

Chippenham Site Allocations Plan

Briefing Note 2: Definition of the Chippenham Strategic Areas

Wiltshire Council is preparing the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan, which will set the long term pattern and direction of growth for the town's expansion. This briefing note is one of a number of papers which have been/will be created to support the progress of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan. This note explains the definition of the Chippenham Strategic Areas.

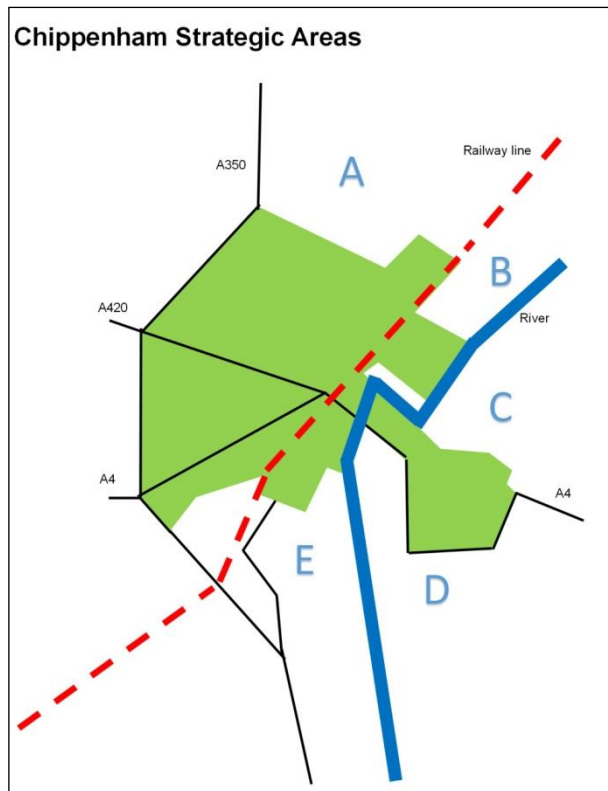
1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides greater detail about how the strategic areas have been defined and specifically why no areas have been identified west of the town. The information is not included as policy and provides context on how future work on the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan will be progressed. The purpose of strategic sites and the process of identifying land to accommodate them are each explained in separate briefing notes¹.
- 1.2 The emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy² includes a diagrammatic representation of Chippenham showing 'strategic areas' around the urban edge in the countryside, south and east of the town. The text within the draft core strategy summarises the rationale behind this as set out below.

"5.54a Core Policy 10 identifies a need to identify at least a further 2625 dwellings (once existing completions and commitments have been taken into account) and 26.5ha of land for employment development on land adjoining the built up area. The Chippenham Site Allocation DPD will identify mixed use land opportunities necessary to deliver at least this scale of growth. In this context there are a number of strategic areas where large mixed use sites could be located and directions for growth are shown diagrammatically below:

¹ Chippenham Site Allocations Plan Briefing Note 1: Chippenham Strategic Site Selection Methodology and Briefing Note 5: The Role of Strategic Sites, August 2014

² EXAM/34b Wiltshire Core Strategy: Pre-submission Document (Track changes version) April 2014



5.54b *These broad ‘strategic areas’ for growth are indicated by barriers such as main roads, rivers and the main railway line. The A350 is one such barrier to development, but is also considered to be a clear and logical boundary to the town, which should not be breached unless other options are exhausted. Hence no strategic areas are shown west of the A350. The Chippenham Site Allocations DPD will assess how each of these areas performs against criteria contained in Core Policy 10.”*

2. The Definition of Strategic Areas

- 2.1 The strategic areas show areas of search for strategic sites, to meet the needs of Chippenham as identified in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Selecting a preferred area(s) and then site options within the strategic area will set the long term pattern of the town’s future growth.
- 2.2 Main roads, rivers and the main railway line define the boundaries to strategic areas. These components represent barriers to development. They are not necessarily insurmountable barriers preventing development beyond; however their significance and role does affect how the town’s growth can proceed in terms of costs, linkages and constraints.
- 2.3 For instance, the river and the areas at risk of flooding alongside, represent a corridor of land which should be left undeveloped. Crossing this corridor involves additional costs, influences how new development could link to the existing town and constrains where development can be located.
- 2.4 Main transport infrastructure in the form of railway lines and main roads also influence how links are made to the existing town and crossings; bridges and junction improvements can

also involve significant costs. These too affect the feasibility of different patterns of development and how the town can grow.

