a resident in Bydemill Gardens for more than 50 years and have seen the way the Old Golf Course has been used. Although not a golfer, when this facility came to an end, the fact that it remained a green space was beneficial to me and my family as it's the only green area within striking distance of the High Street - there are others but they are at the bottom the hill and for many people not a viable option.
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I hope that those who have said they will oppose this application think again.

It was only a few years ago that you received a large negative response to a plan to build on the Old Golf Course in Highworth. Now, in direct reversal of Policy 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan you are seeking to build on the very land which is protected by this policy. I find it disgraceful that, within a comparatively short time, the town is once more having to defend our right to use this green space. Once more we see the wishes and right of ordinary people being ignored. This shameful treatment adds to the bigger picture, whereby trust is further lost in the political process and in government itself. Local government is seen as "the enemy" of those it purports to serve.
The Old Golf Course is an important local amenity in very close proximity to the town. It is, therefore, in easy walking distance of many people. Personally, my husband and I have found the open space invaluable for walking and for use with our young grandchildren. Currently, I am using it for the frequent short walks I have been told I need to do for recovery from an orthopaedic operation. I would not want to walk along busy roads and nor would I think it right to drive to another open area for such a short walk. Others have quick access to a suitable space for dog walking and for personal exercise.
This is a multi-use space, as its size allows a wide variety of wildlife to flourish and be appreciated by the people of the town. I would add that I walk here at different times throughout the day. Invariably, I see other walkers over the whole of the area. It is a much used amenity. The other open space within Highworth is Pentylands Fields, which is at the bottom of the Highworth Hill. It is often waterlogged and inaccessible for many people due to the long hill climb required to return to the main town.
In the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan the Old Community Golf Course is designated as an Open Space in its entirety. Local residents have already demonstrated their support and commitment to this policy. Please be good enough to respect the wishes of your electors.

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Yet again we have to make representations about protecting the Old Golf Course in Highworth against development.
This is an area to the south of the Cricklade Road which was an area for walkers and ramblers when it was a golf course and it is even more so now that the golf course has closed. There is total freedom to wander across this now totally natural area. Indeed it is a fine example of nature taking back what was once more manicured. Wild grasses and flowers are in abundant supply in their natural periods
Wildlife has also returned in abundance and deer, owls, rabbits, hares, birds of all varieties including Kites, Kestrels and Buzzards can be seen. My wife and I have often seen owls at dusk 'quatering' the area searching for their supper.
This can all be found near to the centre of Highworth ensuring easy access on foot. There is no need to drive to the area for a walk or ramble saving air and noise pollution. Indeed once walking over the area it is a haven of quiet away from the continuous humm from the A361 and other access roads through the town.
As you know, Highworth stands on the top of a hill so the views from the Old Golf Course offer the best views to be had from the town. One looks over the undulating park and farmland towards the Marlborough Downs some 10 miles away. These views when looking towards Blundon at sunset cannot be matched. A development here would remove them not for a year or a decade but forever!
There are four roads leading into Highworth, roughly from north, south, east and west. Two out of those four now have brand new developments softening the hilltop image of this special town .. allegedly the highest small town in Wiltshire. A development on this site would disfigure the hilltop view from the third side and be totally contrary to Policy 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
One could write more and more. I realise more housing is needed in the UK and Highworth is contributing acres for this but the Old Gollf Course is the totally wrong site in Highworth. It is not farmland or derelict land. It is land that is used by the population of the area for exercise, picnicking, enjoying the open air, the wildlife and the fantastic views. It would be irresponsible to steal this away from the residents of Highworth and further afield.

I have lived in Highworth for over 50 years and have always greatly valued … the Golf Course space for walking and many other reasons.
1. I love walking and enjoy the space and freedom of the Golf Course with great views from Red Down. I walk over the green space at least twice a week.
2. I love alone. My husband died 25 years ago so it is an opportunity to meet people and chat as it can sometimes be a lonely life.
3. If a longer walk is required, there is a footpath up Red Down Hill, over the brook and this will take you to Stanton Park. No need to drive there.
4. It is essential for children and young people to have space to play and for dog walkers to have a place to exercise their dogs away from the roads.
5. With Highworth expanding so fast we need some green space left.
6. I have seen many birds over on the course, including green woodpeckers. They would lose some of their habitats. Also I found bee orchids there in 2024.
I would be really depressed if it was not lest as a green space.

Comments as appendices

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Reading
RG1 8DB

Neighbourhood Plan Team, Swindon Council

Issued via email:
forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk

07 February 2025

Swindon Council – Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 Submission draft

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for allowing Thames Water Utilities Ltd (Thames Water) to comment upon the above.

As you will be aware, Thames Water are the statutory water supply and sewerage undertaker for the Swindon Borough and are hence a **"specific consultation body"** in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.

We have the following comments on the consultation in relation to our water supply and sewerage undertakings:

Policy 1 – Water Supply and Sewerage/Wastewater Infrastructure

We support the reference in Policy 1 D to the need for adequate water and wastewater infrastructure provision as it is in line with our previous representations.

A key sustainability objective for the preparation of Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans should be for new development to be co-ordinated with the infrastructure it demands and to take into account the capacity of existing infrastructure. Paragraph 20 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024, states: "*Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for… infrastructure for waste management, water supply, wastewater…*"

Paragraph 11 states: "*Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:*

a) *all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects*"

Paragraph 28 relates to non-strategic policies and states: "*Non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure…*"

Paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF goes on to state: *"Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary…."*

Paragraph 27 states: "*Once the matters which require collaboration have been identified, strategic policy-making authorities should make sure that their plan policies align as fully as possible with those of other bodies where a strategic relationship exists on these matters, and take into account the relevant investment plans of infrastructure providers, unless there is a clear justification to the contrary. In particular their plans should ensure that:*

a) a consistent approach is taken to planning the delivery of major infrastructure, such as major transport services/projects, utilities, waste, minerals……"

The web based National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) includes a section on 'water supply, wastewater and water quality' and sets out that Local Plans should be the focus for ensuring that investment plans of water and sewerage/wastewater companies align with development needs. The introduction to this section also sets out that *"Adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development"* (Paragraph: 001, Reference ID: 34-001-20140306).

Thames Water therefore recommends that developers engage with them at the earliest opportunity (in line with paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF) to establish the following:

- The developments demand for water supply infrastructure;
- The developments demand for Sewage/Wastewater Treatment and network infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met; and
- The surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site and can it be met.

Thames Water offer a free Pre-Planning service which confirms if capacity exists to serve the development or if upgrades are required for potable water, waste water and surface water requirements. Details on Thames Water's free pre planning service are available at: https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Water-and-wastewater-capacity

In light of the above comments and Government guidance we support Policy 1 D.

Water Efficiency

We also support Policy 1 E as it is in line with our previous representations.

The Environment Agency has designated the Thames Water region to be "seriously water stressed" which reflects the extent to which available water resources are used. Future pressures on water resources will continue to increase and key factors are population growth and climate change.

Water conservation and climate change is a vitally important issue to the water industry. Not only is it expected to have an impact on the availability of raw water for treatment but also the demand from customers for potable (drinking) water. Therefore, Thames Water support the mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day (105 litres per head per

day plus an allowance of 5 litres per head per day for gardens) as set out in the NPPG (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 56-014-20150327) and support the inclusion of this requirement in the Policy.

Thames Water promote water efficiency and have a number of water efficiency campaigns which aim to encourage their customers to save water at local levels. Further details are available on the our website via the following link:
https://www.thameswater.co.uk/Be-water-smart

It is our understanding that the water efficiency standards of 105 litres per person per day is only applied through the building regulations where there is a planning condition requiring this standard (as set out at paragraph 2.8 of Part G2 of the Building Regulations). As the Thames Water area is defined as water stressed it is considered that such a condition should be attached as standard to all planning approvals for new residential development in order to help ensure that the standard is effectively delivered through the building regulations.

Within Part G of Building Regulations, the 110 litres/person/day level can be achieved through either the 'Calculation Method' or the 'Fittings Approach' (Table 2.2). The Fittings Approach provides clear flow-rate and volume performance metrics for each water using device / fitting in new dwellings. Thames Water considers the Fittings Approach, as outlined in Table 2.2 of Part G, increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in the new dwelling. Insight from our smart water metering programme shows that household built to the 110 litres/person/day level using the Calculation Method, did not achieve the intended water performance levels.

We therefore support Policy 1 E in relation to water efficiency.

Comments in Relation to Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that a sequential approach should be used by local planning authorities in areas known to be at risk from forms of flooding other than from river and sea, which includes "Flooding from Sewers".

Flood risk sustainability objectives and policies should also make reference to 'sewer flooding' and an acceptance that flooding can occur away from the flood plain as a result of development where off site sewerage infrastructure and capacity is not in place ahead of development.

With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, watercourses or surface water sewer. It is important to reduce the quantity of surface water entering the sewerage system in order to maximise the capacity for foul sewage to reduce the risk of sewer flooding.

Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SuDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change.

SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to: improve water quality; provide opportunities for water efficiency; provide enhanced landscape and visual features; support wildlife; and provide amenity and recreational benefits.

With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request that the following paragraph should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan "***It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding***."

Also to mitigate flood risk both on and off-site: "***surface water drainage system discharge rates should be restricted to the equivalent Greenfield Qbar runoff rate or as close as practically possible, but never greater than 2 litres per second per hectare (2l/s/Ha)***." in line with CIRIA guidance.

Site Allocations

The information contained within the Neighbourhood Plan will be of significant value to Thames Water as we prepare for the provision of future wastewater and water supply infrastructure.

The attached table provides Thames Water's site specific comments from desktop assessments on water supply, sewerage/waste water network and waste water treatment infrastructure in relation to the proposed sites, but more detailed modelling may be required to refine the requirements.

We recommend Developers contact Thames Water to discuss their development proposals by using our pre app service via the following link: https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Water-and-wastewater-capacity

It should be noted that in the event of an upgrade to our sewerage network assets being required, up to three years lead in time is usual to enable for the planning and delivery of the upgrade. As a developer has the automatic right to connect to our sewer network under the Water Industry Act we may also request a drainage planning condition if a network upgrade is required to ensure the infrastructure is in place ahead of occupation of the development. This will avoid adverse environmental impacts such as sewer flooding and / or water pollution.

We recommend developers attach the information we provide to their planning applications so that the Council and the wider public are assured wastewater and water supply matters for the development are being addressed.

Specific Comments on Housing Allocation at Crane Furlong which is adjacent to Highworth STW

We made representations on this site in the original Neighbourhood Plan as the site adjoins the Thames Water Highworth Sewage Treatment Works (STW) site. Given the proximity of this site, located just to the south east of Highworth STW, we set out that an odour impact study needs to be undertaken and submitted by the applicant as part of their planning application submission and this was supported by the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Neighbourhood Plan review.

An application was submitted in 2019 with an odour impact assessment and is still under consideration by Swindon Council (Ref: S/OUT/19/1195). The odour impact assessment shows that odour mitigation is required at Highworth STW to make the site deliverable, and a

S106 legal agreement will be required to ensure this is delivered. The S106 is under consideration.

We trust the above is satisfactory, but please do not hesitate to contact David Wilson on the above number if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

Date: 06 February 2025
Our ref: 497867
Your ref: Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2

NATURAL ENGLAND
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ
T 0300 060 3900

Swindon Borough Council

BY EMAIL ONLY
forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk

Dear

Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 - Regulation 16 Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 19 December 2024.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.

However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and to the following information.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further information on protected species and development is included in Natural England's Standing Advice on protected species .

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice.

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If an Strategic Environmental Assessment is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely
Consultations Team

Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural environment information sources

The Magic[1] website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map)** and **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available from the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres .

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found here[2]. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found here[3].

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the Magic[4] website and also from the LandIS website[5], which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural environment issues to consider

The National Planning Policy Framework[6] sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Planning Practice Guidance[7] sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

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[1] http://magic.defra.gov.uk/

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making

[4] http://magic.defra.gov.uk/

[5] http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm

[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

[7] http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed here[8]), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Ancient woodland[9]. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed here [10]) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice here[11] to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land [12].

Improving your natural environment

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment and should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you should follow the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy and seek to ensure impacts on habitats are avoided or minimised before considering opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. You may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development and how these could contribute to biodiversity net gain and wider environmental goals.

Opportunities for environmental enhancement might include:

- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to reduce impacts on wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.
- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.

Site allocations should be supported by a baseline assessment of biodiversity value. The statutory Biodiversity Metric may be used to understand the number of biodiversity units present on allocated sites. For small development allocations the Small Sites Metric may be used. This is a simplified version of the statutory Biodiversity Metric and is designed for use where certain criteria are met. Further information on biodiversity net gain including planning practice guidance can be found here

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework sets out further information on green infrastructure standards and principles
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see Planning Practice Guidance[13]).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks or on verges, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).

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8 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england

9 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences

10 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england

[11] https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals

[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land

[13] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space

- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

Natural England's Environmental Benefits from Nature tool may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside the statutory Biodiversity Metric and is available as a beta test version.

Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation

Safeguarding Department
DIO Head Office
St George's House DMS
Whittington Lichfield
Staffordshire WS14 9PY

Your reference
Swindon Borough Council - Submitted Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 consultation

Our reference:
DIO 10065429

Mobile:

E-mail:

Forward Planning
Swindon Borough Council
5th Floor Wat Tyler West
Beckhampton Street
Swindon
SN1 2JG

6th February 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is understood that Swindon Borough Council are undertaking a Regulation 15 consultation regarding the proposed Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2.

The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 sets out the vision for the future of the area and a number of planning policies which, if made by Swindon Borough Council, will form part of the Development Plan.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Safeguarding Team represents the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as a statutory consultee in the UK planning system to ensure designated zones around key operational defence sites such as aerodromes, explosives storage sites, air weapon ranges, and technical sites are not adversely affected by development outside the MOD estate**. For clarity, this response relates to MOD Safeguarding concerns only and should be read in conjunction with any other submissions that might be provided by other MOD sites or departments.**

Paragraph 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) requires that planning policies and decisions take into account defence requirements by '*ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.*' Statutory consultation of the MOD occurs as a result of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives

storage areas) Direction 2002 (DfT/ODPM Circular 01/2003) and the location data and criteria set out on safeguarding maps issued to Local Planning Authorities by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in accordance with the provisions of that Direction.

Copies of these relevant plans, in both GIS shapefile and .pdf format are issued to Local Planning Authorities by MHCLG. An assurance review was conducted by the MOD in 2023 which confirmed that, at that time, Local Planning Authorities held the most recent relevant safeguarding data. Any subsequent updates to those plans were then issued by MHCLG. If there is a requirement for replacement data, a request can be made through the above email address.

The review, or drafting, of planning policy provides an opportunity to guide developers and to make them aware of constraints that might be applied to a given development as a result of the requirement to ensure defence capability and operations are not adversely affected by that development.

The area covered by the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 will both contain and be washed over by safeguarding zones that are designated to preserve the operation and capability of defence assets and sites including RAF Brize Norton and RAF Fairford.

To illustrate the various issues that might be fundamental to MOD assessments, a brief summary of safeguarding zone types is provided below. Depending on the statutory safeguarding zone within which a site allocation or proposed development falls, different considerations will apply.

The airspace above and surrounding aerodromes is safeguarded to ensure that development does not form a physical obstruction to the safe operation of aircraft using that aerodrome.
The height, massing, and location of development relative to safeguarded aerodromes are factors of particular concern.

Birdstrike safeguarding zones with a radius of 12.87km are designated around certain military aerodromes and marked on safeguarding maps with a heavy dotted line. Aircraft within these zones are most likely to be approaching or departing aerodromes and would be at critical stages of flight. Within these statutory consultation zones the creation or enhancement of environments attractive to those large and flocking bird species that pose a hazard to aviation safety can have a significant effect. This can include:

- the landscaping schemes associated with developments including the provision of green/brown roofs, or roof gardens and/or

- the creation of new waterbodies such as reservoirs, wetlands, ponds and/or attenuation basins and other elements associated with sustainable drainage systems.

With regard to the Regulation 15 consultation document, the MOD have the following comments:

Policy 12: Biodiversity and nature recovery

The MOD request that; when drafting policy and guidance which addresses biodiversity, ecology, and Biodiversity Net Gain; Swindon Borough Council bear in mind that some forms of environmental improvement or enhancement may not be compatible with aviation safety.

Enhancements that require or result in the introduction of tall structures (whether temporarily or permanently), or where plants or trees are planted may degrade aviation safety, either by introducing physical obstacles to aircraft, or by degrading or compromising the operation and capability of safeguarded technical assets. Where enhancements include ground works that might result in open water (whether temporarily or permanently), the introduction or plant/tree species that bear berries or fruit, or the introduction of tree species that provide dense canopy, and the enhanced site is within 12.87km of an MOD aerodrome, it is possible that bird strike risk can be introduced or exacerbated to the detriment of aviation safety. In summary, where off-site provision is to provide BNG, the locations of both the host development and any other site should both/all be assessed against statutory safeguarding zones and the MOD should be consulted where any element falls within the marked statutory safeguarding zone.

The Crane Furlong site allocated in the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 Regulation 15 document fall within the RAF Fairford statutory safeguarding zones. Development of or exceeding 91.4m in height above ground level and/or development that might result in the creation of attractant environments for large and flocking bird species hazardous to aviation, including the potential for an environment attractive to hazardous bird species to be formed temporarily will trigger statutory consultation requirement.

I trust this clearly explains our position on this update. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to consider these points further

Yours sincerely

DIO Assistant Safeguarding Manager

Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2

Comments from

First, I want to say that there is a policy missing with regard to being resilient to climate change. This issue needs another policy – Policy 13.

15. The Neighbourhood Plan 2 has set out policies to meet the requirement for sustainable development and this is illustrated in **Table 1**.

