

**Land East of Tobacconist Road (south of The Bulwarks)  
Minchinhampton (PS05)**

**Planning Summary**

**Background**

Minchinhampton is a large settlement with a population of 3,462 and 1,437 households. It is recognised to be a sustainable community with a strong local retail role and a very good level of local services and facilities (SDC Settlement and Role and Function Update 2018).

Minchinhampton is amongst the District's most vulnerable settlements in terms of ageing population and socio-economic trends. Reducing household size, ageing population and housing unaffordability are likely to put increasing pressure on the community's diversity and vitality.

Minchinhampton has experienced low historic housing growth, in proportion to its size and functionality. The current Local Plan has not allocated sites for housing at Minchinhampton, which has been reliant on small windfall and infill sites. Small sites do not provide for a good range of dwellings or require affordable housing.

The Minchinhampton Neighbourhood Plan has not allocated sites for housing but refers to the need for affordable housing and a mix of market dwellings. It recognises that sites could come forward through the new Local Plan to provide new homes for the community and also contribute towards delivering identified community projects.

**The Proposed Allocation**

The key consideration for accommodating growth outside of the existing settlement boundary of Minchinhampton is its setting within the AONB and adjacent to the SSSI Common.

Discussions with officers at the AONB Board have established that in landscape terms the land east of Tobacconist Road is the most suitable (least sensitive) location to direct growth for Minchinhampton. This is confirmed by the Stroud Landscape Sensitivity Report (land parcel reference M06).

The site was also identified as the preferred location in Minchinhampton to accommodate growth through a Planning for Real exercise which was organised by the Parish Council in 2010.

The land east of Tobacconist Road has been proposed as a potential allocation in each previous stage of the draft new Local Plan. During this process, the proposed allocation has reduced from 100 to 80 dwellings. Since the last consultation, it has been recognised that the extent of the allocation could be smaller and still accommodate 80 dwellings.

The allocation has therefore been substantially reduced to focus development on the northern part of the site, which is adjacent to the existing settlement edge and least sensitive in landscape/AONB terms. The development can be served by a vehicular access via the Bulwarks and the recent Sanctuary Housing scheme at Farm Close. This will be instead of the access onto Tobacconist Road, where traffic from the development travelling towards Cirencester would have passed through the High Street. An access via the Bulwarks has the benefit of linking to the Cirencester Road beyond the High Street. A pedestrian/cycle only link can still be maintained to Tobacconist Road for convenient access to facilities.

A draft Concept Plan has been produced which illustrates how 80 dwellings could be accommodated on the reduced northern parcel of land, with vehicular access from the north and generous public open space and landscaping. This includes integrating the public right of way within a landscaped corridor.

The reduced development area also reduces any risk of a significant adverse impact on the Bulwarks Scheduled Monument.

Appropriate mitigation will be provided to minimise any potential impact from additional visitors to the Rodborough Common SAC.

### **Supporting Information**

The following technical information has been produced to inform and support the proposed allocation and is provided with this planning summary:

- Concept Plan
- Environmental Appraisal
- Additional Heritage Technical Note
- Additional Landscape Technical Note

### **Summary**

Minchinhampton is a large and sustainable settlement which has experienced comparatively low levels of growth historically. It is one of the most vulnerable settlements in terms of ageing population and socio-economic trends and there is an acute problem with the affordability of housing. There is a need for a substantial allocation which can provide a good mix of dwellings, including starter homes, homes suitable for older people and 30% affordable housing. A cohesive allocation can also contribute towards improvements to existing infrastructure and community facilities.

The land east of Tobacconist Road is acknowledged to be the most suitable location to accommodate some growth for Minchinhampton. The draft Concept Plan illustrates how a reduced allocation of the least sensitive area to the north could be developed, which responds to comments received to the last consultation on the draft Local Plan.