

# Willersey Site Assessments

## Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (2021)



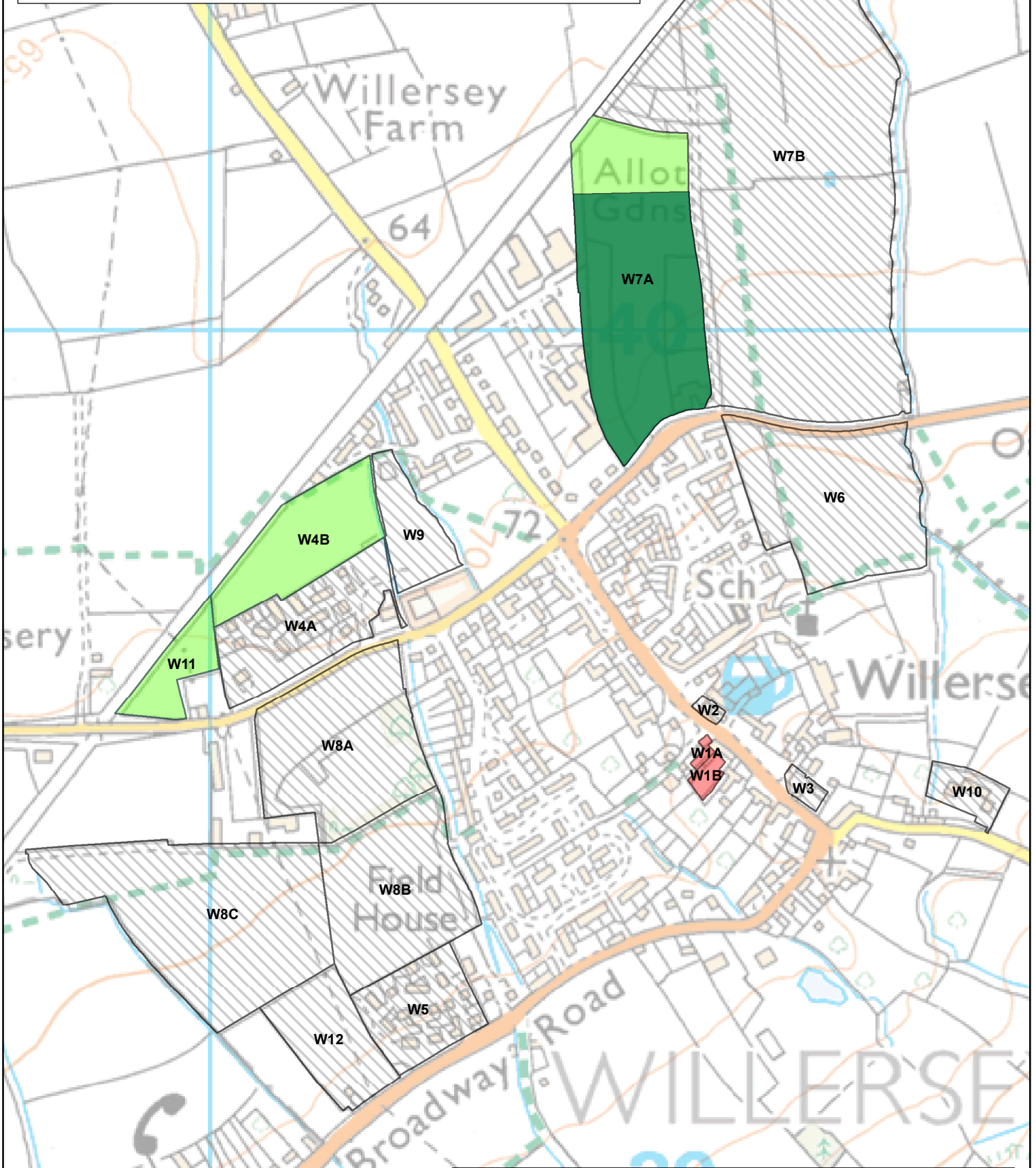
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# Willersey - Summary Map of Site Assessment Conclusions

## Key

- Adopted Local Plan mixed use allocation
- Discount
- Delete Adopted Local Plan Site Allocation
- Candidate for further consideration for allocation in the Local Plan



## Site Assessments: Part I

Ref.	Address	Proposal	Assessment	Conclusion
W1A, W1B	Garage workshop behind The Nook, Main Street	Housing	Further assessment finds the sites cannot deliver five or more dwellings. However, the sites are within the Willersey development boundary, where the principle of development is supported.	Deallocate from Local Plan
W1B	Garden, behind The Nook, Main Street	Housing	See W1A	Discount
W2	Petrol Filling Station, Main Street	Housing	Unsuitable for development of 5 or more dwellings - brownfield site inside village envelope, but currently in use. Site is also an important local amenity.	Discount
W3	Rose Villa, Main Street	Housing	Extant planning permission. Deliverability assessed in Housing Land Supply Report	Discount
W4A	Willersey Land adjacent to Harvest Piece, Collin Lane	Housing	Development complete	Discount
W4B, W11	Land between Colin Lane and future Heritage Railway	W4B: 40 homes W11: additional housing	W4B and W11 have been assessed together to consider whether any strategic benefits could be gained by allocating one or more of the sites or whether any parts of the sites, which might otherwise be unsuitable for housing or commercial development, could deliver other elements of a scheme. Detailed site assessment provided in Part 2.	See Part 2
W5	Land at Broadway Road	Housing	Development complete	Discount
W6	Field east of Willersey and south of B4632	Housing	Unsuitable - very sensitive location in AONB. The site is in the setting of listed church, Willersey's Conservation Area and development would have a high impact of the historic edge and setting of Willersey. The site forms an important area of open countryside on the approach to Willersey, which should be protected.	Discount
W7A	Land north of B4632 and east of employment estate	Housing and Employment	Detailed site assessment provided in Part 2.	See Part 2
W7B	Land east of Willersey between B4632 and Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway	Housing or Employment	Unsuitable - The development of this land would be far too large scale for Willersey. It would be an unacceptable intrusion into open countryside. The site is also disconnected from the village.	Discount

Ref.	Address	Proposal	Assessment	Conclusion
W8A	Land between Collin Close and Collin Lane	70 homes	Unsuitable - The site is within the AONB and is also quite exposed with views from the road and the hills to the south and the wider AONB. It is also viewed from the Public Right of Way to the south. A planning application for 71 dwellings was refused on the whole site (ref: 14/04854/OUT) and the subsequent appeal was dismissed (appeal ref: APP/F1610/W/15/3121622).	Discount
W8B	Land west of Field Close & north of B4632	80 homes	Unsuitable - The site is within the AONB and is exposed with clear views from the road and the hills to the south and the wider AONB. It is also viewed from the Public Right of Way to the north.. It is a relatively flat field with a strong rural character at Willersey's eastern entrance. The field is in active agricultural use as animal pasture and has ridge and furrow.	Discount
W8C	Land south of Collin Lane	Housing	Unsuitable - The site is isolated and separated from the settlement and its development would be an unacceptable intrusion into the AONB.	Discount
W9	Goodigore Orchard	Housing	Development complete	Discount
W10	Land north of Chipping Lane	Housing	Development complete	Discount
W11	Land between substation and future railway line, Colin Lane	Housing	See W4B	Discount
W12	North side of Broadway Road	Housing	Unsuitable - The site is within the AONB. Its development would be a westwards extension that would erode the gap between Willersey and Broadway. Housing on this site would also depart from the pattern of development in Willersey and would obfuscate the entrance to Willersey that has been created through the recently completed development of W5.	Discount