Table 1: How Neighbourhood Plan 2 applies the presumption in favour of sustainable development

Neighbourhood Plan 2 policy	Economic Objective	Social Objective	Environ-mental Objective
1: Housing provision and mix			
2: Development and rural settlement boundary			
3 Highworth Town Centre			
4: Tourism, attractions and visitor accommodation			
5: Blackworth employment area			
6: Community infrastructure/facilities			
7: Design			
8: Landscape and views			
9: Open Space			
10: Local Green Space			
11: Sustainable transport			
12: Biodiversity and nature recovery			

Add a new policy: 13. Climate Resilience (preparedness/adaptation)

Para 34.

Additional pressure arises from climate change. The Neighbourhood Plan 2 will not comment on the fabric of buildings and will leave matters of sustainable construction to the review of the Local Plan. Also, climate change has led to a breakdown in England's natural environment and the Neighbourhood Plan 2 will specifically address how it can play a part in nature recovery and resilience to climate impacts.

36. It is a place where everyone has the opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives, enjoying its rich cultural heritage and living in a safe, strong, supportive and inclusive community that will preserve the natural environment, improve biodiversity, contribute towards combatting climate change and preservation of open and green spaces for health and wellbeing. It is a sustainable community offering education, lifestyle, and work opportunities in a safe and attractive environment that meets the needs of local residents, businesses, visitors and nature. The Highworth Neighbourhood Area recognises the importance of a positive and proactive approach to sustainable economic growth. Highworth Town Council will work with local organisations to help exclude poverty and exclusion and environmental degradation.

Para 35

The Vision for 2036

[COMMENT]

This does not deal with the issue of adapting to climate change – and being resilient to its impacts. This needs to be included in a way that acknowledges that extreme impacts are predicted by science but unpredictable in nature, severity and timing.

Recent climate measurements indicate that the Paris goal of 1.5C is almost impossible to achieve. The global Carbon Budget runs out in 2029-2030. This unpredictability is underscored by recent studies that predict the AMOC (Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation) will collapse between 2025 and 2075, causing temperatures to plummet and render much of the UK's land infertile. Spells of extreme heat are also possible, bringing different risks. Even extreme weather events in other parts of the world known as 'breadbaskets' can affect us since we import 40% of our food. Scientists believe that in the next 10 years, there is a high likelihood of a 'multiple breadbasket failure', which would cause global food shortages which could lead to civil unrest. Unrest in other countries can cause migration pressures on UK too.

How do we respond?
In a word, 'resilience'. This means carrying out a climate risk assessment and ensuring infrastructure can cope with potential impacts. We need to ensure there is strong social cohesion and resilience in local supply chains for food, water and energy.

Please add paragraph below:

Highworth Town Council recognises that climate change brings risks to the population's health during extreme hot and cold periods, as well as supply chain risks affecting food, water and energy supplies. Consequently, Highworth needs to become resilient by identifying and taking measures to adapt to possible negative impacts as well as promoting community cohesion.

Para 36

Please add 2 additional points: suggested additions in red

- Meets the needs of those seeking a home;
- Maintains Highworth's separate identity from Swindon;
- Retains the hilltop status of Highworth;
- Preserves the key features of the open countryside and local landscapes;
- Supports, improves and enhances the local economy **and self-sufficiency**;
- Improves Highworth Town Centre and protects the Conservation Areas of Highworth, Sevenhampton and Hampton;
- ~~Provides~~ **Prioritises** safe and convenient routes for walkers and cyclists;
- Ensures new infrastructure can sustain the expected increase in population;
- Protect all local heritage assets
- **Improves Highworth's resilience to climate impacts and associated societal stresses.**
- **Supports community cohesion**

37 Table 2 Please add suggested additions in red

Housing

- Meet the strategic housing requirement of the Local Plan in a way that benefits the town.
- Provide a mix of housing to meet local need as evidenced at the time.
- Promote shared ownership schemes **and Council housing** as part of the affordable housing provision.

Economic Development

- Encourage sustainable business.
- Rejuvenate the Town Centre to create a lively, thriving and attractive focus for the town.
- Promote and develop the tourism industry and visitor facilities within Highworth.
- Support and encourage existing businesses including home-working, while attracting new companies into the area.
- **Increase resilience to climate change through local food production, water security and renewable energy production**

Transport

- **Promote traffic and road solutions that meets current needs and plans for the future.**
- **Promote sustainable transport so that Highworth is a town in which people can choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.**
- **Protect and extend the Public Rights of Way and off-road cycle routes to promote informal recreation and access to the countryside, sustainable travel and tourism.**

Arts and Culture

- **Protect community buildings, resist the loss of community facilities and extend and improve facilities where possible.**
- **Use development contributions to fund community projects and infrastructure.**
- **Protect buildings and features of local historic interest to preserve the rich and unique cultural heritage of Highworth.**

Environment

- **Promote good design in the built environment.**
- **Protect open space, sport and recreation facilities**
- **Designate Local Green Spaces.**
- **Promote biodiversity and protect and preserve local wildlife sites.**
- **Ensure Net Zero legal targets are met through carbon removal**

Para 80

Table 6.

[Comment] I strongly support this as described - a one-way high street with pedestrian priority, wider pavements and more cafes. The North side of the street offers sunny positions for outdoor chairs.

Policy 3

A. [Comment] While class E should be supported, a balance is required. Currently, Café's are well attended and more are needed, while there are a lot of estate agents which are poorly attended and don't contribute to footfall.

Policy 5 Please add suggested additions in red

In all cases, due regard must be given to the job creation capability of the activity, the choice of sustainable transport modes for employees to get to work (walking, cycling and public transport), contribution to sustainability and Net Zero targets, and the operational car parking and the servicing of the unit.

Para 99

Table 9, Community Infrastructure levy Please add suggested additions in red

- Works relating to the regeneration of Highworth Town Centre
- Extension of Highworth Cemetery to provide additional burial spaces/plots
- Environmental improvements to Swindon Street, Highworth
- Environmental Improvements to Gilbert's Lane, Highworth
- Provision of cycle facilities and network improvements and connection with Swindon
- Improvements to, and provision of Children's play areas
- Improvements to, and provision of other open spaces
- Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points
- Provision of additional benches

Policy 6

Add a paragraph F

F Proposals that offer enhanced resilience to the impacts of climate change will be supported.

Policy 7 Please add suggested additions in red

Design

A. All planning applications will be prepared in accordance with the Highworth Design Guidance and Codes.
B. In Conservation Areas the respective Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be an important point of reference in design assessments.
C. Boundary wall treatments are to preserve existing stone boundaries, and extend and reflect this local feature.
D. The local building materials of stone and red brick are the preferred main elevation materials, particularly development which is prominent in the street scene and public realm.
E. New landmark native trees, should be incorporated into the soft landscaping scheme of any development proposal with consideration to future changes in climate.
F. Development should be designed to integrate with the existing neighbourhood and work with the character and appearance of existing buildings and the surrounding area.
G. Major development proposals will be expected to undertake design review by means of referral to the Swindon Design Review Panel and the published Planning Protocol of Highworth Town Council.
H. All development should aim to maximise the energy efficiency of a building's performance, harvest rainwater effectively and efficiently and utilise renewable energy technologies to meet legal Net Zero targets.

Policy 9 Open spaces

[Comment:] I support the retention of the Old Golf Course for public Open Space and Local Green space. The value to the community of such a facility is huge in terms of public physical and mental health. This translates in real cash terms as a reduction in NHS costs. It is a general well-being benefit to the whole community, and a positive contribution to nature and climate, protecting our world for the future of our children. In such terms, open space like this is priceless.

Policy 11

Sustainable Transport Please add suggested additions in red

122. With a few exceptions, roads in Highworth are equipped with pavements. A number of footpaths also provide onward pedestrian connections from the backs of cul-de-sac developments, but due to their meandering layouts and the hilly topography, they are not easily navigable and suffer from insufficient wayfinding **and encroachment by gardens**. In addition, the A361 is a major obstacle to pedestrian mobility due to heavy and fast-moving traffic, the narrowness of the pavements, and the infrequency of pedestrian crossings.
123. Beyond the built-up areas, a number of public rights of way (PRoW) connect the town to neighbouring settlements and Swindon through the countryside, especially to the west and the south **but not the East.** Highworth does not have any cycleways, but Highworth Town Council is working on a number of measures, including potential cycle routes, to encourage cycling among residents

Figure 17.

[Comment] The map quality is low and the rights of way are illegible. This means that rights of way can be contested.

Policy 11

Sustainable transport Please make suggested changes in red and highlighted in yellow

A. Development will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the network of existing public rights of way in the Neighbourhood Plan Area shown in Figures ~~16~~ 15 to 19.

B. Existing patterns of connectivity and permeability offered by networks of pedestrian paths through residential developments as highlighted in Figure 16 will be protected and extended in new residential schemes and encroachment from gardens resisted.

D. Proposals that improve the existing and proposed walking and cycling network improvements identified in Figures ~~16~~ 15-19 will be supported. Such improvements will be provided by housing and commercial development where they will give rise to increased use of the network.

E. Links to the walking and cycling network improvements identified in Figures ~~16~~15-19 will be provided by major housing and commercial schemes where the development will give rise to increased use of the network.

Figure 20

And Appendix 8 Please adapt the map as indicated in my comment in blue below

[Comment] The nature recovery area shown only covers half of the field to the East of Roundhills Mead. It should be extended west to meet Roundhills Mead and bounded by the historic hedge to the North – see hatched area below. This entire field is categorised in the Agri-Environmental Stewardship Scheme as 'Organic Entry Level Plus Higher Level', and is part of the designated 'Wood Pasture Parkland Expansion Zone'.

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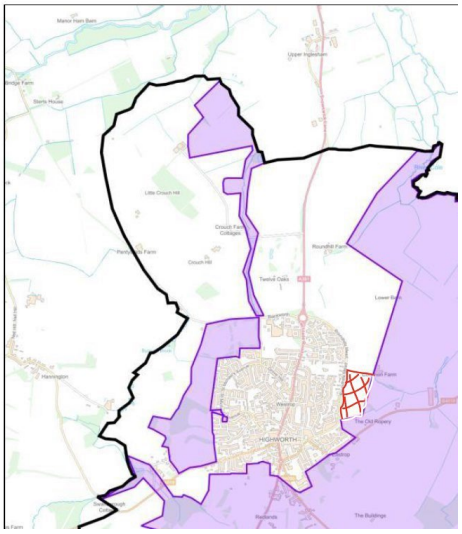
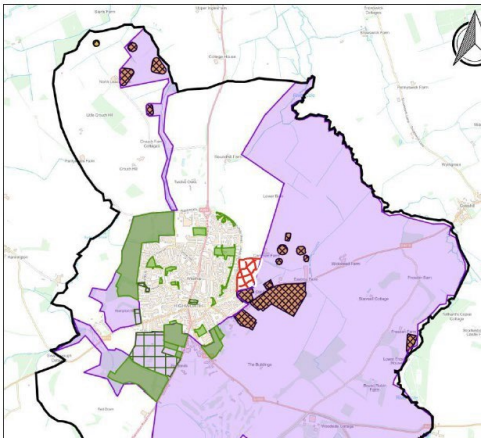
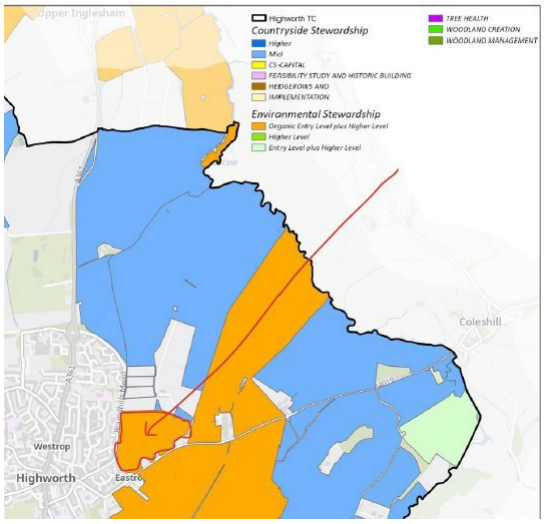
Figure 20: Nature recovery priority areas



Appendix 8: Local nature recovery base maps fo
Neighbourhood Area Map showing nature recov
Open Spaces, Local Green Spaces and Scheduled



Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 (March 2024)



Policy 13

[Comment] The vision and the 12 policies do not deal with the issue of adapting to climate change – and being resilient to its impacts. This needs to be included in a way that acknowledges that extreme impacts are predicted by science but unpredictable in nature, severity and timing.

[As discussed above, I repeat the rationale here]
Recent climate measurements indicate that the Paris goal of 1.5C is almost impossible to achieve. The global Carbon Budget runs out in 2029-2030. This unpredictability is underscored by recent studies that predict the AMOC (Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation) will collapse between 2025 and 2075, causing temperatures to plummet and render much of the UK's land infertile. Spells of extreme heat are also possible, bringing different risks. Even extreme weather events in other parts of the world known as 'breadbaskets' can affect us since we import 40% of our food. Scientists believe that in the next 10 years, there is a high likelihood of a 'multiple breadbasket failure', which would cause global food shortages which could lead to civil unrest. Unrest in other countries can cause migration pressures on UK too.

How do we respond?
In a word, 'resilience'. This means carrying out a climate risk assessment and ensuring infrastructure can cope with potential impacts. We need to ensure there is strong social cohesion and resilience in local supply chains for food, water and energy.

Please add paragraph below:

Highworth Town Council recognises that climate change brings risks to the population's health during extreme hot and cold periods, as well as supply chain risks affecting food, water and energy supplies. Consequently, Highworth needs to become resilient by identifying and taking measures to adapt to possible negative impacts as well as promoting community cohesion.

Policy 13:

Highworth Town Council recognises that climate change brings risks to the population's health during extreme hot and cold periods, as well as supply chain risks affecting food, water and energy supplies. Consequently, Highworth needs to become resilient by identifying and taking measures to adapt to possible negative impacts as well as promoting community cohesion.

HIGHWORTH NEIGHBOURGOOD PLAN 2 2021 - 2036
REPRESENTATION ON REGULATION 16 CONSULTATION DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

This representation is duly made as a local resident of Highworth, having lived and worked in the town for nearly 25 years. The comments made relate to certain policy only.

The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 makes reference to the NPPF in a number of places. This is based on the version published in September 2023 and not December 2024, and so the paragraph numbers need to be updated.

A number of changes to the wording of the policy is suggested. The amended wording is duly underlined.

Due regard has been given to the advice in the NPPF (Paragraph 16). The changes made to the wording of the policy has sought to make sure they it is clearly written and unambiguous.

The representation complements that submitted in January 2025.

POLICY 6: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECT,

SUBJECT TO AN IDENTIFIED CHANGE

The provisions of Swindon Local Plan Policy IN1 (Infrastructure Provision) refers to the cost of new infrastructure made necessary by the development being met and the impact of development on existing infrastructure being mitigated. This is subject to the economic viability of the proposed development.

The supporting text to the policy refers to three forms of infrastructure provision being strategic, local and site-specific respectively (Paragraph 4.217). In respect of Local Infrastructure, the Swindon Local Plan states that this:-

"……can be delivered in a variety of ways including on-site delivery integral to larger scale developments and through off-site investment in existing infrastructure within the vicinity of the development to mitigate the cumulative impact of development. These infrastructure items are identified through relevant evidence-based documents".

The supporting text to the policy also sets out a (inexhaustive) list of infrastructure items that are covered by Local Plan Policy IN1 (Paragraph 4.218). This includes "Community, Faith and Neighbourhood Facilities".

The Borough Council's Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (December 2024) states that, for the period April 2023 to March 2024, the total amount of money received from planning

obligations was £2,189,167.78. An indication of where this money has been spent is not given in the statement.

The NPPF (Section 4) considers the decision-making process, including providing specific advice on the use of planning obligations (Paragraph 58). In this regard, a planning obligation can be used if they meet the following tests:-

- It is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- It is directly related to the development; and
- It is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The NPPF also provides specific advice on the viability of a proposed development (Paragraph 59). It indicates that the submission of a Viability Assessment, by the Applicant in support of a planning application, must meet the following tests:-

- It must is based on up-to-date evidence and outlines any change in site circumstances that warrant the decision maker to give it appropriate weight; and
- It should reflect the recommended approach in national planning practice guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available.

In attending many Planning Committees at the offices of Highworth Town Council, it is clear that The Town Councillors understand the planning obligation process. The usual cause for concern raised by them relates to Swindon Borough Council and their unwillingness to word the legal agreement in such a way that the financial contribution is spent at a particular place (locally), rather than within the Borough as a whole, and this is despite the money being requested (by an internal consultee, e.g. the SBC Highway Officer) to overcome an objection to make the proposed development acceptable in planning and related terms. In order for the community to benefit from the financial contribution, it is imperative that it is "ring fenced" (protected) for its intended purposes otherwise the Borough Council will spend the money on another project within its administrative area.

The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, at Table 9, identifies a number of community infrastructure priorities that are seen as being provided by a developer (Applicant) through a financial contribution. This expectation and requirement are not recognised within the wording of HNP2 Policy 6, and so either an additional criterion (F) or a penultimate paragraph should be added to the policy confirm the Town Council's position on financial contributions provided for all housing sites located within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. In this regard, the following wording is suggested:-

Highworth Town Council, in receipt of a financial contribution provided through the mechanism of a planning obligation attached to a planning permission for housing development, will require it to be "ring fenced" to ensure it is protected for its intended purposes. The triggers contained in the planning obligation will be monitored to ensure that the infrastructure is provided within the specified timescales, and reviewed as part of assessing the effectiveness and delivery of Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2.

cc. Highworth Town Council

Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2
January 2025

Response from

This document makes comments mainly on the proposed housing development site

known as Crane Furlong

The Crane Furlong site

This site was carried forward from the proposal in HNP1. At that time, it was outside the settlement boundary. The information below is from the public consultation document. It includes the playing field area to the east of the site. This is the proposal that was put to the public for comments.

