

Land at Cooper Tires Factory Site

Policy 7.1: Land at Cooper Tires Factory Site

The 12.88 Hectare former Cooper Tires Factory Site, as defined in figure 6, is allocated for a comprehensive and exemplary mixed-use conservation and development.

All development proposals will accord with a comprehensive master plan to be approved by Wiltshire Council.

The reason for the policy

4.8.16 Land at the Cooper Tires factory site comprises the c12.8 hectare main factory site, with boundaries to the River Avon, Bath Road, Scotland Road and A350. The allocation includes the small “Bakers Yard” car park site to the west side of Bath Road.

4.8.17 The site has been the focus of industry since the 18th Century and has been producing rubber and tyres since c1890. Avon Rubber and then Cooper Tires grew to become one of Melksham’s most important employers and a landmark for the

Figure 6: Cooper Tires Redline Plan



town. Production at the plant decreased during the 21st century and is planned to fully cease at the end of 2023.

4.8.18 Local people continue to have strong associations with the factory. Community and Stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to inform the Town Centre Master Plan report priorities, and identified almost unanimous support for the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan addressing policy that would support the regeneration of the site to deliver a new mix of uses.

4.8.19 Previous consideration of the site by Wiltshire Council's "Employment Land Review" (2018) concluded that the site had potential for development with a mix of uses, although this did not include residential uses at the time. Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy has not identified the site as a Principal Employment Area. It is not included in protected or proposed principal sites in the emerging Local Plan (2020-38).

4.8.20 Owners of the site made it available for assessment and potential selection for allocation within the JMNP (2020-38). Whilst the site is known to be constrained by flood risk and contamination, as previously developed and now under-used land, the site assessment considered the site potentially suitable for allocation.

4.8.21 JMNP Steering Group recognise the scale and ambition of allocation of the site. However, it is also aware of its duty to

respond positively to the needs and wishes of the community and to lead local policies to secure the objectives of the JMNP.

4.8.22 Through engagement with the current site owners, it is known that the site ownership is likely to change within the JMNP period. Nonetheless, in response to community wishes and national planning guidance, proactive and positive planning for the future of the site is considered appropriate and timely, given the closure of the factory site.

4.8.23 In selecting the site for allocation, JMNP Steering Group has also been in close dialogue with Wiltshire Council. It is aware of the challenges site constraints impose and the need to support the allocation with robust evidence that will provide sufficient confidence that regeneration of the site can be viably delivered in whole or part by 2038. To this end, the JMNP Steering Group is working in collaboration with Wiltshire Council and site owners to inform and produce an agreed site regeneration study and framework master plan. Upon endorsement, it will provide a viable framework to secure confidence of viability at this stage. It will supplement this site allocation and form the basis upon which any comprehensive outline planning application or detailed scheme is considered. It is expected that this framework will be endorsed by Wiltshire Council and the JMNP Qualifying Bodies prior to submission of the draft JMNP2 to Wiltshire Council.

Master Plan Led Approach

4.8.24 Development must be in conformity with a comprehensive master plan and design code which is to be approved by Wiltshire Council that will ensure site development optimizes community, environmental and economic benefits and ensures site remediation and on and off-site infrastructure is delivered as part of the regeneration.

Land Uses

4.8.25 The combined sites are allocated for exemplar master planned regeneration to deliver mixed-use regeneration which will comprise employment and commercial, leisure and cultural uses that address Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Policy 10 (Employment Sites) and that complement and strengthen the quality, offer and vitality of Melksham town centre, in conformity with JMNP Policy 9 (Town Centre), contributing towards the delivery of priorities identified in the Melksham Town Centre Master Plan report (2023).

4.8.26 Development should include at least 150 dwellings to include open market and affordable housing to contribute to meeting local housing needs and in conformity with adopted Wiltshire council housing policies and informed by the Melksham Housing Needs Appraisal (2023)

Flood Risk and Contamination

4.8.27 Significant parts of the site are within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. The master plan must address flood risk and water management in conformity with national and local planning policies, as well as JMNP Policy 3 (Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management).