## Site Assessments: Part 2

### Garage workshop behind The Nook, Main Street (refs: WIA, WIB)



**Proposal:** 5 houses

**Assessment date:** January 2021

**Site area:** Combined 0.18ha (WIA: 0.05ha; WIB 0.13ha)

**Land ownership:** The land is believed to be in single ownership

#### Site description

The site is located within the centre of Willersey on Main Street. WIA is a garage workshop (H. J. Taylor), which is in active use and is associated with the adjacent petrol filling station on the opposite side of Main Street. WIB is the rear garden area of The Nook, which is a house that fronts onto Main Street. The site is surrounded by housing on nearly all sides, except to the south-west, which is the Social Club.

#### Planning history

*This is a summary of the key planning applications and is not a comprehensive list*

Both sites are allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan and are located within the Willersey development boundary, as identified by the Local Plan proposals map.

#### WIA

04/01462/FUL – permitted – Change of use of upper floor of garage storage room and construction of five dormer windows to form first floor flat

09/03299/FUL – permitted – Change of use of upper floor of garage storage room and construction of five dormer windows to form first floor self contained 2 bedrooomed flat

#### WIB

No recent relevant planning history

## **Landscape**

*These comments are made on the basis of a survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer.*

The site is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However, the site is located within the centre of Willersey. It is bordered on all sides by existing development. The site is partly previously developed land that is occupied by a building and partly the garden of a dwelling. It therefore has an urban character and appearance.

The re-development of the site would not result in an encroachment of development into the open countryside or have a material impact on the setting of the town within the AONB landscape. The site could be re-developed without having an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the wider landscape or the AONB.

## **Biodiversity**

*These comments are made on the basis of a short survey conducted by officers in the month of January. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) would be required with any development proposal.*

The biodiversity value of this site is likely to be limited to garden habitat within WIB – which in this case is predominantly a grass-lawn area with flower borders, shrub planting and several fruit and ornamental trees. These are likely to provide nesting sites and food for birds. WIA is mainly a garage building and is unlikely to have significant biodiversity value, although a bat survey would likely be required if this building were to be demolished or significantly altered.

On-site Biodiversity Net Gain might be delivered through the incorporation of biodiversity features within built structures (e.g. bat and bird nesting and roosting sites) and through the appropriate design of any landscape provision. Given the limited scale of the site it may be difficult to accommodate 5 dwellings and deliver on-site Biodiversity Net Gain.

## **Trees**

*These comments are made on the basis of a short survey conducted by officers in the month of January. A full tree survey would be required of any development proposal.*

The sites are located in the Conservation Area, where trees are protected. WIA does not contain any trees but WIB has several, including:

- A small Cherry Tree in the western corner;
- Two apple trees in the centre of the site;
- What is believed to be a Walnut Tree in the north-east corner;
- A Birch tree along the western boundary;
- A medium sized sycamore tree in the southern corner; and
- A Fir Tree in the eastern corner.

Although none of these trees are particularly fine examples of their species, they do have a positive contribution to what is essentially an attractive greenspace within the Conservation Area.



### **Historic Environment (excluding archaeology)**

*These comments are made on the basis of a short survey conducted by officers on the historic environment. A full historic environment survey would be required of any development proposal.*

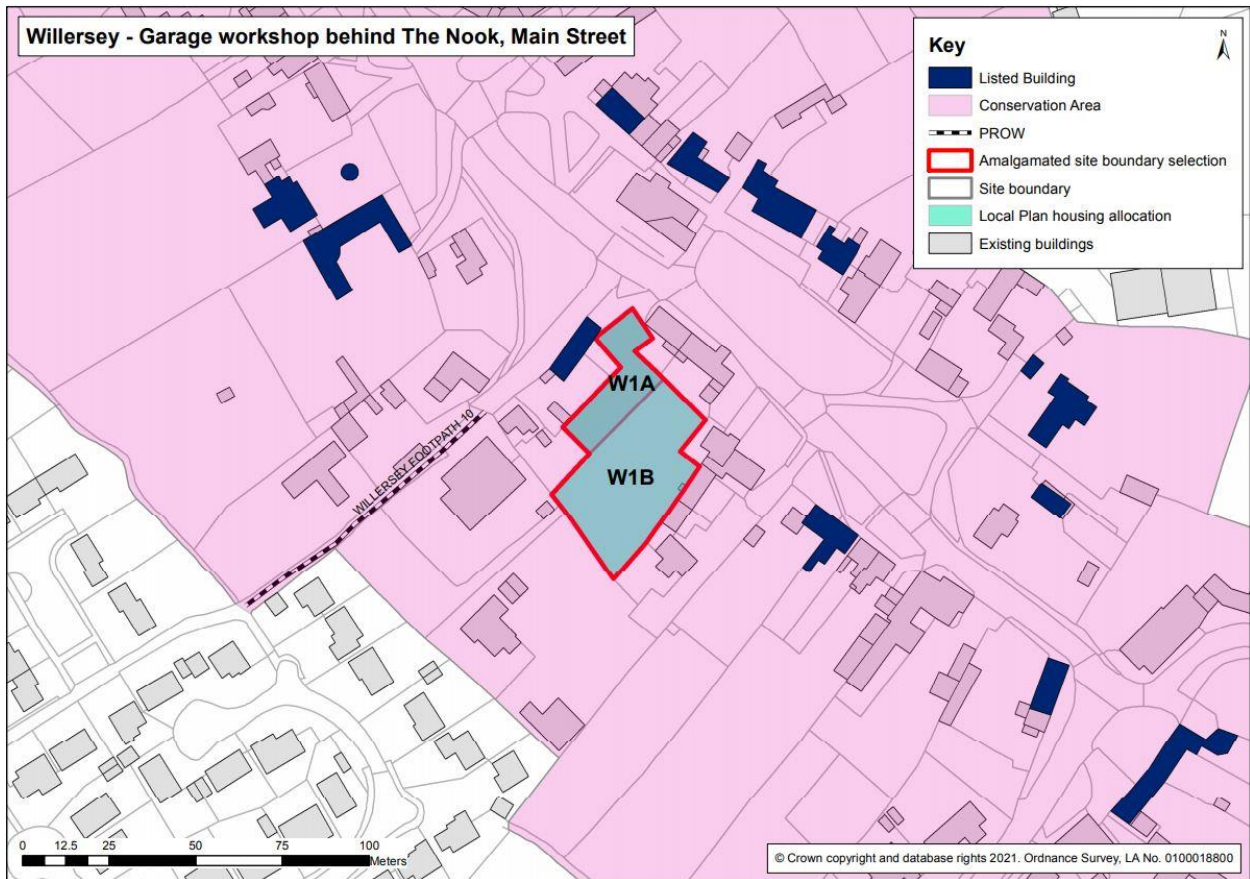
The sites are both located in the heart of the Willersey Conservation Area. The garage building that forms WIA is a 1.5 storey brick-built building, which is set back from Main Street by a small grassed area and an access road into the garage. The building appears on the 1960 Ordinance Survey map and is believed to originate from around this period. The building is not of any particular architectural importance but its value and interest within the Conservation Area are linked to its use as an independent garage business, which has changed little over the years. This garage and petrol station buildings together are quite prominent features on Main Street and are part of the character of the village centre.