Crane Furlong Site

Site description: 2.3 Ha; 69 Houses at 30 dwellings per Ha

- Access: from Lechlade Road
- Current use: Recreational and Agricultural/grazing
- Outside current Settlement Boundary
- Part of site to be improved for recreational use

HPN1 stated that:

The Crane Furlong site "... allows for most of Highworth's share of development under the Local Plan to be met in its entirety, and at the same time it would help to alleviate the traffic problems, particularly on Grove Hill, as foreseen in the Plan."

(Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, 9th December 2014)

The ‘Crane Furlong’ site was considered because a) it would supply most of the housing needed at the time and b), because of a Lechlade Road access, would not impact on Grove Hill traffic problems.

Residents were consulted on the basis that it would be developed in conjunction with the neighbouring field (owned by SBC and leased to HBC), allowing access to Lechlade Road. That is no longer the position.

Furthermore, because of the several hundred houses that have been built since the Crane Furong site was proposed, or are planned to be built in Highworth, this site is no longer needed to meet Highworth’s share of development under the Local Plan.

Whole site versus **just the western section of the site**

As soon as the eastern part of this site became unavailable (after the HTC decision not to release its lease), both these reasons for inclusion (the number of houses and the traffic access on to Lechlade Road) became negated. Because of this, the site should not have been simply ‘carried forward’ into HNP2.

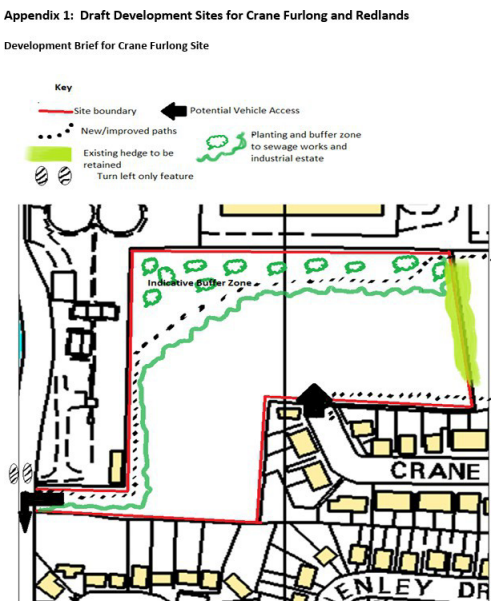
The remaining, western, part of the site would now only supply a fraction of Highworth’s housing requirement at the time, not the whole of it as was stated above and, because traffic would now flow onto Grove Hill, the traffic conditions there would become exacerbated rather than alleviated.

As well as traffic on Grove Hill, the new, reduced site is also different in terms of these factors:

- access
- proportion of land left available to screen the site from the sewage works and the factories
- number of houses
- overlooking of near neighbours
- degradation of the amenity value of Pentylands Lane and Pentylands Country Park
- vehicle and pedestrian routes to the Town Centre and other facilities

These two schemes (the whole site as against just the western section) are therefore quite different proposals with very significant drawbacks to the reduced scheme. Residents and planners would have responded quite differently to this scheme had it been proposed to them.

The proposed Pentylands Lane access to the site



The diagram on the left is the one which went for later public consultation. Notice the much-reduced green buffer zone and the removal of the footpath on the final diagram on the right

The proposal is for vehicle access on to Pentylands Lane/and or Crane Furlong.

The arrows on the diagram are confusing. Most residents I have spoken to have assumed they indicate a bizarre one-way system through the estate.

Pentylands Lane carriageway at the point of access is only 3m wide – narrow even for a single-track road. It is bounded on the far side by a stream in a deep cutting. The Lane would need radical remodelling and widening, including the culverting of the stream for a distance of at least 40metres. The damage to the ecology of the stream, its banks, flora and fauna, would be considerable.

It would have sight-line and splay problems at the access point into and out of the development.

The plan expects drivers to obey a 'Left turn only' exit from the site, on to Pentylands Lane. This is fanciful. A similar requirement for vehicles exiting Fitzgerold Avenue on to the Lane is frequently ignored by drivers on their way to Aldi along Pentylands Lane.

Drivers regularly flout this no left turn sign on their way to Aldi. Similarly, drivers exiting on to the Lane from the new site would ignore a left turn only sign.

Indeed, one might ask why they should, when by turning left from Fitzgerold Avenue, there is a direct route to Aldi along the Lane taking about 1 minute, rather than turning right and following convoluted route involving eight road junctions, a steep hill and a roundabout.

SBC opinion on Pentylands Lane access to the site

Alison Curtis, Senior Transport Development Management Engineer for SBC, in an email to Tom Buxton, Principle Planner to SBC, has recommended that the **application be refused** because:

"The proposal has failed to demonstrate safe and suitable access for all and has failed to adequately assess the impact of theproposal on the local road network therefore is contrary to policies TR1 and TR2 of Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026."

(see details in email in Appendix)

Public opinion and Pentylands Lane

At the time of the planning enquiry into what is now Fitzgerold Avenue, twelve hundred Highworth residents signed a petition objecting to the proposals. A major reason for most of their objections was the degradation of Pentylands Lane because of its amenity value to the community – it is highly valued locally as a safe route into the countryside and the Country Park for hundreds of walkers, joggers, cyclists, children and dog walkers every week.

The development of the Crane Furlong site would further damage this important community asset. Many people in Highworth would welcome Pentylands Lane being closed to vehicles except for essential access.

Pentylands Lane near the proposed exit from the site. A 3m wide, single-track road.

Pentylands Lane is the most-used pedestrian and cycle access route into the countryside for Highworth residents.

The proposed Crane Furlong exit point

The shortest route from the proposed Crane Furlong exit point of the development to the Town Centre for pedestrians and vehicles is 1300 metres (GPS measured) and a little further for Warneford School.

However, the journey for vehicles from the Crane Furlong exit to the Town Centre involves a tortuous route with eight junctions, including the difficult and dangerous Grove Hill to Lechlade Road right turn.

For pedestrians leaving from a Crane Furlong exit, it is even worse. As well as negotiating the eight road crossings, young mothers with buggies and older and perhaps infirm residents, have to climb 40 metres in height (GPS measured) – the equivalent of 12 flights of stairs.

Climb from Crane Furlong to Town Centre (GPS measured)

Additionally, they have to pass the dangerous 'pinch-point' towards the top of Grove Hill which has a pavement width of less than one metre on one side of the road and no pavement on the other. The pavement itself slopes down toward the road and is difficult and dangerous for the disabled, wheelchairs, a parent walking hand in hand with a child, and parents with pushchairs. The road is too narrow to allow for two wide-bodied vehicles to pass - with its own inherent danger.

Pedestrians, pushchairs, the disabled and vehicles have to negotiate this dangerous point from Crane Furlong on to Grove Hill

Access to the town centre from the Crane Furlong site

Realistically, nearly all current residents of Crane Furlong drive to the Town Centre for shopping – as would residents of any new development here. This would obviously exacerbate the already-dire traffic and parking problems that Highworth now faces.

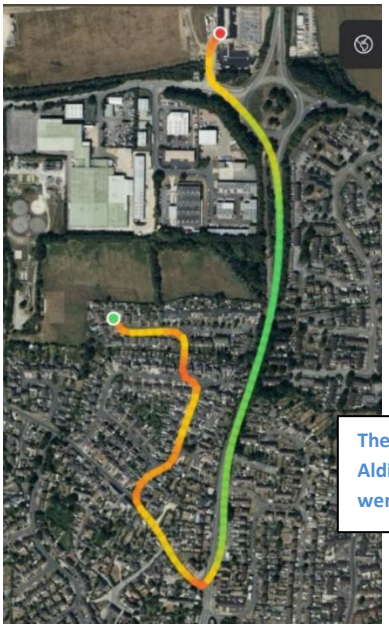
The walking route from this development site to the nearest community facilities of Westrop School, Tesco Metro, and GP Surgery also involves a steep walk uphill, and most residents from the bottom of the hill, particularly young families and older residents, choose to drive, as evidenced by the sometimes-chaotic competition for parking spaces at Newburgh Place, particularly at school run time.

These considerations alone make this site unsuitable for development.

Access for shoppers from the site to Aldi

Most shoppers to Aldi come by car because they have to carry heavy bags. The site is close to Aldi - the nearest point of being 350m as the crow lies. A reasonable new road access to Aldi from this site *via Lechlade Road* would be about 420m.

However, if vehicle access to the site exit is through Crane Furlong, without any new road access to Lechlade Road, Aldi is three times as far at 1.54km. This route has eight road junctions, and passes through the dangerous pinch point towards the top of Grove Hill. It also would have to negotiate the difficult junction of Grove Hill with Lechlade Road.



The vehicle route from the Crane Furlong exit to Aldi. 1.54km instead of 420m if a new road exit were made to Lechlade Road.

The route from a Pentylands Lane exit to Aldi would be similarly difficult for car journeys.

Access to schools

Travel to school should be a criterion when judging possible sites. This site, because of its lengthy, steep, tortuous and frankly dangerous routes to schools, will discourage walking to school, generate significant traffic on the school run for primary school pupils, and present a danger to Warneford students travelling to and from school by bike.

Cycling routes

Cycling and walking routes into town should be considered part of the site selection assessment criteria. Any hill-top town presents difficulties for cyclists. Cycling routes to the Town Centre from this site have not been considered

It is obvious to anyone who tries to cycle from Crane Furlong to Warneford School, Newburgh shops or the Town Centre, that it is difficult except for the very fittest. It is also dangerous because of the many road junctions to negotiate, and the steep downhill roads returning present a danger to children on their way back from school.

Highworth is a hill-top town!

For all that is said about the Town being on a hill top, the topology and the 'lie of the land' has been ‘conveniently’ ignored in this proposal. Level walking routes are not differentiated from steep routes, straight-line distances rather than GPS-measured routes are used, and complex, labyrinthine routes involving many junctions for cars, or road crossings for pedestrians, have not been properly considered.

Additionally, this site lies on flat land (except for a small, raised part at the end of Crane Furlong), and is outside and beyond the hill of Highworth. It has been a commitment that residential development should not be extended beyond the hill of Highworth. This proposed development conflicts with that requirement.

Blackworth industrial estate

The site is bordered to the north by ugly factories, considerably taller than a two-storey house. Residents of Crane Furlong and Pentylands Close tell of the noise during the day and throughout the night, the crashing of equipment being returned in the early hours of the morning and shouting and the use of bad language which is clearly audible from across the field. There is also all-night light pollution from the factories.

There are also plans to build more factories along the northern side of the Blackworth Industrial Estate service road. Potential noise nuisance from these should be taken into account.

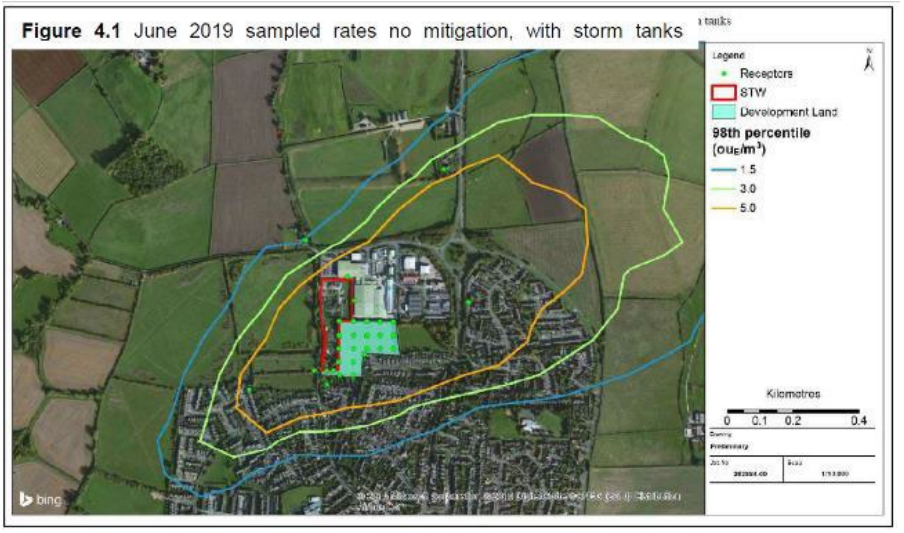
The road through Blackworth is unadopted and privately owned. It cannot be assumed that the owners would always continue to allow traffic through on to Pentylands Lane. Indeed, some years ago its junction with Pentylands Lane was bollarded off.

In my opinion, we should be ensuring there is a significantly wide, green buffer zone between Highworth's residential development and its industrial land. This field is its last remaining bulwark.

The Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works

The site is bordered to the west by the sewage treatment facility. This often gives rise to offensive smells.

On a visit by Adrian Jack (Senior Project Manager at Thames Water) and Paula Walker (Thames Water Customer Relations Coordinator), both commented on the noxious smells arising from the works. Mr Jack identified it as a 'rag' smell originating from the four open screens which remove solid, non-biodegradable waste from the incoming sewage (the circular structures visible on the map). Local residents know this is a common occurrence.



As these screens are to the west of the proposed development site, smells will be carried across any new housing on the prevailing westerly winds. (The recent upgrading project to the works will not improve things or prevent these unpleasant smells.)

Proposed planting and buffer zone

It is difficult to tell from the map exactly what this buffer zone will be. To screen against visual intrusion from the factories and sewage works, it would have to be of a very significant height (three storeys), probably on a mound, and quite deep front to back.

Any tree planting would take several decades to reach maturity and so would not protect the first residents from visual intrusion – a consideration for developers who wish to sell these houses.

Any buffer zone would not protect against the serious noise pollution from the factories nor odour pollution from the sewage works.

The planted buffer zone on the diagram extends along the north side of the proposed vehicular entrance/exit on to Pentylands Lane. This reduces the width available for road access to less than will be required for the road, the junction and splays.

The road exit onto Pentylands Lane appears to directly abut the rear boundaries of 8, 9 and 10 Pentylands Close without any pavement, verge or planting. Including such a pavement/verge would again reduce the width available for a road.

There is no planting/buffer between the development and the rear gardens of number 8 to 15 Pentylands Close. The effect of the development on these houses has not been considered anywhere in the plans.

HNP2 Appendix 1 states that *"There is a need to protect the privacy of dwellings which currently abut the site and proposed dwellings need to be set back from the boundary to achieve this".* It is important to see how this setting back can be achieved along the site's boundary with houses in Pentylands Close and in Crane Furlong. This requirement is not apparent in any development plans that have been produced.

Consideration of noise and light pollution

There is significant noise from CVR vehicle transport at Blackworth. A new storage facility for a scaffolding company has recently been opened on the old TS Tech site. Scaffolding materials are notoriously noisy when being lifted on and off vehicles.

There is significant all-night light pollution from these factory sites.

There is often noise from the Sewage Treatment Works, heavy lorry movements, pumps and loud maintenance work.

The ‘privacy zone’

The previous HNP included a ‘privacy zone’ extending along the north-facing properties of Crane Furlong. It is not clear why this is not carried forward into HNP2. It should also be in place for other adjoining properties in Crane Furlong and in Pentylands Close.

Area remaining for building

I note that there is no ‘green space’ planned for this proposed development. New residents here would already be disadvantaged because of the poor-quality location (sewage works, factories, poor access to town centre etc.). Why should Highworth residents here be judged second-class citizens without the same green environment as, say, those on the new Redlands/Backhouse development?

I estimate that 40% of the available area is taken up by

- the privacy zone
- the setting-back of the new houses and their gardens from those in Pentylands Close and Crane furlong
- existing hedgerows and buffer zone
- new planting
- new green space (est 0.27 hectares)
- parking.

On this site of 2.27 hectares, this would leave only 1.3 hectares available for dwellings and roadways. Using the SHLAA-assumed housing density for this site, this will not achieve the stated number of dwellings stated in the HNP proposal.

Professional view of land use of this site

This land has regularly been on offer for sale as potential development land since the 1990s, but has not yet found a developer willing to build. As mentioned below, the site has a previous planning refusal.

The Land Agent who had been acting for the landowners has written that the land *“ . . . is probably more suited to commercial use . . . In my view the land is 20 years away from being developed”.*

In more recent years, a number of opportunistic agents have looked at possibilities to promote development here, but decided that the likelihood of selling dwellings at this difficult site at a sufficient profit was improbable. This included Ainscough Strategic Land and Community Communications Partnership (CCP).

According to the Swindon Advertiser, promoting agents, acting for the owners, have even resorted to sharp practice tactics to induce developers to the site. (see Advertiser report below).

windonadvertiser @swindonadver Monday, July 1, 2019

Residents are said to be complaining about the smell from the sewage treatment works in Highworth Picture: DAVE COX

Something stinks - and it may not be the sewage works

MP accuses developer of scheme to boost land value near Highworth site

Daniel Angelini
danielangelini@newsquest.co.uk

COMPLAINTS about the smell from a Highworth sewage treatment plant came flooding in but things were not as they seemed.

The Community Communications Partnership sent more than 40 complaints to Thames Water and North Swindon MP Justin Tomlinson, which they had collected from people living near the Pentylands Lane plant.

They acted on behalf of developers Southern and Regional Developments, who hope to submit plans to build housing on a site near the plant.

However, something didn't seem quite right about this sudden surge in complaints and further investigation revealed a few surprises.

Mr Tomlinson said: "It would seem that this was simply a case of a developer seeking to bounce Thames Water into paying for additional works for which, if they brought forward a planning application, they should be responsible. This work would have pushed up their own land values but they would not have paid.

"I'm very disappointed at how they have gone about this. I have never seen a developer try to do this before and I will feed this to Swindon Borough Council if any plans are submitted."

A Thames Water spokesman said: "Highworth Sewage Works complies with all industry standards regarding odour and previously averaged one complaint every 18 months. We recently saw a one-day spike in customer comments regarding the site and we're investigating what may have led to this.

