

# Sulis Down Phases 3 & 4 Guidance Notes for Objections Deadline 30<sup>th</sup> May



**A new application to build ‘up to 200’ more houses on the South Stoke plateau has been submitted to B&NES by Hignett Family Trust and Welbeck Land.**

**PLEASE RESPOND WITH YOUR COMMENTS – no later than SATURDAY 30 MAY 2026**

To submit your comments go [here](#).

Details of the application can be seen on the B&NES site [here](#).

A key document is the Design and Access Statement which can be viewed [here](#)

**Please use your own words in any response** – these guidance notes summarise what is proposed and gives outline areas you may wish to put in an objection or comment. **200 more houses is excessive and the application does not resolve the reasons the previous application was rejected.**

In March 2025 the Planning Inspector turned down the appeal from the Hignett Family Trust for their application to build 290 houses on Phases 3 & 4 on the basis of this being detrimental to the Cotswold Landscape. Inevitably, given that the land is allocated for development, we anticipated this further application.

## **What is now being proposed?**

The latest application ([26/01238/EOUT](#)) for the development of Phases 3 and 4 is (in summary):

- An outline application for up to 200 dwellings, a community hall, allotments
- A full application for a road from Phase 1 through Sulis Manor grounds

Analysis commissioned by B&NES for the Public Inquiry showed that the eastern plateau (Phases 3 and 4) could only accommodate 130 – 150 houses without causing an unacceptable impact to the local landscape. 200 more houses is an excessive development – and is far in excess of what is in the Local Plan for this area.

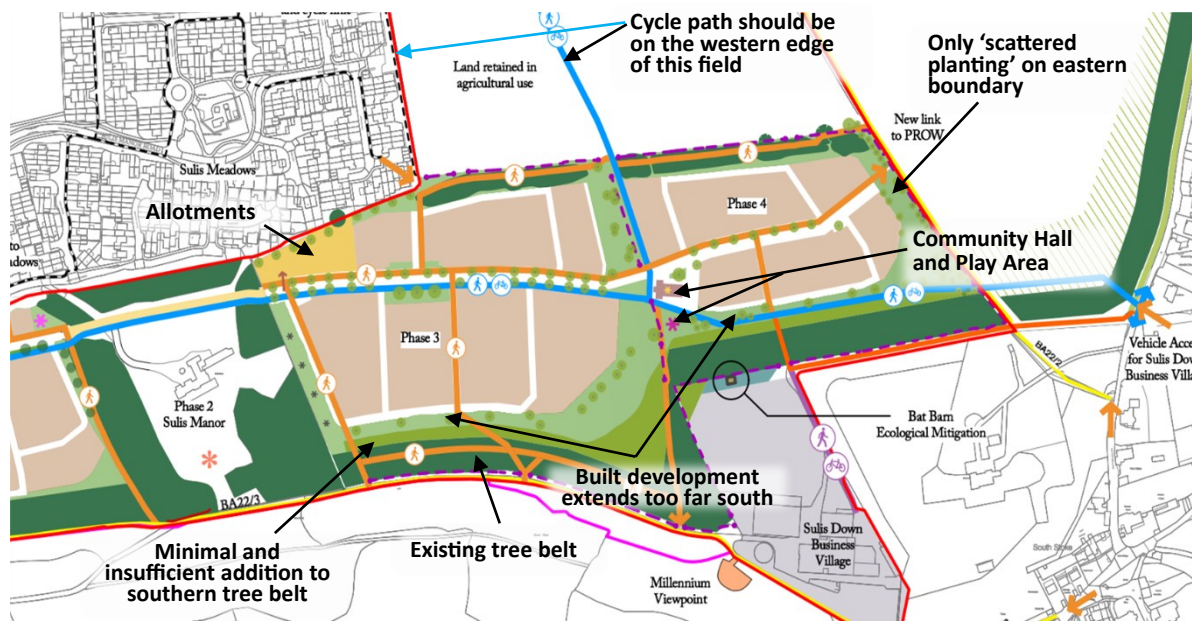
This proposal is not ‘landscape-led’, as the developers claim, but ‘profit-led’.

**THE APPLICATION MUST BE REJECTED.**

## **How does it differ from the previous application which was rejected last year?**

- Up to 200 rather than up to 290 houses – still 40% affordable.
- Northern tree belt has been retained, except along the boundary with Sulis Meadows.
- Presence of a central ‘community hall’ between Phases 3 and 4.
- Very small change to the southern extent of the development.
- Minimal increase to the width of the southern tree belt
- Reduction in the height of the tallest houses from 3 storeys to 2.5 storeys – they would have the same maximum height as the Phase 1 buildings.