The garden of The Nook which forms WIB was once a small field that formed part of Jordan's Farm – the former farm buildings are located adjacent to the south-eastern boundary and are now in residential use. Although the garden is not viewed from any public vantage points, it is an attractive greenspace which is overlooked by a number of houses adjacent to the southern, eastern and northern boundaries. The garden also contains several trees that are seen from public vantage points. The garden area and the trees within it provide a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and help to retain the identity and historical context of the former farm complex.

WIA is located adjacent to Tye Cottage, a Grade II listed building. There are several further Grade II listed buildings on the opposite side of Main Street, including The Bell Inn, Rose Cottage, Chestnut House and The Old Bakehouse, and the northern part of the frontage of the garage building forms part of their setting. The rear of Tye Cottage also looks out onto the rear of the garage building, although further assessment is needed to understand whether the removal of the garage building and its replacement with housing would have a positive or negative impact on the setting of this listed building.

Overall, it is difficult to see how five dwellings could be accommodated on this site without causing harm to the Conservation Area, particularly in relation to the loss of an attractive greenspace and several trees. The loss of the garage building would also lose part of the character of the village centre.





### Other issues / constraints

- Loss of a viable garage business, which is an important community facility;
- There is currently no access into WIB. Access might be achieved if the buildings on W1A were demolished or if an access could be provided through the social club car park, although this may have a negative impact on the Conservation Area;
- Loss of garden land, which is contrary to Local Plan Policy EN11, which states that “*Development proposals, including demolition, that would affect Conservation Areas and their settings, will be permitted provided they will not result in the loss of open spaces, including garden areas and village greens, which make a valuable contribution to the character and/or appearance, and/or allow important views into or out of the Conservation Area Demolition and clean-up costs*”; and
- Amenity issues due to the proximity of neighbouring houses.

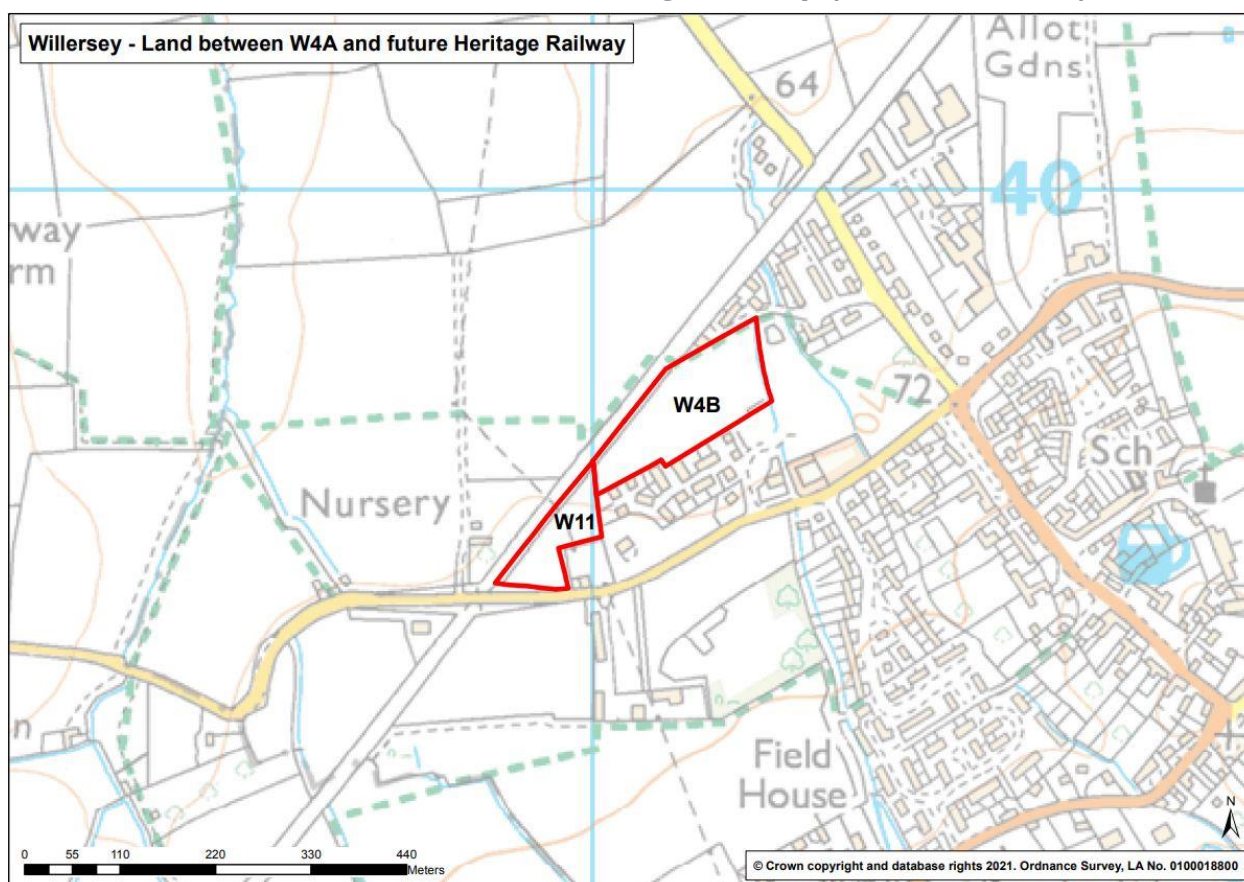
### Summary

These sites are currently allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan. However, a firm development proposal has not been put to the Council or an indication of how or when this site will be brought forward. There is now a need to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain. Reassessment of this site has found that five or more dwellings would unlikely be able to be accommodated on this site whilst achieving the required level of Biodiversity Net Gain.

### Recommendation

This site should be deallocated from the Local Plan. The site remains within the Willersey development boundary, where the principle of development is accepted. However, there is not a reasonable prospect that this site will deliver five or more dwellings by 2031.