"We held a drop-in session last week and the handful of customers who attended confirmed they do not believe odour at the site to be a major problem and are happy with our efforts keep it to a minimum."

Mr Tomlinson added: "The CCP contacted me after I received all these letters of complaint in a short period of time, so I immediately contacted Thames Water. They kindly agreed to do a drop-in event and were somewhat surprised after having received hardly any complaints about the smell over the last five years.

"It soon became clear that these letters had been generated by the developers using somewhat questionable processes and these residents were surprised to see their names included and receive a drop-in invitation."

A CCP spokesman said: "We have liaised directly with Thames Water and their consultants and have identified a solution to the odour issues with regard to improvements to the works.

"However, Thames Water have advised that no such works will be timetabled as they do not acknowledge that they are causing a nuisance to residents."

Previous planning history

Planning history is an important consideration in the granting of any planning application. SBC has stated that the site has no relevant planning history. This is not so. This site has adverse planning history with a refusal in January 1993 for development (ref T92/1216). Even in this application, more than thirty years ago, the traffic issue on to St Michael's/Grove Hill was recognised, with only pedestrian/cycle access proposed from the site on to this road.

The examiner's report for HNP1 commented that it may transpire that the site is not developable even to the extent of 42 houses. (para 105). He says "I have some concerns that the site allocation process has not taken into account the deliverability and viability of the Crane Furlong site. This site has technical constraints, . . . from the adjacent sewage works, noise from the adjacent industrial site and other unresolved issues".

SBC Environment officer, speaking of the sites being considered for HNP1, said: "If I were to rank them, this site (Crane Furlong) would certainly be the one I would least like to be developed."

Public opinion

For HNP1, residents were asked to vote for or against a number of possible development sites. Taking the for/against balance, Crane Furlong was the least popular by far. Of the residents who commented directly or indirectly about the Crane Furlong site, over 100 objected; only 5 supported development here.

Suitable, available, developable

HNP2 claims that this site is suitable, available and developable.

This submission gives many detailed reasons why this site is not **suitable** for development.

Any landowner could claim that their land is **available** for development. In planning terms, availability should mean more than wishful thinking on the part of the owner.

Understandably, given its drawbacks, and after several decades of promotion by its owners, no developers have yet made offers for this land. For this reason, and others in this document, this land cannot be considered **developable**. Just by claiming it is so, does not necessarily make it so.

North/south imbalance in the Town

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, there have been waves of new building extending down the hill town from the town centre, further and further north towards Lechlade, and NE and NW, until it has reached the flat fields below the hill. This culminated in the Pentylands development at Fitzgerold Avenue– at the time the largest Highworth development for some decades.

There has been some redress of this north/south imbalance with new housing at Redlands and Shrivenham Road, but traffic problems are still compounded by the major proportion of the town being towards the north.

As the large majority of the population of Highworth lives north of the town centre. This significant imbalance causes many problems in the town including traffic, access to facilities and degradation of the town centre.

There is no merit or community benefit, in the building of even more development northwards on the flat fields below the hill, causing more urban sprawl there, especially when it is sandwiched between unsightly and noisy factories and a noxious sewage facility.

Traffic considerations

There are two main problems with traffic in the town.

The first is that, because Highworth's population lives largely to the north of the traffic light junction, most Highworth residents travel to work from the north of the town, southwards through the traffic light junction causing long traffic queues up the A361. They return northwards through the junction in the evening.

Traffic queuing south, up Lechlade Road for 700 metres, beyond the Grove hill junction, towards the town centre traffic lights.

The second is, because one-third of Highworth's population lives on the St Michael's/Grove Hill loop, the exits from this road on to the A361 are difficult and dangerous for the high volume of traffic.

At busy period it is nearly impossible to exit this loop onto Lechlade Road from the St Michael's Avenue exit opposite the church because of the constant line of vehicles waiting for the traffic lights. Most traffic tries to leave by the Grove Hill junction. This is a hill-start, turning right, crossing traffic on a main A-road, with a blind bend to the right, with fast vehicles speeding away north from the town centre. There have been accidents here but, thankfully, with no fatalities yet.

Any new planning applications for sites which adds to these two major difficulties should be refused on traffic considerations. The Crane Furlong site is on the north of the town and will create more traffic up Lechlade Road through the traffic light junction. Access on to Pentylands Close, or to Grove Hill, will additionally exacerbate the problems at the St Michael's/Grove Hill junctions with the A361.

Visual intrusion, views out and in, impact on hill-top setting, impact on neighbours

The Crane Furlong site would not be visible from viewpoints immediately north of it because it would be hidden behind the factories at Blackworth. Some may regard this as a good thing – others perhaps not. However, from the many high-standing houses of Henley Drive, Folly Drive and Folly Crescent, and from some points on these roads themselves, the development would cause serious visual intrusion, and affect views out of the town. For houses in Crane Furlong and Pentylands Close, the development would cause serious visual intrusion. Any new three-storey houses would have a clear view over the Sewage Treatment Works and the factories.

Summary

This proposal, on unsuitable land for housing bordered as it is by a sewage works and factories, was presented as enabling Highworth's housing quota to be met, and also not to add to the traffic on Grove Hill. Since the east section of the site was removed from the plan, neither of these 'advantages' remain. As this submission has shown, it also fails on nearly every other planning consideration.

Do we want to condemn future generations of Highworth residents to this low-grade site when more aspirational sites exist elsewhere in the town – sites where, with good design and sensitive landscaping, development will enhance the appearance of the town? For those of us who love Highworth and are proud to live here, we would like to offer something better to future residents.

I request that this site is now removed from the Neighbourhood Plan.

A further note:
I would like to personally thank all members of the HNP committee and the many other Highworth residents who have worked so hard in the difficult task of producing this new Neighbourhood Plan.

From – Highworth resident

As a resident of Highworth for over 30 years, I am writing to say that I very much support the following policies in Highworth's Neighbourhood Plan, currently out for consultation. Please ensure my comments and this document is put before the examiner.

1. **Policy 10, to designate the top northern section of Highworth's old golf course as Local Green Space.**
2. **Policy 9, to designate the bottom southern section as Open Space**
3. **Policy 8, to protect the Landscape and Views**

For me

I walk on the old golf course most days, appreciating nature, getting my daily exercise and meeting the many walkers and friends that also love this wonderful open green space. During winter months when the lower southern section becomes waterlogged, I (and others) just walk the top northern section.

For me, the peaceful surroundings of the old golf course are a great contrast to the hustle and bustle of walking the busy streets of Highworth and demands of my everyday life. It is somewhere special where I can just get away from it all.

I have watched hares running from the threat of buzzards flying above. I have watched deer as they nervously step out from the undergrowth onto the old golf course to graze. Every now and again, the local barn owls hunt across the open space. It really is one of the most uplifting things to see.

As a keen photographer I have taken some lovely photos of the beautiful views looking away from the old golf course and the scenery and nature within. The changing seasons, weather and open spaces also make many of my walks and photos very unique. Most of this will be lost forever if we allow the top section to be destroyed. This is the section that provides those glorious views looking out.

When it snows, I enjoy watching children making snowmen and in summer months, playing on the old greens and areas mowed by the local town council. All year-round people travel to Highworth from neighbouring towns and villages to walk the old golf course, and they do so, because this really is a special place.

With the top section under the threat of housing by the local Borough Council, selling this green space today for reason of financial gain would be extremely short sighted and a total betrayal for the generations of people that live in Highworth, and have benefitted from this open space.

Please let us not be the generation that gives up on this wonderful green space, that has been rightly protected for so long. The old golf course is an extremely special place for so

many people that needs the protection that local green space will give.is also considered by some as Highworth's area of outstanding natural beauty.

For residents and visitors

People have lived in the ancient hill top town of Highworth for over 7000 years, and all throughout that time, have enjoyed the most fantastic views from this open green space, across to the Wessex Downs.

Today, people come and sit on the benches across the top section to admire these lovely views, take in the countryside, nature and fresh air and to contemplate. This is just the best place for people's mental health and well-being. It is also considered by some as Highworth's area of outstanding natural beauty.

The top section is also the most easily accessible from the town centre, with the walk across the top being flat and suitable for those less fit and unable to walk up and down hills. The top section is also suitable and is used by wheelchair users. If the area covered by Policy 10 is used for housing, those same people will be excluded from walking or using the bottom southern section. Are we to be the generation that will be responsible for not protecting this land, losing these views and this special place forever?

With Highworth Town Council, residents have developed a business plan to make the whole site a Nature Park, to include a nature themed café and education centre, nature trails, wetland area with boardwalks, children play area, picnic areas, wild flower meadows, plus an area to be used as a natural burial ground. The 3 ponds on the lower southern section will be cleaned to encourage wildlife where schoolchildren will be able to go pond dipping. This is the aspiration of many residents and visitors to this site.

[redacted]

HOW MANY PEOPLE USE OUR OLD GOLF COURSE

Have you ever wondered how many people walk our old golf course each day, 50, 100, 200?

As an Action group we always knew that hundreds walked it every day, but we have never had the actual evidence to prove this. So last Friday and Saturday, Action Group members and volunteers were on the OGC between the hours of 7am and 7pm, counting people as they walked on.

We did not advertise that we were doing a survey, other than the usual photos posted showing the OGC in all its glory.

This old golf shop building was fully manned all of the time on both days. We recorded 434 people walking onto the OGC on Friday and 514 on Saturday.

Unfortunately, we did not have enough volunteers to cover the Roman Way and allotment entrances all of the time, so the actual number is higher than this.

I think more than anything, the most pleasing thing to see are the large number of people that come here, all having the same love and appreciation for this place as me. It truly is wonderful.

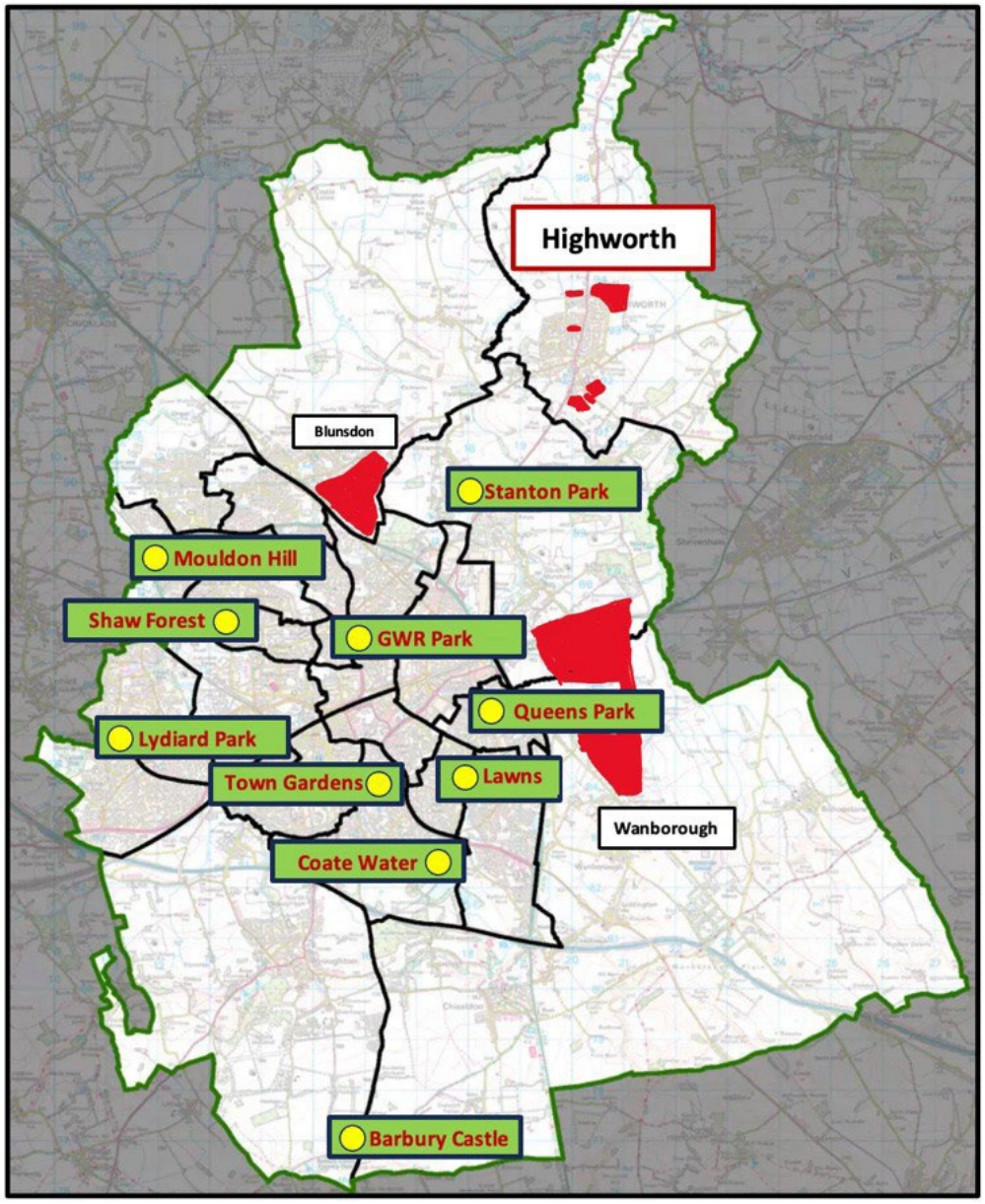
Local people are extremely passionate about this land and have been fighting for it to be saved from development since when SBC allowed the golf course to be closed in 2019.

Population growth and the case to keep this Local Green Space

According to the ONS, Swindon is already amongst the top 45% most densely populated local authority areas in the country. Current housing targets will push this figure even higher.

Taken from the SBC website, the Borough has 10 major nature parks (shown below) within or on the edge of Swindon: none are in Highworth despite Highworth being one of the Borough's largest towns/parishes.

Despite significant population growth over the last 20 years, the Borough has had no new park provision since 2007 (Mouldon Hill)



The Planned SBC large northern and eastern housing developments are shown in red.

The large growth in housing is focused within the Borough's East, North East and North sectors, such as Highworth, Blunsdon, Eastern Villages, Kingsdown and more. There is already a shortage of parkland in these areas compared to other parts of Swindon. This, therefore, is where the greatest amount of parkland will be needed in coming years.

Since 2007, our green space simply has not been keeping up with our significant population growth

SBC - Number of parks by population - 1894 to 2044

	1894	1904	1914	1924	1934	1944	1954	1964	1974	1984	1994	2004	2014	2024	2034	2044
Date park opened	Town Gardens 1894		Coate Water 1914	GWR Park 1925		Lydiard Park 1945 Lawn 1946	Queens Park 1950		Barbury Castle 1971		Stanton Park 1996	Shaw Forest 2004 Mouldon Hill 2007?				
SBC Population (apprx)	33000		50000	57000		71000	76000		117000		148000	159000		233000	283000	302000
Residents per park	33000		25000	19000		14200	12600		16700		18500	15900		23300	28300	30200

- The Borough's population has increased by approximately **70,000** since the last new park was provided.

- By 2034, the population will have increased by **124,000** since the last new park was provided.

- Highworth's Old Golf Course is **ideally located** in the north of the Borough, where much of the planned future growth will occur. It is land originally obtained by Highworth Rural District Council in the 1970s (see below), with ownership passed to SBC when Highworth Rural District Council was disbanded soon after the land was obtained.

- A recent survey showed that at least 434 people walked onto the old golf course land on a week day and over 514 on a weekend day, so it is a very popular place to walk. Take this green space away and these people will either need to get in their car and drive to a park, or walk the narrow and busy streets of Highworth. Highworth residents deserve better.

- Highworth Town Council have developed a business plan to turn the old golf course land into a Nature Park, along with other leisure and recreation ideas that will protect this land from development. This is currently under review by SBC @ February 2025. The business plan also offers a solution to the expected shortage of country parks across Swindon Borough.

The following section describes the history of the land and highlights how SBC have been trying for some years to take this land from the residents of Highworth and visitors for housebuilding.

History of the land

The land was obtained through the council tax paid by Highworth Rural District Council (HRDC) residents in the 1970s, to be used both for leisure and recreation and to provide a buffer to protect the ancient hill top town setting of Highworth, to safeguard vistas to distant landscapes and local features.

On April 1 1974, the land was transferred to the newly created Thamesdown Borough Council, when HRDC and Swindon Borough Council were absorbed into Thamesdown Borough Council. Then in 1997, Thamesdown was renamed Swindon Borough Council (SBC). The land rights are now unfortunately with SBC.

On the transfer from HRDC to Thamesdown Council in 1974, the then Mayor of HRDC said – *'The amalgamation of the Highworth Rural District Council with the Borough of Swindon on April 1 1974 marks the end of negotiations over a period of three years - negotiations which have been conducted in a spirit of great goodwill.*

Nevertheless, folk in the rural district must have some feeling of nostalgia, if not of concern, at the passing of an authority, which, over a period of 80 years, has followed a policy of intimate personal relationship with the local Parish Councils and indeed with individuals; and this relationship has been recognised as of great value. Let us hope that the vastly bigger bureaucratic structure of Thamesdown will continue in this spirit!

The then Mayor then went on to say "*The villages must be safeguarded and the interest of the minority must not be unduly sacrificed to the demands of urban representatives and the insatiable compulsion of continuous development".* Full details can be seen in Appendix A.

1989

In February 1989 the layout of the golf course was submitted for planning permission (see Appendix B), which also indicated all existing rights of way through the area are to be preserved, along with new permissive routes to be formed, allowing public access throughout most of the area. These have been walked every day since the course opened. The plan also clearly marked conservation areas. It was proposed that construction would commence in April or May 1989.

In March 1989, Thamesdown Council wrote to a Highworth resident, which stated that the golf course was being built, not just for golfers, but for walkers and nature lovers (see Appendix C).

1990

The golf course was eventually built in the 1990s and was run by SBC, through until 2014.