4.8.28 As a result of previous industrial processes undertaken there is significant site ground contamination. The masterplan must be supported by a full ground contamination assessment and support the delivery of de-contamination including measures to prevent any pollution of the River Avon and ground water.

Heritage

4.8.29 Avon House (listed Grade II) and the former art deco canteen must be retained, restored and converted to viable new uses. The design and uses of any adjacent development must protect and enhance the setting of the listed building.

4.8.30 In alignment with Wiltshire Core Strategy Conservation and Historic Environment Policy 58, proposal must protect or enhance the setting of adjacent listed buildings including The Town Bridge (Grade II) and The Unicorn Public House (Grade II).

4.8.31 The former canteen building is identified as a non designated heritage assets by Policy 21 of this Plan is to be retained and conserved as an integral part of the scheme.

4.8.32 The master plan must be supported by a robust heritage survey and assessment to be undertaken before any demolition. Identified historic fabric or artefacts identified are to be retained in-site or removed to be re-used or displayed.

4.8.33 Investigation will be needed to identify the presence and significance of archaeological remains, including industrial archaeology across the sites. Mitigation should include avoidance of high value archaeological remains where preservation in situ is to be required.

4.8.34 Where viable, existing building materials including historic bricks, roof tiles and timber should be retained to be re-used within the fabric of new development on the site.

4.8.35 Interpretation of the site's industrial history within its design and presentation of artifices, re-cycled materials and interpretative art.

Sustainable Design and Construction

4.8.36 In conformity with Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 41 (Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy) and Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Policy 1 (Sustainable Design and Construction) the master plan and following detailed proposals should have regard to the twelve placemaking "considerations"

identified in "Building for a Healthy Life" design code or an agreed similar guidance.

4.8.37 Development proposals must be supported by a sustainable energy strategy to demonstrate how it will contribute to Wiltshire Council's and the UK's target of net zero carbon targets for 2030 and 2050 respectively.

4.8.38 It should combine design to maximise sustainable travel with minimising all operational energy use and greenhouse gas production and by maximising the integration of renewable and low-carbon energy technologies such as heat pumps and solar PV and opportunities for cooling through integration with on-site green and blue infrastructure. The master plan and detailed proposals should be supported by:

- A sustainability and energy statement that demonstrates how the operational development supports a move towards carbon neutrality and adaptation to climate change upon completion, in line with Wiltshire Council's 2030 carbon zero ambition.
- An embodied Carbon Assessment that demonstrates a score of less than 900kg/sqm of carbon can be achieved within the development of the substructure, superstructure, and finishes.

Access and Transport

4.8.39 The level site is in a highly sustainable location directly neighbouring the town centre, King George V Park, neighbouring communities. Bus and rail connections linking across Wiltshire and beyond are immediately adjacent to the site.

4.8.40 In conformity with Wiltshire Core Strategy transportation policies 60-53 and JMNP Policy Policy 11 (Sustainable Transport and Active Travel) and Policy 4 (Ultra Low Emission Vehicle charging), regeneration will be expected to harness these assets to deliver exemplary multi-modal transportation solutions that optimise potential for active and sustainable travel choices and maximise the inclusion and accessibility of the site to all people.

4.8.41 Development must create a new and integrated network of pedestrian priority streets and public spaces, creating linkages from the town centre, railway station, King George V Park and the riverside. Streets and parking should conform with the principles of Manual for Streets.

4.8.42 Public access will be provided along the entire riverside frontage of the site, linking into existing public rights of way and the new streets and public realm to be provided within the site.

4.8.43 Vehicular access to the site should be from Bath Road and the A350. Only limited residential vehicular access will be supported from Scotland Road.

4.8.44 The walking and wheeling route between the site and Melksham Railway Station and Town Centre must be improved including the replacement of the existing subway crossing of the A340 with a signal controlled crossing facility and provision of enhanced pedestrian and cycling crossings and infrastructure to secure safe and convenient river crossing to King George V Park and improved connections with neighbouring areas.

4.8.45 All development will be required to be within 200m convenient walk of bus stops serving all of Melksham's local and connecting bus services. This must include the provision of new bus stop facilities along the Bath Road frontage.