## Land between Colin Lane and future Heritage Railway (refs: W4B, W11)



**Proposal:** 40 homes on W4B and further housing on W11

**Site area:** Combined 2.54ha  
(W4B: 1.82ha; W11: 0.72ha)

**Assessment date:** January 2021

**Land ownership:** The land is in two separate ownerships. Conversations are ongoing to establish if the owners are willing to work together.

### Site description

The wider site area comprises two separate SHELAA site submissions, which have been amalgamated together to consider whether any development in this location would be suitable.

The site is located on flat ground in the north-west corner of Willersey and comprises two fields, which are used for animal pasture. The site is bound to the north-west by the wooded embankment of the former Cheltenham to Honeybourne Railway line, which is expected to reopen in future as an extension to the existing heritage railway (the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway). A recently completed 50 dwelling development wraps around the eastern boundary and south-eastern boundary, which provides a readymade access into W4B. An electric sub-station and Colin Lane are located at the south-west boundary.

### Planning history

*This is a summary of the key planning applications and is not a comprehensive list*

20/04553/OUT - Erection of up to 40 ultra-low carbon dwellings, associated landscaping and biodiversity net-gains (Outline application). Pending consideration

17/04765/OUT – an Outline application for up to 40 dwellings including details of access was refused in January 2019 on W4B (ref: 17/04765/OUT). The subsequent appeal was dismissed in December 2019 (ref: APP/F1610/W/19/3229031). The only refusal reason contested at the appeal was that the development proposal was outside the Development Boundary and was therefore contrary to the Development Plan.

## Landscape

*These comments are made on the basis of a survey conducted by a qualified Landscape Officer. A full landscape and visual impact assessment would be required of any development proposal (desktop and site assessments) undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced landscape professional.*

Parcel W4B was previously assessed as part of the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update' Additional Sites 2: Final report (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, October 2014).

Local change has occurred due to the 50 dwelling scheme that has now been built to the south and east of the parcels and is known as 'Willow Green' (16/02543/REM).

### Parcel Specific Features

**W4B** – The parcel was assessed as part of the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update' Additional Sites 2: Final report (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, October 2014). The local context has changed since that description was produced, an amended description is set out below.

The parcel is a grass ley field. To the north, there is a recent housing estate and a well vegetated dismantled railway on a low embankment which screens all views from the wider landscape in this direction. The eastern and western boundaries are defined by hedgerow, the hedgerow and trees to the south have been removed in the intervening years which make a weak landscape transition to the residential scheme to the south and east. Although the parcel lies on the edge of the settlement, the dismantled railway is a strong boundary feature. The visual envelope of the parcel is limited by layers of intervening features to all sides. Willersey Footpath 8 is present along the northern boundary.

**W11** – the parcel has not previously been assessed for landscape sensitivity. The parcel is grass ley field. To the north-west, there is a well vegetated dismantled railway on a low embankment which screens all views from the wider landscape in this direction. Although the parcel lies on the edge of the settlement, the dismantled railway is a strong boundary feature. The southern and eastern boundaries are defined by a combination of hedgerow and an electricity substation. Due to the presence of the substation electricity lines cross the parcel. South of the station and hedgerow is Collin Lane. Beyond the eastern boundary is a combination of horse paddocks and the residential scheme known as Willow Green. The visual envelope of the parcel is limited by layers of intervening features to all sides. No public access is permitted within the parcel.

### Landscape Context

National Character Area 106: Severn and Avon Vales

Landscape Character Type: Unwooded Vale

Landscape Character Area VE1C: Mickleton Vale Fringe

### Constraints/Designations

Landscape: Not within the Cotswolds AONB. The boundary to the AONB is present along the southern boundary of parcel W11.

Historic: No designated features. The historic route of the Stratford to Cheltenham railway line is present to the north west of the parcels.

Biodiversity: Watercourse along eastern and western boundaries

Other (floodplain, PROWs): Willersey Footpath 8 is present to the north of parcel W4B

### Landscape Sensitivity

Justification:

**W4B:** The landscape sensitivity given to the parcel as part of its inclusion within the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update' Additional Sites 2: Final report (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, October 2014) was **Medium/Low**. The justification for this landscape sensitivity needs to be updated given the recent change in the local landscape. This is set out below.

The parcel's susceptibility to development is in its quiet character and location at the edge of the settlement, the adjacent PROW and the remaining tree and hedgerow vegetation. Given the new baseline context to the south and east of the parcel, residential development here is not considered to represent a significant extension to the settlement. The railway embankment to the north forms a robust edge to the settlement and would limit the landscape character and visual appreciation of the parcel from the wider landscape.

**W11:** The residential scheme to the east has brought development up to the eastern boundary of this parcel. This built context alongside the electricity substation has eroded the rural character of the parcel. Boundary vegetation forms an important landscape feature in this location and helps to filter views of these urbanising features. Given the surrounding context and limited visual envelope the introduction of residential development to the parcel is unlikely to form a significant change to the local landscape character. Given the above the parcel is considered to have a **Medium/Low** landscape sensitivity.

## Biodiversity

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. Further specialist survey work may be required before the site can be allocated in the Local Plan.*

The refused planning application on W4B included an ecological report (All Ecology, July 2017). This found the site to have some ecological interest, including hedgerows and a hedgerow ditch. However, if a development proposal was well-designed, the ecological interest could be retained and enhanced to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain.