## POTENTIAL GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION.



Annotated extract from the [2026 Comprehensive Masterplan](#)

### Still too many houses – over 400 is not ‘around 300’.

The Local Plan allows for ‘around 300’ houses across the allocated areas of the plateau. This application will result in:

- 171 houses in Phase 1
- 200 houses in Phases 3 and 4
- 18 houses proposed for Odd Down Football Club
- 25-50 houses in Phase 2 in Sulis Manor Grounds

This would bring the number of houses across the plateau to over 400. This is excessive and far above the ‘around 300’ in the Local Plan.

### More houses mean a greater impact

An excessive number of houses in Phases 3 and 4 will increase the pressure on local infrastructure and the environment.

For example:

- The local road network is already heavily congested with long queues in the morning peak on the A367 approaching the Park and Ride roundabout. It will also result in excessive traffic through Phase 1 along Harrison Down to access Phases 3 and 4.
- It will increase pressure on local schools and doctor’s surgeries.
- It will result in the unnecessary loss of trees, for example along the boundary with Sulis Meadows, and reduce the amount of green space.

### The development extends too far south and is inadequately screened

The development lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) which is protected to preserve its special qualities for future generations. The principal reason the previous application was rejected was because it had too great an impact on the CNL. The Planning Inspector identified that greater screening from the south would reduce detrimental effects of that proposed development.

In the current proposal the built development extends too far to the south and is almost identical to the previous rejected application.

The revised plans show only 5m of additional planting along most of the southern boundary. This is insufficient to screen the development from both near and long-distance views.

The developers have therefore not addressed one of the main reasons the previous application was rejected.

### **There is very little screening of the eastern side of the development**

The eastern side of the development will be clearly visible to anyone joining the Wansdyke path at the Cross Keys junction and therefore adversely affects this Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Only 'scattered planting' is proposed along the eastern boundary. This should also have woodland trees planted there to shield the views from the north-eastern side of the plateau.

### **Affordable housing – too many 1-bedroom flats and not enough family homes**

The Local Plan specifies that 40% of the dwellings should be affordable housing. Phase 1 has delivered 68 affordable houses (40% of the total). However, they have not delivered the mix of affordable houses that B&NES specified. The developers built twice as many one-bedroom flats (28 when only 13 were specified) at the expense of dwellings with two or more bedrooms.

B&NES must ensure that for Phases 3 and 4 the correct mix of affordable housing is delivered and that the shortfall in Phase 1 of larger homes is remedied.

### **Still no Comprehensive Masterplan**

A key requirement in the Local Plan for this site is the production and agreement of a Comprehensive Masterplan for this allocation. The plan submitted is not Comprehensive as it includes nothing about how many houses are planned for Phase 2 in Sulis Manor grounds.

The plateau is being developed in a piecemeal fashion without an overall plan to coordinate the developments in different areas. Phase 1 residents still do not have allotments, and the developers propose that the 'heart' of the development, where the community hall is proposed, is between Phases 3 and 4, not at the heart of all the phases of the allocation.

### **Path across the field to the north should be along the edge of the field**

The shared use cycle and footpath path runs across the centre of a large arable field to the north of the development. This would have much less impact on the landscape and its continued use as agricultural land if it was on the western edge of the field, rather than through the middle. In the current plans there are no cycle links between the Sulis Down development and Sulis Meadows, this would provide an opportunity to link the developments.

### **Not addressed key issues raised in the consultation**

Many of you will have attended the Welbeck consultation event on 13<sup>th</sup> January and will have your own views. The feedback from this consultation, and previous such exercises, appears to have had no impact on the proposals being developed.

In contrast the feedback from the community to B&NES from the previous application was a significant factor in B&NES's decision in 2024 to reject the proposal to build 290 houses on the plateau.

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**How has the planning policy environment changed since the Planning Inspector rejected the previous application at the start of last year?**

The most important change is that the government has doubled B&NES's housing targets and therefore B&NES no longer has sufficient land allocated for development to meet these targets. B&NES is preparing a new local plan but this will not be in force until next year. Therefore, the current local plan is no longer 'up-to-date' and this could tilt the balance in favour of development. The developers are stressing this point!

However, National Planning Policy specifies that if there are policies that protect assets of particular importance (and this includes National Landscapes and Scheduled Ancient Monuments such as the Wansdyke) then this provides a strong reason for refusing the proposed development, regardless of whether the local plan is up to date or not.

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