4.8.46 Improvements to replace the existing pedestrian subway should explore the potential for the provision of a bus only route along the Bath Road frontage linking from the A350 to the Town Bridge.

4.8.47 Parking and servicing requirements should be provided in conformity with Wiltshire Council Parking Standards SPD. This must include provision of safe parking and storage for cycles and E-scooters. All residential and business and other parking will be

expected to provide ultra-low emission vehicle (ULEV) charging infrastructure in line with current building regulations.

Public Realm and Riverside

4.8.48 The master plan must deliver a high-quality public realm that connects to the surrounding streets, comprising a new network of safe, accessible pedestrian priority streets and public spaces and the provision of a new vibrant public riverside environment that connects between the Town Bridge and Scotland Road pedestrian bridge (Murray Walk Bridge). The riverside public realm should be addressed by new ground floor active uses, upper-level residential units and landscape and ecology measures that will protect and enhance the riverside and water environment. Residential streets and spaces must be addressed by ground-floor habitable room windows and front doors.

Character and Townscape

4.8.49 Development of the scheme master plan and any following detailed scheme proposals will take account of design and placemaking priorities and policies within Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 57 (High Quality Design and Placemaking) and Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Policy 20 (Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design) and Policy all proposals will be expected to have regard to Melksham Design Guide and Code (2023) and the Wiltshire Design Guide (2023).

4.8.50 Redevelopment must be of an exemplary quality design which creates a new attractive, integrated, inclusive and vibrant mixed-use urban riverside quarter of Melksham. It will enhance the character and appearance of the town and the conserved heritage assets within and in the context of the site.

4.8.51 The masterplan and building must weave in characteristics, materials and detailing, including re-used materials that reference and celebrate the century of tyre manufacturing that took place on the site and any previous significant heritage.

4.8.52 The layout and buildings must create positive and complimentary relationships with existing neighbouring buildings and uses on or addressing the boundary of the site. Proposals will also protect or enhance the amenity of existing neighbouring residents and businesses including housing along Scotland Road, neighbouring housing addressing the A350 and the historic "City" quarter to the south of the site's Bath Road frontage. New residents will be provided with a high quality of amenity.

Green and Blue Infrastructure and Biodiversity

4.8.53 The site presents a significant opportunity to create a new urban and riverside landscape of green and blue infrastructure that will simultaneously enhance attractiveness, contribute positively to carbon neutrality and increase biodiversity within the new quarter.

4.8.54 The approved master plan for the site will address Wiltshire Core Strategy biodiversity, landscape and green infrastructure policies 50, 51 and 52 and JMNP Policies Policy 12 (Green Infrastructure) and Policy 13: (Biodiversity). They will include a landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy and code that will:

- create a beautiful and welcoming public realm;
- contribute to climate change resilience;
- retain and protect valued existing green and blue infrastructure features; and,
- achieve a minimum of 20% net gain over the pre-development biodiversity.

A buffer and ecological protection zone should be maintained throughout demolition and construction periods.

Trees

4.8.55 In conformity with JMNP Policy 17 (Trees and Hedgerows), the master plan must be informed by an arboriculture survey and assessment. Proposals must retain and protect identified valued trees and include additional street and riverside tree planting. A demolition and construction period tree protection zone must be provided for all trees to be retained.

Wilts & Berks Canal Link Project

4.8.56 In conformity with Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 53 (Wiltshire's Canals), master planning must have regard to the safeguarding of the Wilts & Berks Canal Link Project route and connection to the River Avon and integrate or future-proof the potential implementation of the canal link project where it relates directly to the site.

Local Infrastructure Contributions

4.8.57 In conformity with Core Strategy Policy 3 (Infrastructure Requirements) development proposals will be expected to make proportionate contributions to the delivery of new and enhanced in-site and off-site infrastructure that addresses demands arising from the development.

4.8.58 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions will be received by the Town Council. 10% of the CIL will be directed to local infrastructure projects jointly agreed between the Town and Parish Councils. These may include measures that progress priority objectives of the JMNP and the Town Centre Master Plan Report (2023).