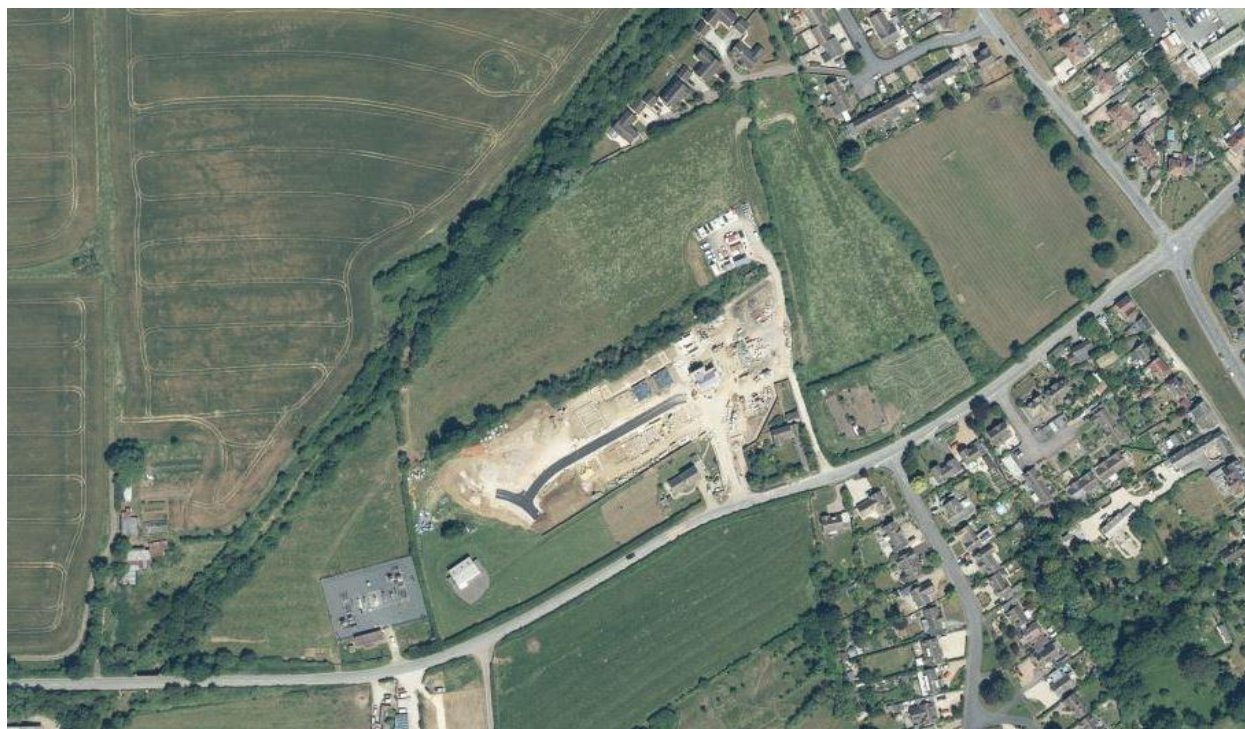
There are also opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain, as laid out in the ecological report, to enhance certain features of the site for biodiversity, in line with the requirements of the NPPF. In particular, there are opportunities to enhance the ditch as part of the landscape scheme for an ecological corridor on the eastern side of the site.

W11 appears to be similar in nature to W4B in terms of its biodiversity value, although an ecological survey is required to confirm this. The former railway embankment along the north-west boundary and the hedge that abuts Colin Road is Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland). There is also a hedgerow separating the W11 from W4B.

The hedgerows would need to be retained within any development. There is also an opportunity to provide some planting to better screen the electric sub-station in the south-east corner of W11. Furthermore, the nature recovery network and natural capital mapping indicates that additional woodland planting parallel to the railway line would provide biodiversity and other wider ecosystems services benefits.

## Trees

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. An Arboricultural Report that accords with BS 5837:2012 would be required of any development proposal.*



There are no trees worthy of Tree Preservation Orders within either site. The hedgerows running alongside the sites appear on the 1884 Ordnance survey and are therefore likely to be pre-enclosure hedges and would be considered to be important under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

## Historic Environment (excluding archaeology)

These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer. A full historic environment or heritage assessment would be required of any development proposal.

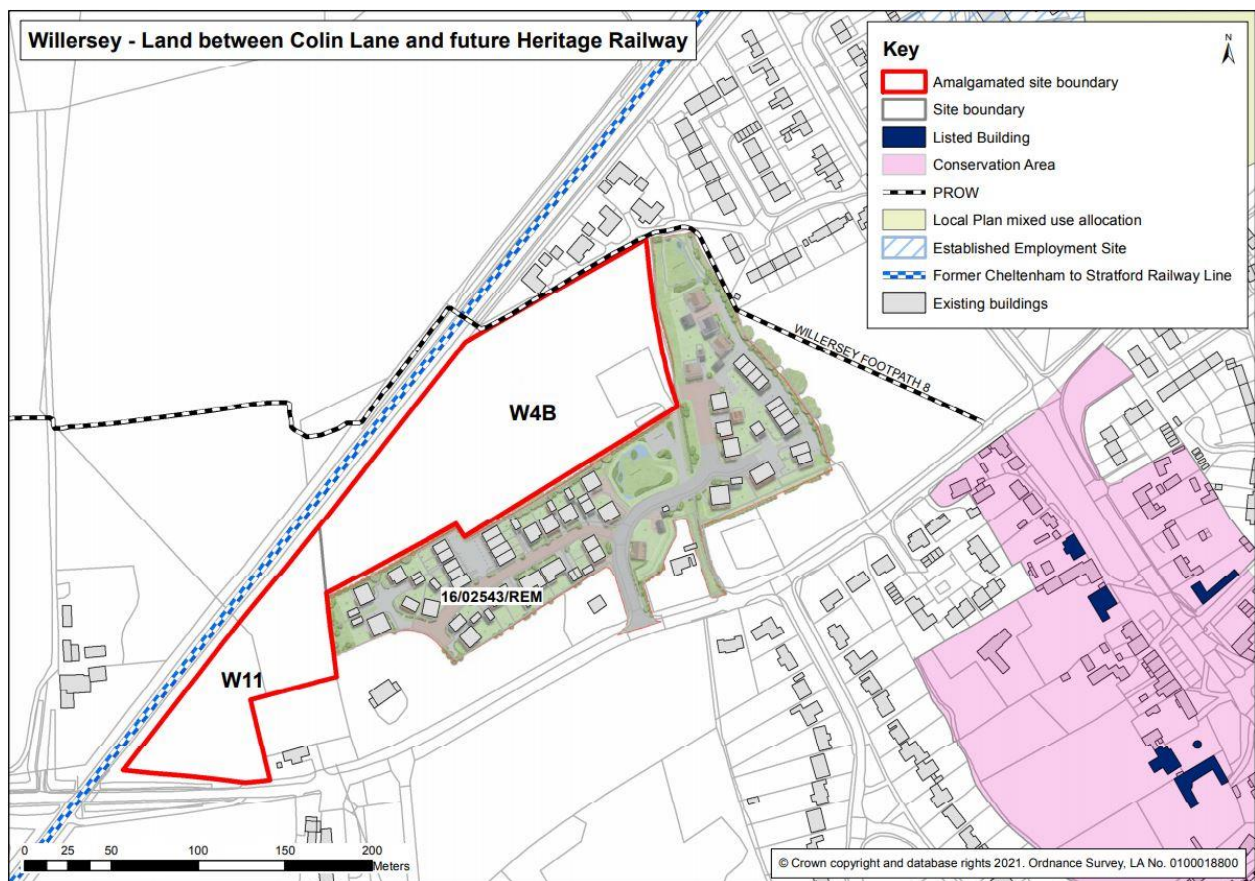
Part of Willersey is designated as a Conservation Area. However, this is centred on the historic core of the settlement along Main Street running through the village. The sites are located towards the north western edge of the village and are separated from the conservation area by late C20 development and the recently completed housing to the north of Collin Lane. Due to the location of the sites and the approved development adjacent to them, there is unlikely to be any impact upon the setting of the conservation area, subject to the scale, design, layout and detail of the development.

The closest listed buildings are sited to the eastern side of the aforementioned C20 housing in Collin Close, on Main Street. The development of either site would therefore be unlikely to impact upon any designated heritage assets.

Although the existing fields in this area contribute to the rural setting of the settlement, the land in this area is fairly flat and views across to and from the sites from public vantage points along the main roads near the site are limited. However, the adjacent railway is an important historic feature, which is likely to return to its original use in future, and this must be considered within the design of any development proposals.