2013 / 2014

In July 2013, SBC Cabinet authorised work to find organisations to lease Highworth Golf Course (along with Broome Manor) on a long lease, with one of the important factors being to secure a sustainable long-term solution for these facilities. See 3.28 of this document

At that time, financial information was provided to potential bidders, showing that the Highworth site was running at a loss. 2013/14 figures showed that expenditure was £162k and income £128k. This did not prevent Twigmarket from bidding for the site.

Golf Courses	Full Year Actual Expenditure 13 14	Full Year Actual Income 13 14	Net (Cost) / Surplus 13/14
Broome Manor Golf	(706,426)	766,616	60,190
Broome Manor Catering	(322,631)	252,473	(70,158)
Highworth Golf	(162,040)	128,305	(33,735)
Moredon Golf	(38,055)	23,559	(14,496)
	(1,229,152)	**1,170,953**	**(58,199)**

The full report can be seen via this link - Here

neet Section 123 best value consideration for the proposed transfer of the site. The very same criteria are being used in 2024, as a reason not to award a lease to Highworth Town Council (HTC)? This is inconsistent use of Section 123 by SBC, used by Officers as the argument to sell the site for housing.

See section 5.13 of this document, which confirms 'best value consideration' was met in 2014.

Lease awarded

In July 2014 Swindon Borough Council awarded Twigmarket a 25-year lease to run Highworth golf course. The lease had a 15 year stay open clause.

Under the terms of the lease, Twigmarket would pay SBC £1000 rent per month for the duration of the contract (with increases to this based on turnover).

This agreement was conditional on Twigmarket taking on both the Broome Manor and Highworth sites (Broome Manor site has a longer lease of 75 years).

As mentioned above, the decision to lease the site to Twigmarket for 25 years **met** the Section 123 requirement to achieve best consideration for the disposal of this asset. The Stay open clause would also see the course remain open until at least 2029.

2017 / 2018

The small pitch and putt course was closed by Twigmarket.

2019

In 2019 Twigmarket closed the main course and advised SBC that, 'The level of loss from operating the golf course was not sustainable'. This information was obtained through freedom of information request FOI007853. The surrender was dealt with by property assets and confirmed by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence on 18/11/2019. The surrender was completed W/C 16th August 2020.

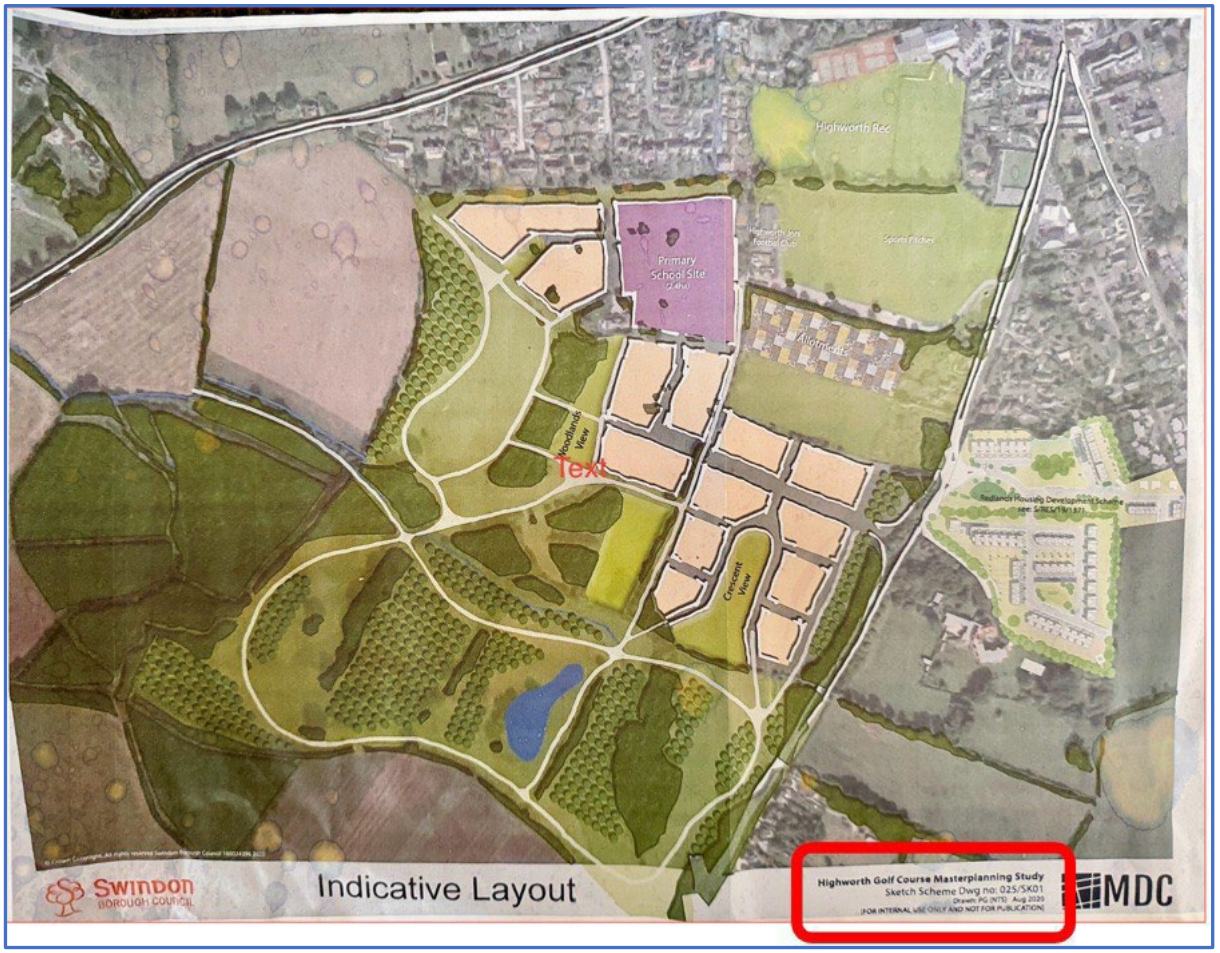
SBC has advised that under the lease surrender, Twigmarket paid a premium to the Council and are continuing to pay the rent on the golf course up to the expiry of the keep open date'.

2020

In March 2020, a report was submitted to the Cabinet meeting, in relation to Highworth golf course, where the Council has agreed to take a surrender of the lease as a result of poor trading conditions experienced by Twigmarket over a number of years (Please bear in mind it was loss making when Twigmarket took on the lease in 2014). In the report it said that the Council has had discussions with Highworth Town Council (not correct) and is considering options for the future of the site which will have been worked up by late Spring.

At some point **prior to August 2020**, SBC asked a company called MDC to produce indicative plans for building 350 houses on the old golf course. The drawings were presented during the SBC Local Plan consultation period between 29th July 2021 and 16th September 2021. The drawings were clearly dated August 2020 (highlighted below) and were part of LA34 (Land at Highworth Golf Club). The indicative plan was marked for internal use only and not for publication, but were on display at the above consultation.

Image on next page.



On the 17th August 2020, HTC wrote to Rob Richards, (Head of Property Assets at SBC), requesting that HTC take over part of this land for the recreational use of Highworth. A response was received on the same day, advising that SBC were considering future options for the land and that interest is noted.

On the 7th March 2021, HTC wrote again to Rob Richards to ask for an update on the request made by HTC 6 months prior. A response was received to say "The Council is still reviewing options in regard to the former golf course site and I can confirm that no more is required from the Town Council at this stage".

It would seem that SBC Officers had been thinking for some time that the land could be used for housing. Even more recently, they wrote to HTC to advise that they will be contesting HTCs LGS application for the northern section of the old golf course.

77	**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:** The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee Councillor J Murphy reported that the NHP2 meets the legal requirements and will proceed to Regulation 16, this process involves a 6 week consultation with the public before it proceeds to the examination stage. SBC reported they will be objecting to the Local Green Space designation on the Old Golf Course.

SBC Councillors and our MPs desire to hand over the OGC for a peppercorn rent

Prior to the SBC elections in May 2023, the Action Group for Saving Highworth's Old Golf Course were approached by Labour Councillors, who said they would like to find a way of transferring the land across to HTC, on a 99-year lease at a peppercorn rent of £1 per year.

[redacted]

Will Stone has since been elected as Swindon North MP.

Message was sent

[redacted]

This was produced and circulated in August 2023.

Please bear in mind that Officers had advised Councillors in 2014 that a 25-year lease at £1000 per month **met** the Section 123 best-value criteria mentioned above and would protect the land long term.

Following the Borough Council Election in 2023, Councillors were then informed by Officers that the transfer of the land for £1 would not meet the best-value considerations that the Council has to take under section 123 of the Local Government Act (please see the below SBC FB post).

Yet when HTC made enquiries about the land in 2019/20, Officers did not advise Councillors that a long lease to HTC for £1000 per month would meet that very same criterion, which would suggest that 2019 (when they allowed Twigmarket to hand back the lease) was the time when SBC Officers first had plans afoot to sell the land for housing.

HTC were not given the opportunity to discuss this with SBC, as any discussion with HTC was shut down by Officers.

It also seems some kind of punishment that the original 350 house proposal in 2021 has been replaced by option 2, 400 houses.

Highworth residents have been treated appallingly by SBC regarding this matter.

The following is taken from the SBC Facebook site, dated 12th July 2024.

Swindon Borough Council's post

Swindon Borough Council
12 July 2024 ·

Here's an update on the current situation regarding the site of the former pitch and putt golf course in Highworth.

The golf course, previously run by a third party operator on Borough Council-owned land, closed in December 2019.

A motion agreed at a Full Council meeting in October 2023 called for the land to be designated as the Borough's sixth country park. It requested that council officers work with Highworth Town Council to agree a long-term lease of £1 for the 102 acres of land to the south of Highworth, within 90 days.

But at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet next week (17 July) councillors will be advised that the transfer of the land for £1 is unlikely to meet the Council's obligation to achieve best value considerations under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It's important to make clear that no decision is being taken at next week's Cabinet meeting on the future use of the site.

A report tabled at the meeting advises that the site needs to be considered as part of the Council's wider Estates and Assets review.

It recommends that further detailed work be carried out on three specific proposals. These include:

🌳 Modifying the site to provide a country park setting

🏘️ A housing scheme with 400 residential units with 50 per cent affordable housing provision, with the remainder of the site modified to provide a country park setting

🏘️ A housing scheme of 700 residential units with 50 per cent affordable housing provision, with the remainder of the site modified to provide a country park setting

If the recommendations outlined in the report are approved by Cabinet, it is anticipated that future options for the site will be brought before councillors later this year.

From the proposal to build 350 houses on the old golf course site in 2021 (later removed from the draft local plan by SBC), I believe the same Officer that proposed this, has now suggested to councillors 3 options, as described in the above screenshot.

A local Highworth resident posted the following, in response to the above SBC FB post.

Swindon's post

[redacted] Rising contributor

"...councillors will be advised that the transfer of the land for £1 is unlikely to meet the Council's obligation to achieve best value considerations under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.
It's important to make clear that no decision is being taken at next week's Cabinet meeting on the future use of the site."

What IS actually being made abundantly clear is how the Council (via **Jim Robbins**) is stating again and again in post after post that they 'must make the best financial decision' (ie. sell for housing). It's also very noticeable how they NEVER mention the fact that the land was leased under contract to provide 25 years of open access green space for recreation and enjoyment to the people of Highworth. (The Golf Course was a proper golf course, and NOT a 'pitch and putt' course, by the way!) That contract was broken 10 years early, with instant aggressive interest from the Council in selling the land for housing. Interesting how that pressure eased - with stated support for NOT building on the OGC from Labour councillors - prior to the election, but now that the election is past what the Borough Council is repeatedly making clear is that they intend to sell, and that will be for housing. The only question is for how many houses.

In terms of the 'country park' element included in the various options, the BC is trying to sound beneficent, but in reality they know they cannot easily build on the bottom section due to the high water table there (ie. it frequently turns into bogland in winter and during periods of high rainfall), so they are trying to make it appear as though they're graciously allowing a country park area when in fact all they are doing is not proposing to build on land which would cost far too much to build on due to the water levels.

SBC have no interest in maintaining the identities of the outlying towns and villages in the Borough. This has already been demonstrated multiple times, not least by the approval of new housing in South Marston which will more than double the size of the village, and completely destroy its historical identity and village feel. SBC seem to think that the residents of South Marston are happy to be part of what they're calling 'The New Eastern Villages Development'. Whereas those I know who currently live or have recently lived there would rather have more appropriate housing development for the sizes of their villages/small towns, and maintain each place's existing identity rather than enduring the council's push to merge them into some mass area which will be far from being 'villages'.

Swindon Borough Council - Green Credentials

For many of us, the coronavirus pandemic exposed how important good quality outdoor space is for our physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Green spaces make us happier and healthier. They help reduce heart disease, obesity, and depression and save the NHS more than £100 million each year in GP visits and prescriptions. They also perform other valuable functions such as reducing flooding, cutting carbon emissions, and protecting nature.

Despite all of these benefits, almost 10 million people in England live in areas with very limited access to green space – Friends of the Earth

Disappointingly, very little reference is given to the town of Highworth on the SBC website, when mention is made of its 3 priority missions, or the Swindon Plan – The web page link is here.

Welcome from the Leader and Chief Executive of Swindon Borough Council

Hello and welcome to Swindon Borough Council.

We are proud to serve Swindon, a vibrant and dynamic town that continues to grow and innovate. Together, we are committed to making Swindon an even better place to live, work and thrive.

Our vision for Swindon is ambitious, and the recently approved Swindon Plan sets out three priority missions to guide our efforts over the next decade:

- **Build a Fairer Swindon:** Reducing inequalities in life expectancy, education and social justice to create a fairer, more inclusive town
- **Build a Better Swindon:** Addressing future challenges by revitalising the town centre, creating more affordable housing and working with private sector partners to deliver growth
- **Build a Greener Swindon:** Leading the way in combating climate change and partnering with communities to protect and enhance our natural environment

One would hope the omission is an oversight and that the mission statements should say e.g. Build a Greener Swindon Borough Council.

Posted by a Highworth resident on Facebook

A few years ago, I use to Cycle the back way to Cricklade, Lady's Lane. The road was full of old oak trees it made a huge arch; the fields were full of bunny rabbits and the trees were full of birds singing...THIS may sound soppy and soft but that feeling of summer and feeling the cool breeze through the trees ...its Gods country it makes the world a better place. ITS CALLED WELL BEING...That bit of country is now West Point housing Estate. They talk about mental health, how do we as a community preserve all that makes us appreciate what nature gave us to enjoy. You don't just destroy a community's well-being you destroy habitat for wildlife all that nature provides for free.

In summary

Highworth is an ancient hill top town that needs the protection for it to remain an ancient hill top town.

The glorious views looking outward and inwards will be lost forever if housing is built on the old golf course.

We are a growing local population with people that need places like our old golf course to walk, for their daily exercise, their mental health and well-being.

SBC have not made any provision for new parks, despite a ballooning population. This land is ideal, is available now at no cost. It is unlikely SBC will have the money to create a new country park in future years, which is why we should be protecting this space today.

The Highworth Town Council business plan for the old golf course will be of benefit to residents, visitors from out of town, local schools, nature lovers and people less fit and unable to walk up and down hills. It will also deliver massive environmental benefits, including the potential to use for carbon offsetting.

Please do not allow houses to be built on our wonderful old golf course, by designating LGS to the northern top section and Green Space to the southern bottom section.

Once this green space is gone, it is gone forever.

Thank you for reading this document.

Highworth and SBC resident.

Appendix A

Highworth Rural District G.ouncil

11 04-101,

GMC NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSPAPER OF THE SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL AND HIGHWORTH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

No. 117 (HIGHWORTH EDITION)

Special Souvenir Edition

Borough to form the new Borough o(Thaml.">dmi11. .llr

A. Burk Jones, th Chairman or the Righ orth Rural Di trict CoUlllciJ, has addre ed a me $3g . "hlrh i printed on thJs page, to the re IdenI or the rural di

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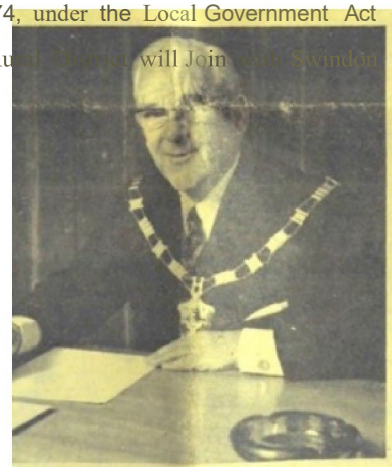
CM c ews I to com- In ttii'e history or l al

On Aprill 1, 1974, under the Local Government Act 19Tl, Highworth Rural District will Join with Swindon

A personal message from Mr A Burke Jooes

ChairmlJII Hig.worth Rln DidrictCOllld



power and influence of the Council to the effective strength only of the majority party.

Highworth's contribution to the partnership is considerable, both in land and wealth, and in no sense are we the poor relation. Even more important is the contribution we can bring of the rural way of life to help ease the tensions and conflicts so apparent in larger urban developments. Our main purpose should be the happiness of the citizens within Thamesdown and to see that this concept is not needlessly sacrificed to the god of expansion merely for expansion's sake.

The villages must be safeguarded and the interests of the minority must not be unduly sacrificed to the demands of urban representatives and the insatiable compulsion of continuous development. However, a balance must be struck regarding the legitimate needs and requirements of the urban areas. Housing for the young, old and handicapped will use resources of land and money but it is essential that established homes should not be sacrificed needlessly to commercial interests however financially attractive such proposals may appear.