## Evaluation

The principle of development in this location is considered to be acceptable.



## Other issues / constraints

- .
- Public Right of Way runs along the northern boundary of W4B;
- Ridge and furrow on both fields;
- Vale of Evesham Lorry Zone;
- Adjacent to an electricity sub-station; and

- Adjacent to the route which is protected for the reopening of a heritage railway line (as set out in Local Plan Policy SP6), which could provide a noise issue. Development proposals must not prejudice its reuse as a railway line.

## Summary

The general principle for the development of W4B was found to be all but expectable other than for the fact that the site was outside the development boundary of Willersey. This is therefore a suitable candidate for allocation in the Local Plan.

W11 shares a very similar nature in terms of its character and position within the village, although the shape of the site and the location of the electricity substation in the south east corner are likely to constrain the number of houses that could otherwise be accommodated on this site and the site layout.

W4B and W11 are in separate ownerships. If the sites are allocated, the policy should specify that an access road can be provided between the two sites with no ransom strips.

The policy should also specify that the hedgerows should be retained and ecological enhancements should be provided, included but not limited to the enhancement of the ditch as part of the landscape scheme for an ecological corridor on the eastern side of the site, as well as planting to better screen the electricity substation.

## Recommendation

The sites are developable and have potential to be considered for allocation in the Local Plan.

## Indicative capacity

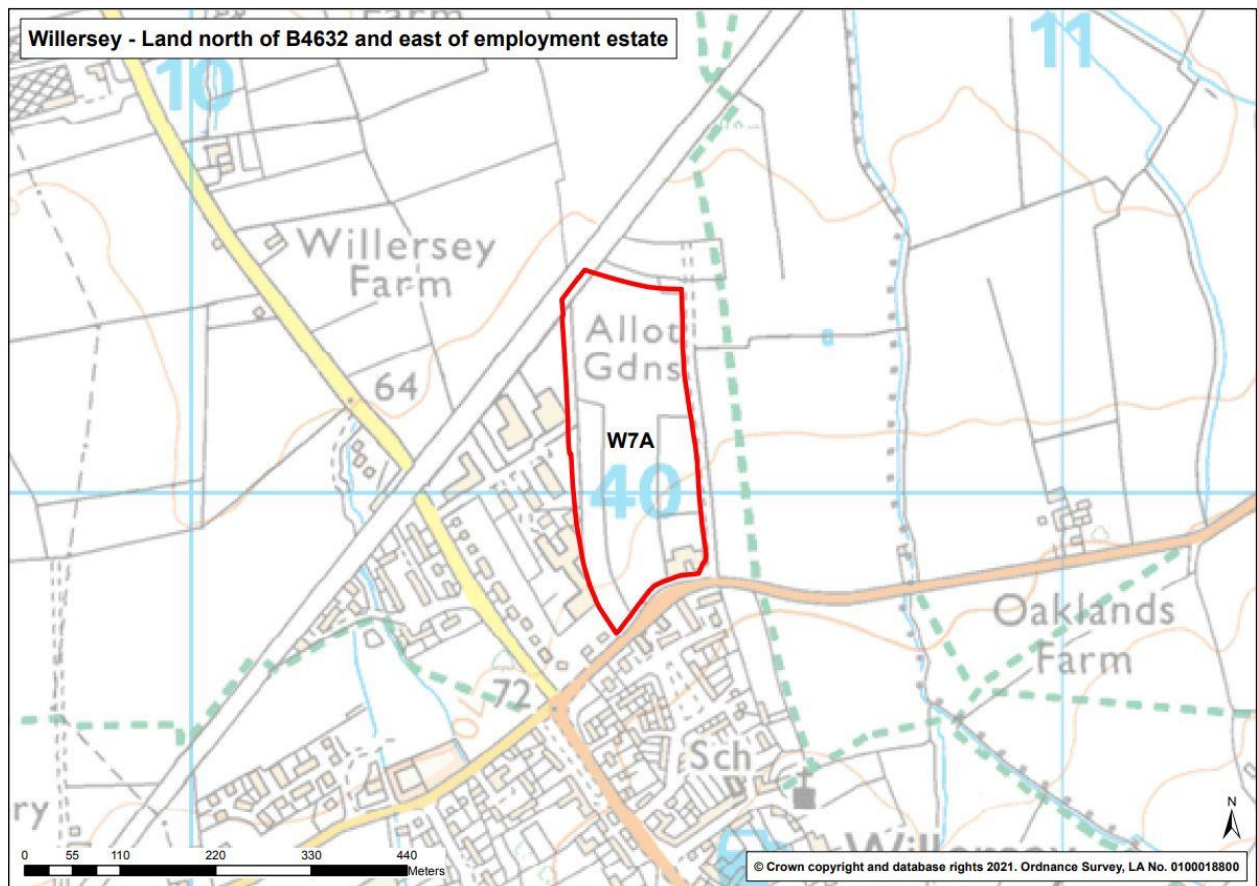
40 dwellings on W4B (based on previous planning application) with 10 further dwellings on W11 (based on a density multiplier assumption with land discounted to exclude area around electricity sub-station)

## Proposed site design brief if the site was allocated in the Local Plan

*The following is not an exhaustive list and further guidance on design requirements will be provided through the pre-application process. Developments will be expected to comply with the requirements of the Cotswold Design Code and to deliver high quality built and green infrastructure design.*

- The layout of either site if developed independently should include an access road between W4B and W11. No ransom strip should be left between the two sites.
- Green infrastructure should form a key element of any design with additional woodland planted adjacent to the railway and enhancements of the hedges and ditch.
- Site layout would need to factor the future operational needs of a reinstated railway line and resultant amenity issues to future residents.

## Land north of B4632 and east of employment estate (ref: W7A)



**Proposal:** Housing and an extension to Willersey Industrial Estate

**Assessment date:** January 2021

**Site area:** 5.01ha

**Land ownership:** Single ownership

### Site description

This site is located on the northern edge of Willersey on open and generally flat land. The site has been used as allotment gardens, although the allotment use has reportedly diminished in recent years due to the likelihood that the site will be developed. The site currently contains several fenced enclosures with a series of dilapidated buildings and storage areas at the southern boundary.

Willersey Business Park forms the western boundary and there is open pastoral farmland to the east. The northern boundary is fenced, with the low vegetation of the dismantled railway line, which, together with extensive woodland, effectively screens all views from the north. There is a hedged track along the eastern boundary, with a PROW running parallel nearby in the adjoining pasture field.

### Planning history

*This is a summary of the key planning applications and is not a comprehensive list*

Part of the site is allocated in the Local Plan for residential uses and B1, B2 and B8 employment uses. This area is also within the Willersey development boundary.

Part of the site in the far north is not included within the existing Local Plan site allocation or the Willersey Development Boundary. This area would be an extension to the site allocation.