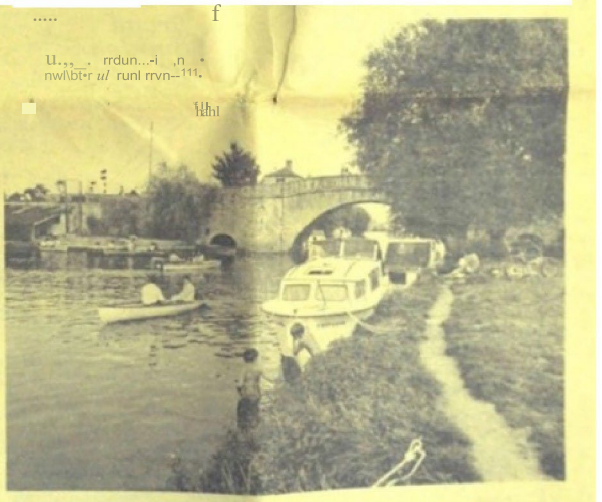
One of the first requirements of the Thamesdown Council must be the closest examination, and if necessary, the re-appraisal of the current and future commitments of existing councils. Vast sums of money are involved and the alarming costs to the ratepayers is a matter of urgent concern.

Side by side with this appraisal must be a decision on the future size of the present Swindon, and a defining of its actual boundary limits, lest the whole area becomes one vast urban sprawl!

At this moment it is true to say that the rural representatives have cause to be both anxious and fearful but we enter the partnership with goodwill; hopeful and resolute to see that only the best will be good enough for all in Thamesdown. An acceptable way of life is of more importance than planners' schemes or architectural monuments.

May we then salute the past and enter the future with hope!

A. Burke Jones.



trlct. who, on that date, will become resldenl!> or 1h1• new Borough of Tliamesdown.

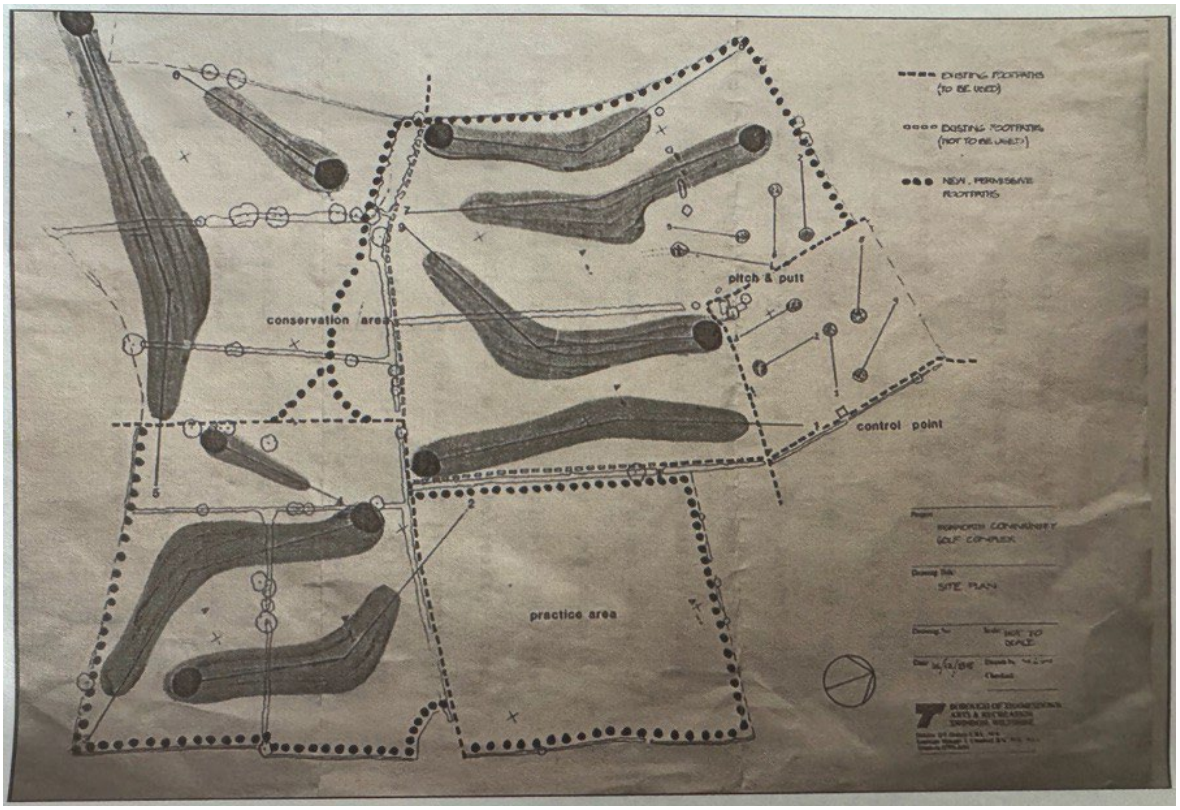
Appendix B

HIGHWORTH COMMUNITY GOLF COURSE

PROPOSED LAYOUT

Overleaf is shown the layout for Highworth Community Golf Course. It is proposed to submit this for planning permission to the Planning Committee on 27th February 1989. As is indicated on the plan all existing rights of way through the area are to be preserved and new permissive routes are to be formed to allow public access throughout most of the area. In addition, the small copse in the valley and adjacent fields will be left relatively untouched and preserved as a conservation area. It is proposed that construction works will commence in late April or early May 1989 with a view to opening the course in late 1990 or early 1991.

Any comments regarding this scheme will be welcome and any queries will be answered happily by Mr. P. Debbage on Swindon 26161 ext. 3122 or Mr. M. Sandys-Winsch on ext. 3124.


EXISTING FOOTPATHS
(TO BE USED)
EXISTING FOOTPATHS
(NOT TO BE USED)
NEW, PERMISSIVE
FOOTPATHS
pitch & putt
conservation area
control point
practice area
SITE PLAN
NOT TO
SCALE

Appendix C

Borough of Thamesdown

Denys Hodson, C.B.E., M.A.
Director, Arts and Recreation.
Civic Offices, Swindon, Wilts. SN1 2JH
Telephone (0793) 26161, when telephoning please ask for Mr. Keating
Ext. 3152

Our ref RK/BM/P/BNV/4

Your ref

22nd March 1989

Mr. G. Tanner,
"Mint Cottage",
7 The Green,
Highworth,
SWINDON,
SN6 7DB.

Dear Sir,

BOTANY FARM GOLF COURSE

Thank you very much for your letter to Mr. Hodson expressing interest in this land at Highworth.

From the outset we have tried to fit the golf course into the existing landscape and uses, thereby designing it not just for golfers but also for walkers and nature lovers.

We had identified the fields A, B and C as particularly valuable for wildlife although had not picked up on your interesting point regards Brookline. As you can see from the enclosed drawing of the proposed golf course layout, the valuable parts of fields A and B are being conserved for their wildlife value and much of field C is also left 'undeveloped'.

We have also carefully considered woodland and hedgerow management and new planting of native species will be undertaken which will provide additional habitat.

Having said all this, I do think it is important that as the years go by, local people wishing to use the land other than for golf should have an input into the management of the area. It may be suitable to set up a wildlife group to help look after Botany Fields and I would welcome your comments on this.

Yours faithfully,

M. Cobden

M.C. COBDEN
PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER
for Director

Repeat Regulation 16 Comment		HTC Comment
Dear Forward Planning team Thank you for providing National Highways with the opportunity to comment on the Modification Statement prepared in support of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2. We have reviewed the modification statement and are satisfied the changes proposed do not alter our previous Reg 16 consultation response dated 13 January 2025 which remains appropriate. We therefore have no further comments. Kind regards Gaynor Gaynor Gallacher South West Operations – Assistant Spatial Planner (Highways Development Management) National Highways	National Highways	No further comment
Good afternoon Toby, I have reviewed the modification statement on behalf of the TDM Team and can confirm that we have no comments to make. Kind Regards, Chelsey	Transport Development Management Engineer	No further comment
I wish to record my wholehearted support for the modified Housing provisions and in particular the Housing Mix. I believe the upper bracket of housing (4/5 bedroom properties) is already well catered for within existing housing stock and the need is now for a greater proportion of 2/3 bedroom properties. This focus on smaller property sizes will greatly improve the opportunity for younger / local residents to get onto the 'housing ladder'.	Individual. PB.	Supports policy 1
I wish to record my wholehearted support for the inclusion in Policy 10, of The Old Golf Course as Area 1 in the listing of Local Green Spaces. This area as identified in Fig 12 / Appendix 6 is one of the most important Local Green Spaces in Highworth, particularly because of its closeness to the heart of the town but yet offering a significant local area of character in its own right, unencumbered by other developments. It has a most attractive open nature, ideal for walking, exercise and casual recreation whilst still supporting a beautiful haven for wildlife.	Individual. PB.	Supports policy 9 and 10
I wish to record my wholehearted support for the recognition in this modified plan that The Old Golf Course has two distinct areas. The top area as detailed in the modified Policy 10 and this area 19 as shown on Fig11 which has been designated as one of the public Open Space areas. This, I believe is a pragmatic view of this overall area covered by the Old Golf Course and one which	Individual. PB.	Supports policy 9 and 10

should carry significant merit and one which I would hope, should warrant unanimous approval		
(See attachment)	Natural England	No SEA required, confirmed by SBC
(See attachment) Please find attached representations to the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 on behalf of Landhold Capital with regard to the allocation of the site at Pentylands Lane. It would be appreciated if confirmation of receipt could be provided. Regards Kathy	Claremont Planning on behalf of Landhold Capital	This will be dealt with through the planning process.
Dear Toby Thank you for your targeted Regulation 16 consultation on the Modifications Statement to the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan. Our previous Regulation 16 response focused on Policy 1 and the possible need to review the contextual heritage evidence base relative to the proposal to allocate land for development at Crane Furlong (see attached). We indicated that we were happy to leave consideration of this issue to your authority and the discretion of its heritage officers. We note that this issue is not referred to in the Modifications Statement and assume that your authority has therefore satisfied itself as to the point raised by us above. On that basis there are no matters, residual or new, that we wish to comment on. Kind regards David David Stuart | Historic Places Adviser		See previous response. This would be dealt with through the planning process and the Heritage officer.
(See attached) Dear Forward Planning Team, Please find attached a letter for the former Highworth Golf Course site in regards to the above. Kind regards Rob Richards Head of Property Assets	SBC Property Assets	See attached response

Dear Forward Planning, Thank you for consulting Archaeology on Highworth Neighbourhood Plan Targeted Regulation 16 Consultation. I have no comment to make. Best regards, Tim Havard Tim Havard Assistant County Archaeologist	Wiltshire County Archaeologist	No further comment

Date: 19 November 2025
Our ref: 529560
Your ref: Highworth Neighbourhood Plan

NATURAL ENGLAND
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ
T 0300 060 3900

Mr Toby Voak
Swindon Borough Council

BY EMAIL ONLY
ForwardPlanning@swindon.gov.uk

Dear Mr Voak

Highworth Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16 Targeted Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 08 October 2025.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan. Our Regulation 14 comments on the neighbourhood plan dated 10 August 2025 remain valid.

However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and to the following information.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further information on protected species and development is included in Natural England's Standing Advice on protected species .

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice.

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If an Strategic Environmental Assessment is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely
Sally Wintle
Consultations Team

Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural environment information sources

The Magic[1] website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map)** and **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available from the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres .

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found here[2]. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found here[3].

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the Magic[4] website and also from the LandIS website[5], which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural environment issues to consider

The National Planning Policy Framework[6] sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Planning Practice Guidance[7] sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

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[1] http://magic.defra.gov.uk/
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making
[4] http://magic.defra.gov.uk/
[5] http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm
[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
[7] http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed here[8]), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Ancient woodland[9]. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed here [10]) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice here[11] to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land [12].

Improving your natural environment

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment and should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you should follow the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy and seek to ensure impacts on habitats are avoided or minimised before considering opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. You may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development and how these could contribute to biodiversity net gain and wider environmental goals.

Opportunities for environmental enhancement might include:

- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to reduce impacts on wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.
- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.

Site allocations should be supported by a baseline assessment of biodiversity value. The statutory Biodiversity Metric may be used to understand the number of biodiversity units present on allocated sites. For small development allocations the Small Sites Metric may be used. This is a simplified version of the statutory Biodiversity Metric and is designed for use where certain criteria are met. Further information on biodiversity net gain including planning practice guidance can be found here

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework sets out further information on green infrastructure standards and principles
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see Planning Practice Guidance[13]).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks or on verges, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).

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[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england
[9] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences
[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england
[11] https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals
[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land
[13] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space

- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

Natural England's Environmental Benefits from Nature tool may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside the statutory Biodiversity Metric and is available as a beta test version.

CLAREMONT
PLANNING CONSULTANCY

Forward Planning
Swindon Borough Council
5th Floor Wat Tyler West
Beckhampton Street
Swindon
SN1 2JH

Email to: forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk

19 November 2025

Dear Sirs or Madam,

REPRESENTATIONS TO REGULATION 16 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION ON HIGHWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

Claremont Planning has been instructed by Landhold Capital to submit representations to the current consultation on the emerging Highworth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 ('NDP2').

Landhold Capital has been promoting land for development at Pentylands Lane/Crane Furlong, Highworth for considerable years, and supports its continued allocation given the land was previously allocated through the adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The site is also the subject of a current outline planning application, under application reference S/OUT/19/1195, which is expected to be approved by the Local Planning Authority in the short term.

These representations will consider the draft NDP2, in particular, the proposed approach to housing and proposed continued allocation of the land at Pentylands Lane, which is strongly supported.

Housing

The proposed approach to housing through the draft NDP2 is supported, in particular the continued allocation of land at Crane Furlong/Pentylands Lane. As recognised in the draft NDP, the site continues to be deliverable, suitable and available, and is the subject of a current planning application S/OUT/19/1195. The application has been under consideration for a substantial period of time, however this is due to a specific legal wording issue, rather than any concerns regarding the deliverability of the site. Through negotiations with the Local Planning Authority, all technical issues have been satisfactorily addressed, and there are no outstanding objections. It is therefore expected that the application should be approved early in 2026.

The proposed **Policy 1: Housing Provision & Mix** is supported, reconfirming the proposed allocation of Land at Crane Furlong and the expectation that the development should 'take account of guidance in Appendix 1 of this Plan'. The guidance provided in Appendix 1 of the NDP is considered further below.

Policy 1 also identifies a proposed housing mix, which is recognised as being informed by the Housing Needs Assessment. Whilst it is useful context for planning applications, it is considered that rather than applying an arbitrary percentage for each type of dwelling to all schemes, a more appropriate mechanism would be to identify a range, and reference that this should be wherever feasible and/or appropriate. This would allow for developments to bring

forward an appropriate mix relative to the specific constraints and opportunities presented on a site, and better respond to current requirements in terms of housing needs.

Settlement Boundary

The inclusion of land at Pentylands Lane / Crane Furlong within the Highworth settlement boundary is supported, recognising the context of the currently pending planning application.

Appendix 1: Crane Furlong Development Brief

Claremont Planning has reviewed the proposed development brief provided in Appendix 1. It is noted that this remains as previously proposed during the Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan consultation, despite representations submitted on behalf of Landhold Capital, identifying the below points. As was identified through those submission, whilst overall the brief is acceptable, a number of amendments are suggested to respond to the current planning application and technical information that has been presented through that process. This should be reflected in the site's allocation, in order to ensure that the allocation is robust.

- *The Allocation is Deliverable –*
    - The NDP identifies that the site continues to meet the definition of a deliverable site as it is available, suitable and there is a realistic prospect that it will be delivered in the next five years. As identified above, the site is the subject of a current planning application S/OUT/19/1195 which is pending determination. The application is expected to be approved in the near future.
- *Site Constraints –*
    - The draft NDP identifies that there is no significant flood risk associated with the site, although springs and ground water has been identified on adjacent developments. Through the planning application, no drainage issues have been identified, and the Council's drainage consultees are content with the proposed approach to draining the development.
    - The draft NDP also considers potential issues relating to noise from the industrial area to the north, and odour from the adjacent waste water treatment works. Through the planning application process, it has been demonstrated that neither of these factors are a constraint to development on this site, with both issues capable of being addressed through appropriate design measures, including the provision of fencing and landscaping to the boundaries of the site, and setting development away from the north-west corner of the site.
- *Site Requirements –*
    - The number of dwellings to be achieved on the site is identified in the NDP as a minimum of 42, unless constraints require a lesser number. It should be recognised the current planning application seeks outline permission for 57 dwellings, and the capacity has been informed by a robust technical assessment. A proving layout/masterplan has been submitted as part of the application, a copy of which is enclosed with this letter, demonstrating that this level of development can be achieved, and this is supported by the Local Planning Authority. It is therefore considered that the draft NDP should recognise the site as suitable for development of 57 dwellings, consistent with the current planning application.
    - The draft NDP identifies that open space is not required to be delivered on site. The development proposals indicate that some open space could be delivered as part of the development, whilst it is also proposed through the planning application that appropriate financial contributions towards off-site recreation would be secured through a legal agreement as part of the permission.
    - Odour is identified as potential constraint, which is acknowledged due to the proximity of the wastewater treatment works. The planning application has been supported by an odour assessment, and this has informed the masterplan layout provided as part of the application and appended to this letter. Through

the development of the site mitigation to the WWTW will be secured through a financial contribution to Thames Water to deliver inlet valve upgrades and covering of treatment beds. Due to the benefits of this mitigation it is considered that the landscape buffers identified by the plan included in Appendix 1 of the NDP are overly cautious. Through the odour mitigation delivered via the application it can be demonstrated that a reduced buffer will be satisfactory to address this constraint and ensure appropriate amenity for future residents. Retention of the plan at Appendix should only be considered if it is marked as an illustrative plan.