No part of the site has any recent planning application history.

### Landscape

These comments are made on the basis of a survey conducted by a qualified Landscape Officer. A full landscape and visual impact assessment would be required of any development proposal (desktop and site assessments) undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced landscape professional.

The parcel was previously assessed as part of the White Report (October 2014) and is now allocated for mixed use development within the Local Plan. The residential element of the parcel was assessed as parcel W\_7A. The economic development part of the parcel was assessed as WIL\_EIC. A section within the north of the parcel has not been assessed within the White Report and is not allocated within the Local Plan.

#### Description

The White Report (2014) provided a description for the parcel. This is reproduced below and is considered to still be relevant to the parcel:

*'The site lies on the northern side of the settlements, where it abuts Willersey Business Park to the west and open pastoral farmland to the east. It consists of very gently sloping pastoral land falling north, in fenced enclosures with a series of dilapidated buildings and rough storage areas on its southern boundary, where a tall hedge separates it from the B4632. Its northern boundary is fenced, with views over the flat pasture fields to the low vegetation on the dismantled railway, which, together with extensive woodland, effectively screens all views from the north. There is a hedged track along the eastern boundary, with a PRow running parallel a few metres away in the adjoining pasture field'*

The landscape described to the north of the parcel is now included within the parcel.

#### Landscape Context

National Character Area 106: Severn and Avon Vales

Landscape Character Type: Unwooded Vale

Landscape Character Area VEIC: Mickleton Vale Fringe

#### Constraints/Designations

Landscape: Not within the Cotswolds AONB. AONB boundary is present to the south of the parcel.

Historic: None

Other (floodplain, PROWs): No PRow present within the parcel. Willersey Footpath 4 is present near the eastern boundary. Further PRow present to the south east.

#### Landscape Sensitivity

Evaluation: **Medium/Low**

Justification: The landscape sensitivity given to the parcel as part of its inclusion within the 'Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District Update' (Cotswold District Council and White Consultants, October 2014) report was **Medium/Low**. The justification provided for this rating is reproduced below and is still considered to be an appropriate justification for the parcels landscape sensitivity:

*'The site is susceptible to housing development by reason of its current land use, but this has little time-depth. It is of low susceptibility by reason of its well-screened location and proximity to existing economic development, outside the settlement but well-screened within the wider landscape. The AONB boundary is the southern edge of the B4632, on the northern edge of which a tall hedge provides screening at present, although there may be some limited views into the site from first floor windows of houses opposite. Dense hedges on nearby parallel field boundaries screen views in from traffic approaching the settlement from the east, but care would be required to ensure that building heights were no more than those of buildings in the adjoining Business Park, to avoid any significant visibility from the scarp slope to the south east. Retention of part of the strongly vegetated southern boundary is recommended.*

The inclusion of the land to the north does not change the landscape sensitivity of the parcel. This is because the land shares the same characteristics as the existing parcel and creates a logical addition to the parcel up to the dismantled railway. Any development would need to be delivered within a robust landscape framework that retains and supplements the existing boundary vegetation.



## Biodiversity

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. Further specialist survey work may be required before the site can be allocated in the Local Plan.*

The site now largely comprises pastoral and arable farmland, which has appears to have areas of improved grassland which are not expected to have high ecological value, although further ecological surveys would be required to confirm this. There are several features within the site, which may be more ecologically sensitive. These include:

- several dilapidated buildings within the south of the site, which may contain bat roosts, Barn Owls, etc.;
- trees and hedgerows, which were observed to be a food source for many birds, are likely to provide habitat for nesting and may provide a bat flight line;
- the disused railway line in the north-east corner is Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland) and is a wildlife corridor; and
- areas that appear to be unimproved grassland within the far north and the south-east of the site, although further survey work is required to confirm this.

Opportunities to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in this location might include a green swathe around the eastern and southern boundaries, which includes tree and hedgerow planting and SuDS that are designed for ecological enhancement.

## Trees

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer in winter. An Arboricultural Report that accords with BS 5837:2012 would be required of any development proposal.*



There are two mature Ash trees within the overgrown hedgerow on the southern boundary. The eastern boundary also has numerous semi-mature trees, which include a variety of species which provide screening between the site and the adjacent industrial estate. There are also several semi-mature trees in the south-east corner and further semi-mature trees along the eastern boundary.

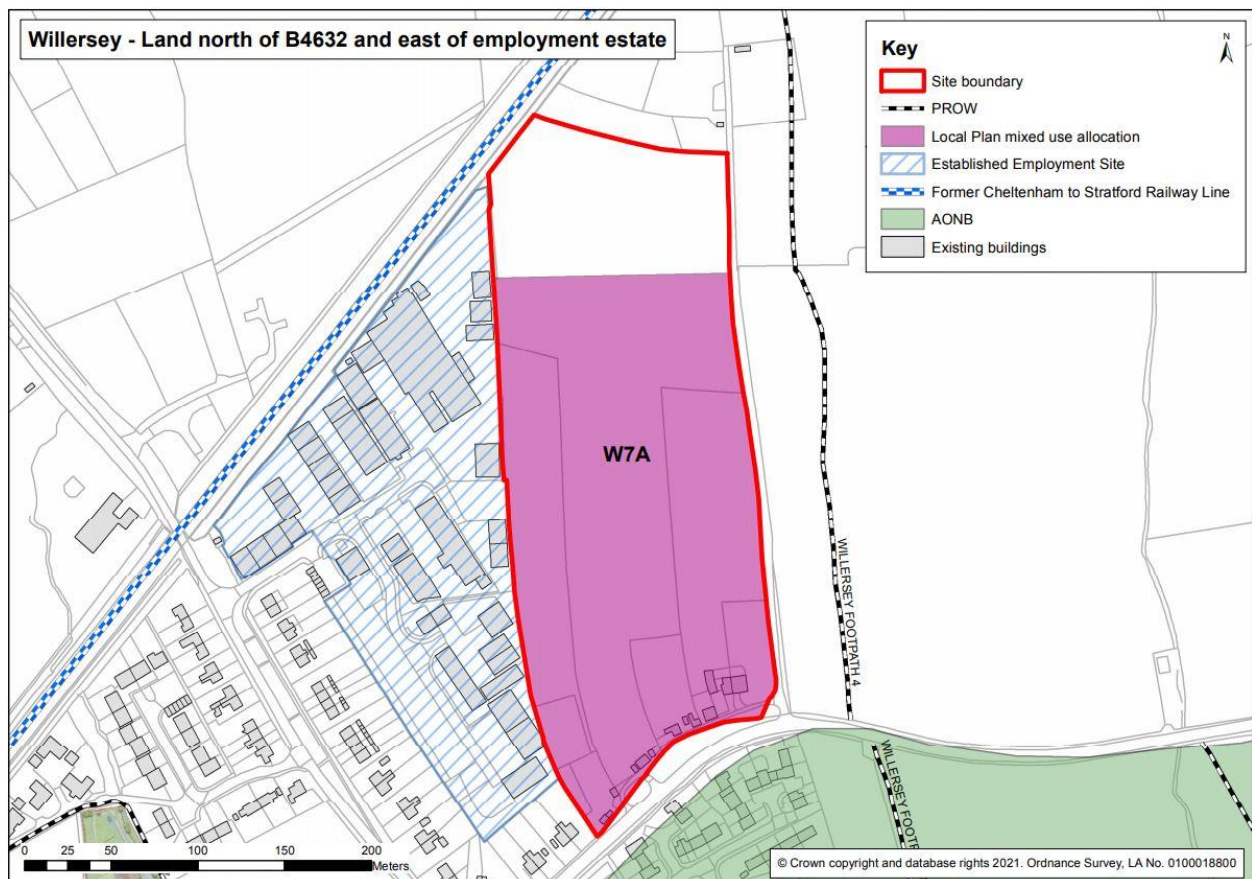
The hedgerows running alongside the eastern, southern and western boundaries appear on the 1884 Ordnance survey and are therefore likely to be pre-enclosure hedges and would be considered to be important under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