- Two options for accessing the site are identified in the draft NDP, from Crane Furlong or via Pentylands Lane. Through the preparation of the planning application, all access options were considered, and it has been demonstrated that the only appropriate vehicular access would be via Pentylands Lane. This access has been robustly assessed by the Highways Authority, which has agreed to this access in principle as part of the application discussions. This point of access will minimise the impact on existing residents, particularly as local objections to the planning application have identified that access via Crane Furlong would not be acceptable. The draft NDP should be amended to remove the reference to two potential points of vehicular access, instead identifying the potential for pedestrian access only via Crane Furlong, whilst vehicular access will be via an improved junction with Pentylands Lane.
- The capacity of the site has been considered extensively through the preparation and consideration of the current outline planning application, and as noted above it has been demonstrated that the site could accommodate 57 dwellings, whilst satisfactorily addressing the noise and odour constraints. It is considered that the capacity of the site allocation should be increased to respond to the current planning application.
- The draft NDP suggests that prior to the submission of a planning application, a design review should be sought. It should be recognised that the planning application has been with the Local Planning Authority for a substantial period of time and has been through various design assessment and review exercise with officers, and therefore it is not necessary for a further design review to be sought prior to the submission and consideration of the current application. Instead it is likely that further design assessment will be required to provide an analysis of the scheme design when layout and appearance reserved matters are being agreed.

We trust that these representations will be positively considered through the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process, and the draft Plan will be amended where necessary to respond to the information provided. We would be grateful if you would keep us updated on future progress of the Neighbourhood Development Plan 2.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Else MRTPI BSc Hons PG Dip
Managing Director
0121 803 7902
kelse@claremontplanning.com

Enc
- Site Location Plan
- Proving Layout
- Masterplan

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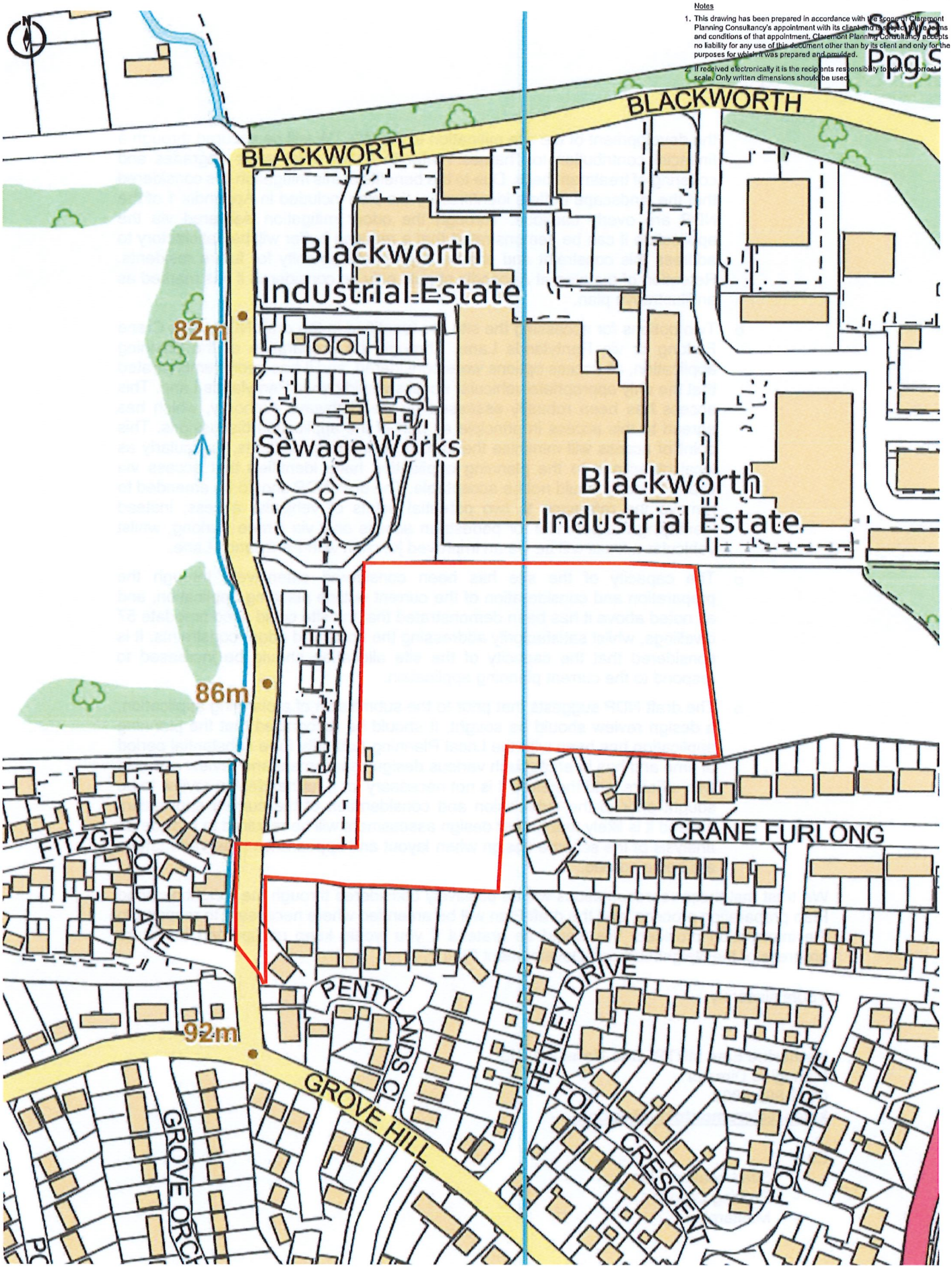
Notes

1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of Claremont Planning Consultancy's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. Claremont Planning Consultancy accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.
2. If received electronically it is the recipients responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.



Project	Highworth, Swindon	Drawing Number 04311-1	Status FINAL	Drawn By JC	PM/Checked by TR	Approved Approved
Title	Site Plan	REV 00	Job Ref 04311	Scale @ A4 1:2500	Date Created 19/06/2019	

Claremont Planning Consultancy
Suite 205 - Second Floor, 2 Snow Hill, Snowhill Queensway, Birmingham B4 6GA
T: 0121 231 3610 M: 07779112641

Site Boundary

1. Vehicular access from Pentylands Lane. Junction to encourage left turn exit onto Pentylands Lane (similar to arrangement at Fitzgerald Avenue).

1a. Access road to be aligned to allow for 3m easement of sewer to the south.

2. Entrance space framed by key buildings creating an arrival point to the development.

3. Buildings set back from existing underground utilities easements. Area to be used as driveways to access garaging.

4. Development creating an attractive frontage to informal open space area.

5. Development set back to respect tree root protection area and to provide amenity offset to industrial area.

6. Eastern boundary tree buffer retained and enhanced with additional low level planting. Potential for long-term tree management to provide filtered views into the recreation ground improving visibility and overlooking of public space.

7. Opportunity to improve existing pedestrian path within wider open corridor to enhance permeability with recreation ground.

8. Opportunity to create further pedestrian access to recreation ground and improve oversight.

9. Opportunity to create a key pedestrian and green link through development connecting Crane Furlong Recreation Ground to the east and Pentylands Country Park to the west.

10. Development set back from boundary to create a privacy and amenity buffer to existing property to the south.

11. New public open space, to include sustainable drainage area.

12. Opportunity to contribute to open space improvements at Crane Furlong Recreation Ground in line with aspirations set out in the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan. Improvements to include Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) delivered through a S106 Agreement.

13. Location of underground foul water pumping station.

14. Provision of 2m high, close-boarded fence, minimum mass 7kg/sq. m for noise attenuation along northern boundary.

edp the environmental dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427 - www.edp-uk.co.uk - info@edp-uk.co.uk

date	09 JULY 2019
drawing number	edp4452_d010i
scale	1:1,000 @ A2
drawn by	JGo
checked	RMC
QA	JTF

client
Southern & Regional Developments UK Ltd

project title
High Furlong

drawing title
Concept Masterplan

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- Site Boundary
- Proposed houses - 57 no.
- Focal Buildings
- Primary street
- Footways and Driveways
- Arrival Square
- Back gardens
- Front gardens
- Public Open Space
- Green Verges
- Mown Grass Pathway
- Pedestrian Connections to Wider Settlement

the environmental dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427 - www.edp-uk.co.uk - info@edp-uk.co.uk

date	29 SEPTEMBER 2020
drawing number	edp4452_d036c
scale	1:1,000 @ A3
drawn by	JGo
checked	PW
QA	GY

client
Southern & Regional Developments UK Ltd

project title
High Furlong

drawing title
Proving Layout

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Inclusive Economy
Swindon Borough Council
Civic Offices
Euclid Street
SN1 2JH

Email: rrichards@swindon.gov.uk

Ref: OC2
Date: 20/11/25

FAO: John Slater
Independent Examiner to the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2

Dear Mr Slater,

Regulation 16 re-consultation

Further to the representations made to the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 (NHP2) Regulation 14 re-consultation in August 2025, I write in my capacity as Head of Property Assets for Swindon Borough Council (SBC) to the current Regulation 16 re-consultation. SBC is the freehold owner of the Former Highworth Golf Course, a vacant former public golf course to the south of Highworth, the northern parcel of which is proposed to be designated as a Local Green Space under draft Policy 10 of the NHP2, and the southern parcel proposed to be designated as Open Space under Policy 9 of the NHP2 (August 2025). These representations should be read alongside the previous representations submitted.

Our previous representations objected to the Former Highworth Golf Course being designated as a Local Green Space under draft Policy 10 of the NHP2. In line with previous representations, the designation of part of the golf course as a Local Green Space is premature in advance of the forthcoming SBC Local Plan Review, potentially prejudicing consideration of sustainable development options at Highworth. The site was not considered to comply with the statutory criteria to be designated Local Green Space, set out at National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 107; namely that it is not sufficiently special in character to be upgraded from its existing Open Space designation; and further, that as an extensive tract of land, it is beyond local in character.

As set out in the previous representations, at the Swindon Cabinet meeting of 4th June 2025, SBC resolved to authorise the progression of a development scheme pursuant to the wider golf course site through formal planning pre-application channels, comprising of housing-led development of up to 700 residential units (including 50% affordable provision), with the remainder of the site modified to provide a publicly accessible nature reserve. Since the last consultation, work has been undertaken by a technical project team to understand the technical and environmental constraints of the site, and to progress a scheme towards pre-application discussions with Swindon Council Officers. The establishment of a Local Green Space designation on the site would prejudice forthcoming pre-application discussions.

We respectfully submit that the proposed designation of The Old Golf Course as a Local Green Space should be deleted by way of modification on the grounds of prematurity and conflict with national planning policy.

We trust that these updates are of assistance to the forthcoming NHP2 examination and reserve the right to represent our interests in person if the examination proceeds to a public hearing.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Richards

Head of Property Assets

HIGHWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2
2021-2036

REPEAT REGULATION 16 CONSULTATION DRAFT

RESPONSE TO THE REPRESENTATION SUBMITTED BY SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL HEAD OF PROPERTY ASSETS

DESIGNATION OF THE OLD GOLF COURSE AS LOCAL GREEN SPACE

STATEMENT PREPARED BY:

COUNCILLOR MISS JULIE MURPHY
CHAIR, PLANNING COMMITTEE
HIGHWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

DECEMBER 2025

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1. BACKGROUND TO SUBMISSION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is a repeat of Regulation 14 and 16, necessitated by Swindon Borough Council's incorrect reporting that Highworth Town Council had met the legal requirements to proceed to independent examination. The independent examiner identified that a Modification Statement should have been produced prior to the original Regulation 14 consultation. The absence of this statement rendered the plan legally unsound.

1.2 In the interim conclusions issued on 30th April 2025, the examiner advised:

'Now that these fundamental flaws has been identified, the most expeditious route would, in my opinion, be for the Town Council to withdraw the current version of the plan, as proposed to be modified, and repeat the Regulation 14 consultation, this time including a modified Modification Statement which sets out the reason it has reached the opinion that the modifications do change the nature of the plan.'

Following this advice, Highworth Town Council has produced the required Modification Statement and returned to the Regulation 14 stage of the Neighbourhood Plan review process. This has resulted in significant delays to the plan's progression.

1.3 Highworth Town Council, in reviewing the representations submitted in respect of the repeat Regulation 14 and repeat of Regulation 16 version of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, note the submissions made by the Head of Property Assets at Swindon Borough Council relating to the designation of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space. The submission infers that the aforementioned parcel of land should be protected for housing development as it is owned by Swindon Borough Council.

1.4 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that Swindon Borough Council did not submit a representation to the Regulation 14 (June 2024) version of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2. This version included Policy 10, which identified the Old Golf Course as a Local Green Space designation. Instead, SBC first chose to submit objections **at Regulation 16**, a much later stage in the neighbourhood planning process when HTC was already preparing for examination. In this respect, HTC believes it made every effort to consult openly, transparently, and in accordance with statutory guidance. SBC had ample opportunity to make its views known earlier and failed to do so.

1.5 It is also critical to note that SBC's Cabinet decisions, particularly those referenced in the latest letter (Cabinet meetings of 4 June 2025 and 9 July 2025), were taken well after both the original Regulation 14 and Regulation 16 consultations had concluded. Furthermore, HTC had been advised by SBC officers that the Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions and could proceed to Regulation 16 submission. This was clearly inaccurate, and as a result of this mis advice, HTC progressed to submission and

examination in good faith, only to be told later that it must restart the Regulation 14 process. HTC questions whether this was a deliberate strategy on SBC's part to delay or obstruct the Plan's progression, particularly given the clear divergence in policy objectives over the future of the Former Golf Course. Highworth Town Council rejects SBC's assertion that the Local Green Space designation is "premature". Paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that prematurity can only be claimed where a plan is at an *advanced* stage of preparation and where the effect of a neighbourhood plan would undermine the plan-making process. Swindon Borough Councils Local Plan Review does not meet these criteria. The Old Golf Course site has not been allocated as a policy in the emerging reg. 18 of the Swindon Local plan.

ADOPTED HIGHWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1.6 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that Policy 10 (and Figure 13) designates 4 Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The wording of the policy states the following:-

Policy 10 - Local Green Spaces

The following areas shown on Figure 13 are designated as Local Green Space:

1. Village Green
2. Cemetery
3. Highworth Parish Church Churchyard
4. Sevenhampton Churchyard

Development on Local Green Spaces will be considered in the same manner as development in the Green Belt as explained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), section 13. This establishes a presumption of resisting most forms of development which is detrimental to the openness and character of the green spaces.

1.7 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the supporting text (Paragraph 4.5.2 of the made Plan) to the policy refers to the designations being "new" and that they comply with the advice given in the NPPF (2012 version, Paragraphs 76 and 77). It refers to the 4 designations being demonstrably "special", and thus important to the local community.

1.8 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that Policy 9 (and Figure 11) identify other open space in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The wording of the policy states the following:-

Policy 9 - Open Space

Public open space assets defined on the Figure 11 will be protected from development unless:

- *it can be demonstrated that alternative provision can be made locally of equivalent or better size, quality and accessibility; or*
- *the proposed development is ancillary to the main use of the site and protects its public open space function;*
- *or the proposed development is subject to an Open Space Appraisal to ensure it does not adversely affect local needs and/or existing quality of open space within the area in accordance with the Council's Standards, as set out in Appendix 3 (of SBLP 2026) and in the most recent Open Space Audit and Assessment;*
- *or when assessed against the Open Space Appraisal, the proposed development provides community benefit which outweighs the loss of open space.*

1. *The Golf Course*
2. *Recreation Ground Upper and Lower Fields*
3. *Pentylands Country Park*
4. *Swindon road allotments*
5. *Allotments adjacent to Highworth Golf Complex*
6. *Park Avenue Allotments*
7. *Haresfield Play Area*
8. *Crane Furlong Recreation ground*
9. *Highworth Community Centre Playing field*
10. *The Triangle*
11. *Priory Green*
12. *Sevenfields Entrance*
13. *Newburgh Open Space*
14. *Home Farm Green Space*
15. *Sevenhampton Cricket Ground*
16. *Westrop Primary School*
17. *Southfields School*
18. *Highworth Warneford School*
19. *Town Green (adjacent to Parsonage Court)*

1.9 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the supporting text (Paragraph 4.5.3 of made Plan) identifies other open space in the town of Highworth that fulfil important recreational, play and visual roles for the local community. The first open space identified in Policy 9 is the (Old) Golf Course and this is described as follows:-

THE GOLF COURSE The course was developed in the lower area of the Recreation ground using one of the higher fields for a pitch and putt area. There is a golf shop and toilet block for users of the course under the ownership and (currently) control of Twigmarket, leased from Swindon BC. It is a 9-hole course. It is an attractive area, well landscaped and containing walking paths, which are well used by runners and walkers and can be accessed from several paths leading off Cricklade Road and the Upper Rec. Its position on the hill leading into Highworth from Swindon creates an attractive landscape when entering the town.

1.10 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the Old Golf Course has been protected as public open space for the last 8 years or so. This is due to its value to the local community for sport and recreational purposes.

EMERGING HIGHWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1.11 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the decision was made to designate the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space following feedback from local residents. This was in response to Swindon Borough Council allocating the Old Golf Course for residential purposes without informing the local residents, as well as Highworth Town Council, of their intention to do so.

1.12 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the Swindon Local Plan Review (July 2021) identified the Old Golf Course as being suitable to accommodate around 350 dwellings and a primary school (Policy LA34). The draft Swindon Local Plan Review was subject to two stages in the Development Plan process, being Regulation 19(i) and Regulation 19(ii) respectively. The former was presented for public inspection from 17th December 2019 to 31st January 2020 (inclusive). The latter was available for public inspection from 29th July 2021 to 7th October 2021 inclusive.

1.13 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the allocation of the Old Golf Course was first identified in the draft Swindon Local Plan Review published in July 2021 (Regulation 19(ii)). The provisions of Policy LA34 was subject to extensive objection from local residents, as well as Highworth Town Council. Infact it was the most responses ever received by Swindon Borough Council.

1.14 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the Swindon Borough Council's website confirms that at the meeting of the Full Council, which sat on the 20th January 2022, a report on the draft Swindon Local Plan Review was presented to the Borough Councillors for discussion and debate, and Highworth Town Council (Miss Julie Murphy) raised a number of questions about the future of the Highworth Golf Course. The minutes of the meeting state the following:-

This Council recognises the need and benefits of approving a Local Plan that is sound and robust in order to deliver the required 5-year land supply plus 20%. Without this, Swindon will not meet the Government planning requirements and leave the Borough open to speculative developments.

The Council also recognises the strength of feeling of Highworth's three Ward Councillors and the passion and sincerity of the Highworth residents in relation to the provision in the Local Plan for 30 per cent of the Highworth Golf Course site being used for the development of 350 houses and a new school.

The Council recognises that Highworth has already provided a sufficient number of housing as a community in excess of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan and therefore the proposed housing is an unwarranted development.

The Council and ward councillors understand that the consequences of removing the site for housing means that Highworth will not have the proposed new primary school and the remaining 70% of the land for leisure use, will not be gifted to Highworth Town Council. The further consultation will delay the plan going for the examination in public and incur significant additional public funds.

1.15 The minutes of the meeting also confirm the decision of the Full Council. They resolved to:-

- Support an amendment to the Local Plan minute on the basis that removing this allocation will not render the Plan unsound.
- Agree that the site be removed from the Local Plan.
- Conduct a further Regulation 19 Consultation, which will need to be Borough wide, for a period of 6 weeks

1.16 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that no further Regulation 19(iii) consultation on the draft Swindon Local Plan Review took place. The situation was such that Swindon Borough Council effectively abandoned the draft Swindon Local Plan Review resulting in its policies and proposals having no weight in the planning and development management processes.

1.17 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that, in 2021, they began the process of reviewing the current adopted Highworth Neighbourhood Plan and this included engaging with local residents. The feedback received from local residents included the request to protect the Old Golf Course, and the view was taken that it was a good contender to be a Local Green Space designation. In March 2024, the Regulation 14 version of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 was published. The provisions of Policy 10 states the following:-

Policy 10: Local Green Spaces

The following areas shown on Figure 12 and Appendix 6 are designated as Local Green Space:

1. The Old Golf Course
2. Village Green
3. Cemetery
4. Highworth Parish Church Churchyard
5. Sevenhampton Churchyard

Policies for managing development within a Local Green space should preserve a sense of openness and be consistent with those in the Green Belt.

1.18 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the policy is supported by a Table (11) that describes all 5 designations. The Old Golf course is described as follows:-

A local green space situated to the south of Highworth that forms part of a larger recreational space. An area that is demonstrably special to residents to enjoy outdoor recreation. The area provides a natural, tranquil, beautiful, open area that boasts an abundance of wildlife. Evidence from the review of this plan supports this.

The nature of the landscape is important to the character setting of the ancient hilltop town and is part of the Mid Vale Ridge character area of the Borough which is recognised for its recreational value in Swindon Borough Councils Landscape Character Area supplementary planning guidance.

1.19 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the wording of the policy is almost the same as Policy 9 in the adopted Highworth Neighbourhood Plan (2017). The only change is the addition of the Old Golf Course to the list of Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, and the re-writing of the last paragraph to comply with the wording of the advice in the NPPF (December 2023).

1.20 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the policy was subject to significant support from local residents. The comments made sought to tweak the wording of the last paragraph to re-emphasise the advice in the NPPF about what development was appropriate/inappropriate in the designation (December 2023).

1.21 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that, in publishing (March 2024) the Regulation 16 version of the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, the decision was made to modify the wording of Policy 10 to acknowledge the feedback received. The provisions of Policy 10 states the following:-

Policy 10: Local Green Spaces

The following areas, as listed in Table 10 as shown on Figure 13 and mapped in Appendix 7 are designated as Local Green Space:

1. *The Old Community Golf Course (northern section)*
2. *Village Green*
3. *Highworth Cemetery*
4. *Highworth Parish Church Churchyard*
5. *Sevenhampton Churchyard*

Policies for managing development within the Local Green Spaces should consider the appropriateness of the land use and built development in preserving the prevailing sense of openness.

1.22 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the policy is supported by a Table (11) that describes all 5 designations. The Old Golf course is described as follows:-

In Neighbourhood Plan 1 the entirety of the Old Community Golf Course was designated as Open Space. The northern sector which is connected to the built-up area of Highworth and accessible to all at all times of the year has been designated as Local Green Space. This area forms part of a much larger tract of recreational space. It has defined hedgerow and is used daily by runners and walkers from local residents and those visiting from the Borough. It is known for its tranquillity, far reaching views, openness and array of flora and fauna. An area that is demonstrably special and referred to as a 'piece of heaven.' Evidence from the review of this Plan supports this.

The nature of the landscape is important to the character setting of the ancient hilltop town and is part of the Mid Vale Ridge character area of the Borough which is recognised for its recreational value in Swindon Borough Councils Landscape Character Area supplementary planning guidance.

The Swindon Local Character Area assessment item vii. page 7. identifies the Midvale Ridge and its characteristics. (Page 11 vii Midvale Ridge)
The other Midvale Ridge Area contains the hilltop settlements of Blunsdon, Hannington and Highworth, which run along the Corallian Ridge. Included within the Corallian Ridge are the small valley settlements of Stanton Fitzwarren, Sevenhampton and South Marston.

This Midvale Ridge area enjoys views over the surrounding lower clay vales, particularly northwards over the Thames Vale. This Midvale Ridge Area also adjoins the southern part of Highworth's settlement boundary, for which the Local Plan Policy ENV12 (Landscape Setting to Highworth), provides additional landscape guidance.
Development Considerations Within the Midvale Ridge Landscape Character Area proposals should:

- Ensure that non-developed hilltops remain free from development to preserve the prominence and quality of existing hilltop settlements.
- Retain the perception of distinctiveness and separation from Swindon within the Rural Buffer areas identified in the Local Plan.
- The Local Character Area Map clearly shows that the Midvale Ridge Includes the Old Golf Course and in line with the recommendations should be given protection from any proposed development.

Therefore: the proposal to include the upper part of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space is both in line, and compliant with, the current Swindon Local Character Area policy and that of the National Character Area 109 recommendations.

1.23 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the policy was subject to significant support from local residents. Once again, the comments made sought to tweak the wording of the last paragraph to re-emphasise the advice in the NPPF about what development was appropriate/inappropriate in the designation (December 2023).

2. REASONED JUSTIFICATION FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATION

INTRODUCTION

2.1 Highworth Town Council considered the advice in the NPPF (December 2023) about designating a parcel of land as Local Green Space given that they were reviewing their adopted Neighbourhood Plan (Paragraph 106). This stated, at Paragraph 107, the following:-

The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

2.2 Highworth Town Council note that the NPPF, at Paragraph 107, further stated that policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts. The NPPF advice on Green Belts refers to development being appropriate or inappropriate (Paragraphs 152 – 156).

2.3 Highworth Town Council note that the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides detailed advice on Local Green Space. This is given with reference to a specific answer to a specific question.

COMPLIANCE WITH PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE ADVICE

Designation Landownership

2.4 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG confirms that a Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership. It refers to the local planning authority (in the case of local plan making) or the qualifying body (in the case of neighbourhood plan making) contacting landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space, with landowners will have opportunities to make representations in respect of proposals in a draft plan (Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 37-019-20140306).

2.5 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG confirms that designating a green area as Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt. It states that there would be no new restrictions or obligations on landowners (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 37-020-20140306)

2.6 Highworth Town Council are fully aware that Swindon Borough Council own the Old Golf Course site. They have been in direct communication with them, via both its

Planning Officers and Borough Councillors. The former want to protect it for housing purposes while the latter want to protect it as a country park.

Designation Definition

2.7 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG sets out a list of criteria (NPPF, Paragraph 107) that must be met to make the designation policy compliant. It states that the designation of land as Local Green Space is a matter for local discretion, and can include green areas could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 37-013-20140306).

2.8 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG criteria referred to above requires the land to be:-:- `

(a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
(b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
(c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Proximity

2.9 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG states that the proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will depend on local circumstances, including why the green area is seen as special, but it must be reasonably close. It refers to where public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 37-014-20140306).

2.10 Highworth Town Council wishes to advise that the Local Green Space immediately abuts the built-up area of Highworth, and is easily accessible to the local community it serves. It can be reached on foot by pavements and public footpaths (See Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, Paragraph 118).

Significance

2.11 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG states that Local Green Spaces may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community. The land can be located in a village, or in a neighbourhood in a town or city (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 37-009-20140306).

2.12 Highworth Town Council wishes to advise that, prior to its closure, the former Golf Course was well used by golfers of all abilities. There was great disappointment when the facility closed to the general public.

2.13 Highworth Town Council wishes to advise that local residents use the former golf course as a place of recreation. It is very popular with walkers, including those with and without dogs.

2.14 Highworth Town Council wishes to advise that the Local Green Space is seen by the local community as having certain attributes. It is seen as being special for its tranquillity, a sense of peace and quiet away from the bustle of life (See Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, Paragraph 118). SBC states that the land is "not sufficiently special" to justify Local Green Space designation. This assertion is not supported by evidence and is directly contradicted by the findings of community engagement, the Area's Landscape Character Assessment, the Asset of Community Value listing, and the usage patterns recorded over many years. The site meets every element of PPG Paragraph 013:

- **Beauty:** The land forms a visually striking approach to the historic hilltop town, with open vistas characteristic of the Mid Vale Ridge landscape setting.
- **Historic significance:** The landscape contributes to the long-established visual setting of the medieval town core, recognised in conservation and character assessments.
- **Recreational value:** For over 50 years the land has been used for golf, walking, running and general outdoor enjoyment. It remains one of the most heavily used recreational spaces in Highworth. it is also supported by Swindon Borough Councils landscape character assessment policy as having Recreational value.
- **Tranquillity:** Community consultation identified tranquillity as one of the site's defining and most cherished attributes.
- **Wildlife and biodiversity:** Residents and volunteers have documented diverse flora and fauna, supported by the mosaic of hedgerows, grassland and woodland retained from the former golf course design. The ecology report commissioned by Swindon Borough Council describes the area as a unique opportunity for ecology and supports residents views of how special the area is.

Collectively, this constitutes overwhelming evidence that the land is demonstrably special.

Size

2.15 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG states that there is no lower size limit for a Local Green Space (Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 37-016-20140306). It states that there are no hard and fast rules about how big a Local Green Space can be because places are different and a degree of judgment will inevitably be needed. The PPG refers to the advice in the NPPF and the need for that Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. It stipulates that blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate (Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306).

2.16 Highworth Town Council consider that the Local Green Space designation is not a large tract of land, being only a small part (24ha) of the much larger existing Old Golf Course (41ha). It is an integral part of a much larger area of land (50ha), that defines the west side of Highworth as a place for both sport and recreational purposes in association

with the Highworth Recreation Centre and the Highworth Town Juniors Clubhouse (See Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, Paragraph 118). The much larger tract of land comprises of the following:-

Description of Community Facility	Size (Ha)
Golf Course (Municipal)	41.20
Highworth Recreation Ground (North, Central and South Areas)	7.25
Elms Recreation Ground	0.02
Allotments	1.85
Total	50.32

Source: Swindon Borough Council, Open Space Audit and Assessment (2014)

Designation Identification

2.17 Highworth Town Council note that the PPG advises that Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 37-005-20140306). It advises that Local Green Space designation is for use in Neighbourhood Plans where they can be identified on a map ('designate') green areas for special protection (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 37-006-20140306).

2.18 Highworth Town Council wish to advise that the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 (Regulation 14 and 16) includes a map (Figure 12) that identifies the Old Golf Course Local Green Space designation. It is identified by cross hatching and annotation.

Designation Development Needs

2.19 Highworth Town Council note that the PPG requires the designation of Local Green Space to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. It refers to Local Plans requiring to identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making (Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 37-007-20140306).

2.20 Highworth Town Council acknowledge that Highworth is identified as a location suitable for residential development (Local Plan Policy SD2). The town of Highworth has been the subject to planning applications for residential development and Highworth Town Council consider that the urban fringe of Highworth, particularly to the north and south of the town, contains parcels of land that could be viewed as being suitable for new residential development subject to meeting the normal development management requirements i.e. design, highways, environmental etc.

2.21 Highworth Town Council consider that the west side of the town is a designated area used for sport and recreational purposes. The Local Green Space is an integral part of these prevailing land uses and so must be protected from inappropriate development.

It is also relevant that SBC's own policy documents contradict its present objection. The Swindon Landscape Character Assessment identifies the Mid Vale Ridge, including the Former Golf Course, as an area of notable landscape value and recreational importance. SBC's Open Space Audit and Assessment (2014) further categorises the site as significant recreational open space. These designations recognise the importance of the land to the town's character and amenity. SBC cannot reasonably rely on the site's importance when producing its own evidence base, yet disregard the same qualities when objecting to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Designation Permitted Status

2.22 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG refers to Local Green Space designation not being appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. It indicates that an exception to this could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 37-008-20140306).

2.23 Highworth Town Council wishes to advise that the Old Golf Course does not have a planning permission for residential development. The website of Swindon Borough Council indicates that the land has planning permission for the following:-

T/88/1705
Change of use from agricultural land to golf course
Granted 21.10.1988

T/89/0187
Construction of nine-hole golf course, pitch and putt, practice area and ancillary landscaping
Granted 27.02.1989

2.24 Highworth Town Council notes that the two planning applications referred to above were submitted by Thamesdown (Swindon) Borough Council on land forming part of Botany Farm. The Old Golf Course was opened by the Borough Council in 1990 as the Highworth Community Golf Centre. It is a 9-hole play and play course (3120 yards), set within a woodland/parkland context, and includes a detached building used as the golf shop. It closed in December 2019.

Designation Public Access and Rights of Way

2.25 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG refers to some areas that may be considered for designation as Local Green Space may already have largely unrestricted public access, though even in places like parks there may be some restrictions. It states that designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present and any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with land owners, whose legal rights must be respected (Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 37-017-20140306).

2.26 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG refers to land being designated as Local Green Space being crossed by public rights of way. It states that there is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 37-018-20140306).

2.27 Highworth Town Council wishes to advise that the Old Golf Course is already open to the general public and there are no restrictions in place by the landowner (Swindon Borough Council) that prevent them from walking onto, and through, the designated land. It is crossed by a public footpath (HH20) that connects it to a wider network of other public footpaths (see Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2, Figures 16, 17 and 18). The other two PROWs are East West routes from Old Toll House to Hampton and A361 via allotments to Roman Way.

Designation Management

2.28 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG refers to the management of land designated as Local Green Space remaining the responsibility of its owner. It refers to how the designation will be managed in the future is likely to be an important consideration particularly if the features that make a green area special and locally significant are to be conserved. The PPG states that local communities can consider how, with the landowner's agreement, they might be able to get involved, perhaps in partnership with interested organisations that can provide advice or resources (Paragraph: 021 Reference ID: 37-021-20140306).

2.29 Highworth Town Council wishes to advise that, in October and November 2022, they consulted the local community (by survey and events) about the future of the Old Golf Course. In January 2023, the Golf Course Working Party was formed and this comprised of Town Councillors and Members of the Old Golf Course Action Group. A Business Plan has been formulated following invitation from Swindon Borough Council to use the Local Green Space designation for a range of recreational uses, including using the old golf shop as a café, to ensure its future in perpetuity. The Business Plan has been shared with Swindon Borough Council.

Designation Community Asset

2.30 Highworth Town Council notes that the PPG refers to land designated as Local Green Space may potentially also be nominated for listing by the local authority as an Asset of Community Value. It refers to the listing giving community interest groups an opportunity to bid if the landowner wants to dispose of the land (Paragraph: 022 Reference ID: 37-022-20140306).

2.31 Highworth Town Council wishes to advise that the Local Green Space is an Asset of Community Value. The website of Swindon Borough Council confirms that the Old Golf Course (SBC Ref: 2024/001) was designated an Asset of Community Value in 2019 and reregistered on the 5th November 2024. It will remain in place until the 5th November

2029. Furthermore, SBC's own decision to designate the northern parcel as an **Asset of Community Value** in November 2024 confirms that the land is of *genuine and proven significance* to the community. Under the Localism Act 2011, Asset of Community Value status is only granted where land's use "furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community". SBC's recognition of this status until 2029 is incompatible with its current suggestion that the land is not special. If SBC accepts that the land is of community value for Asset of Community Value purposes, it cannot logically argue that the same land is not of community value for Local Green Space purposes. This is only 1 of 5 assets registered by Swindon Borough Council.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Highworth Town Council consider that the designation of the Old Golf Course at Highworth complies with the advice in the NPPF and PPG. It meets the requirements of the national planning policy advice and guidance.

3.2 Highworth Town Council consider that Swindon Borough Council are giving out clear mixed messages about the future of the Old Golf Course. The Borough Councillors, representing the Highworth local residents, want it protected in perpetuity as a Country Park, while its Officers (in Planning and Property Assets) want it protected as a future housing site. Highworth Town Council supports the former proposal but not the latter proposal on planning and environmental grounds.

3.3 Highworth Town Council confirms that there has been a Local Green Space designation in place for nearly 10 years. This seeks to protect 4 identified sites in Highworth.

3.4 Highworth Town Council confirm that, following feedback from local residents, an additional site was identified and added to the Local Green Space policy. The new site is a former 9-hole golf course that was used by the local community, as well as visitors to Highworth. Its designation as a Community Asset confirms its status and the protection will be in place until the end of the decade.

3.5 Highworth Town Council cordially invites the Examiner to support the designation of the northern section of the Old Golf Course as Local Green Space as per figure 14. This has the full support of local residents as evidenced in the responses from residents during regulation 14 and 16. If the examination proceeds to a public hearing Highworth Town Council respectfully request the opportunity to make representation in person.