The trees and hedgerows surrounding this site screen views from the AONB to the south and views into the site on the eastern approach into Willersey. It is therefore important that the existing trees and hedgerows are retained. However, the access into the site may require some tree removal to provide sufficient highway width and visibility splays. This may harm the rural approach to the village and views into the AONB. Replacement planting would be required within the site but this is also likely to make it more difficult to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain on this site.

There are also opportunities to provide additional tree planting within the site. Tree planting could form part of green infrastructure improvements if a transitional belt were incorporated within the design of the scheme, which could span the southern and eastern boundaries. Further tree planting may also be beneficial along the boundary with the industrial estate to provide further screening and to filter noise from the industrial estate.

### Historic Environment (excluding archaeology)

*These comments are made on the basis of a desktop and site survey conducted by a Principal Planning Policy Officer. A full historic environment or heritage assessment would be required of any development proposal.*



Part of Willersey is designated as a Conservation Area. However, this is centred on the historic core of the settlement along Main Street running through the village. The site is located at the north eastern edge of the village and is separated from the Conservation Area by late C20 development at Lay Orchard and the overgrown hedgerow on either side of the B4632. There is therefore unlikely to be any impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area, subject to the scale, design, layout and detail of the development.

The closest listed buildings are the Grade I listed Church of St Peter and Grade II buildings along Church Street. Although the site is extensively screened by the aforementioned C20 housing and vegetation along the B4632, a substantial part of the site (mostly the northern part of the site) is visible from the church tower. The development of this site would therefore impact upon the rural setting of the Church. Further assessment is required to understand this issue further.

Although the existing fields in this area do contribute to the rural setting of the settlement, the land in this area is fairly flat. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to improve the harsh development line which Willersey Industrial Estate currently provides to the wider landscape with a softer edge to the settlement.

### **Other issues / constraints**

- The District has had several mixed use planning applications where the residential part of the development has been developed first and the employment part of the development has failed to be delivered. This has undermines the basis on which the planning permission was granted in the first instance. The suitability of W7A is dependent on the delivery of the employment part of the development.
- There is a demand for allotments in Willersey. The Cotswold District Open Space & Recreation Study also identifies a shortage of public open space in Willersey. The allotment use has anecdotally diminished in recent years due to the threat of development – people have not wanted to invest time or money in allotments on this site, despite there being demand for allotments in Willersey.
- The site is viewed from a Public Right of Way to the east;
- Access issue for the industrial estate extension (the existing industrial estate access is believed to already be constrained and a further extension is likely to worsen the existing issue);
- Electricity pylons cross the southern part of the site;
- Vale of Evesham Lorry Zone;
- Noise from the adjacent industrial estate;
- Also adjacent to the route which is protected for the reopening of a heritage railway line (as set out in Local Plan Policy SP6), which could provide a further noise issue;
- Access to the village centre – a crossing would be required over B4632; and
- Loss of agricultural land.

### **Summary**

The majority of this site is already allocated for mixed use development in the adopted Local Plan. This area continues to be developable.

The part of the site to the north of the existing Local Plan site allocation would be an extension to the site allocation. This land is part of the same field that is already allocated in the Local Plan. It would make best use of this land and historic field boundaries if the whole of this field were brought forward for development, rather than leaving a remnant part of an agricultural field which may be difficult to cultivate.

### Recommendation

The existing Local Plan site allocation should remain allocated in the Local Plan. The northwards extension to the site is a candidate for further consideration for allocation within the Local Plan.

### Indicative capacity

57 houses (based on the density multiplier assumption) and 2ha of B1, B2 and/or B8 use class employment land as an extension to Willersey Industrial Estate

### Proposed site design brief if the site was allocated in the Local Plan

*The following is not an exhaustive list and further guidance on design requirements will be provided through the pre-application process. Developments will be expected to comply with the requirements of the Cotswold Design Code and to deliver high quality built and green infrastructure design.*

- The employment and residential aspects of the development must be built simultaneously. The first dwelling must not be occupied until construction has commenced on the employment units. No more than 50% of the dwellings will be completed before 50% of the employment units are completed. No more than 75% of the dwellings will be completed before 75% of the employment units are completed. The final dwelling must not be occupied before the final employment unit is occupied.

- The development of this site should improve the eastern gateway into Willersey and screen views of Willersey Industrial Estate from the wider landscape and it should be informed by a robust landscape framework that retains and supplements the existing boundary vegetation;
- The trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries must be retained. The hedgerow along the eastern and western boundaries must be thickened and reinstated where they are missing to fix broken linkages within the hedgerow network; screen the site from views from the west; and help to mitigate the noise impact from the adjacent industrial estate. Planting should comprise a variety of native species;
- A substantial landscape buffer must be provided along the length of the eastern and southern boundaries. This should be part of the development's public open space and may be where SuDS are located;
- Allotments should be provided on the site to compensate the loss of existing allotments. These may be included within the area of public open space.
- The site access should ideally be located in the south-west corner where visibility splays at the junction with the B4632 are longest and where the pedestrian route into the village centre is most direct. The development of this site is likely to require off-site highway improvements, including a new crossing facility over the B4632 and footpaths instated / upgraded along this road to provide a safe pedestrian route into the village centre.
- The extension to Willersey Industrial Estate should be located in the north-west corner of the site. It should be screened from views of the wider landscape. If a new access is provided connecting the site with Willersey Industrial Estate, further off-site highway improvements are likely to be required to incentivise employment traffic to use the new access to the B4632, rather than the existing access from the industrial estate via Badsy Lane.

#### **Key actions required**

- Ecological assessment;
- Assessment of impact of development of the site on the Grade I listed Church of St Peter;
- Noise and vibration impact assessment required of adjacent industrial estate and the impact of the future industrial estate; and
- Approval from Gloucestershire County Council on highway requirements.