- 2.5 Together these elements have influenced how the town has grown in the past and they will continue to do so. They therefore represent an appropriate foundation for a broad brush framework to consider the town's long term growth.
- 2.6 The land to the south of Chippenham between the railway and the A350, known as Hunters Moon has not been included as a strategic area because development has already been accepted in principle here. A planning application (reference N/13/01747/FUL) for 450 homes and 2.5 ha of employment land was permitted subject to the signing of a Section 106 legal agreement in January 2014.

3. West of Chippenham

- 3.1 The draft core strategy shows strategic sites east of Chippenham (strategic areas A – E). Each of the strategic areas will be assessed to see how they perform against criteria contained in the core strategy as well as the sustainability appraisal (see Section 5 below). This will culminate in a preferred area(s) being selected.
- 3.2 No strategic areas have been identified west of the A350. This is a continuation of a previous approach utilised by both North Wiltshire District Council and Wiltshire Council³. Preparation of the North Wiltshire Core Strategy included consideration of broad directions for growth. Preparation of the Wiltshire Core Strategy reviewed this as well as other evidence and proposed specific strategic site allocations. However, sites were removed from the draft core strategy at the suggestion of the Inspector examining the soundness of the plan.
- 3.3 The former North Wiltshire District Council's 'North Wiltshire Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation document'⁴ proposed options for growth at Chippenham. It consulted on options for growth in an eastern and southern direction, but did not suggest options west of the town. It was thought that the 'Chippenham Western bypass', with its opportunity in the future for becoming a dual-carriageway, was a serious constraint to linking any new expansion into the town⁵.
- 3.4 The 'Wiltshire 2026 Strategic Sites Background Paper 2009'⁶ originally prepared to inform the Wiltshire Core Strategy, excluded potential strategic sites to the west of Chippenham as they were adjacent to the A350 and are separated from the rest of the town. The A350 is part of the County's National Primary Route network and has safeguarded land for dualling (the role of the A350 and its importance is discussed further in Section 4 below)⁷. This position was confirmed following consultation stages and a reassessment of strategic site options as reported in 'Topic Paper 12 Site Selection Process'⁸. The proposed changes

³ North Wiltshire Council was the Local Planning Authority for the Chippenham area responsible for preparing a statutory development plan (the North Wiltshire Local Development Framework) until its abolition and the replacement by Unitary Authority for Wiltshire in 2008. Previous work by the District Council contributed to the preparation of the Core Strategy.

⁴ Core Strategy Second Issues and Options Consultation, North Wiltshire District Council, May 2007 (paragraphs 8.189 – 8.200)

⁵ Core Strategy Second Issues and Options Consultation, North Wiltshire District Council, May 2007 (paragraph 8.200)

⁶ Wiltshire Core Strategy Strategic Sites Background Paper, Wiltshire Council, December 2009 (pp 13 – 28)

⁷ Wiltshire Core Strategy Strategic Sites Background Paper, Wiltshire Council, December 2009 (p 27)

⁸ Topic Paper 12: Site Selection Process, Wiltshire Council, January 2012, Appendix 3 (pp 46 -123)

to the draft core strategy, led by this evidence, continue this approach since no new factors have emerged necessitating a different view. Successive Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments have shown overwhelming land owner and developer interest east of the A350 and no alternative strategic sites have ever been promoted by developers in the same way.

- 3.5 Some responses to the consultation carried out on the suggested change to Core Policy 10 queried why no strategic areas were identified west of the A350, but the definition of a set of strategic areas encapsulates a long standing understanding of Chippenham's realistic growth options.

4. The role of the A350

- 4.1 The A350 does not have equivalent status as a barrier to development when compared to the other main roads in and around Chippenham. Core Policy 66⁹ provides specific emphasis upon maintaining the strategic transport network along the A350 corridor to support development growth at Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge, Westbury and Warminster. Therefore the A350 has greater weight as a barrier. Transport studies supporting the preparation of the Wiltshire Core Strategy refer to the fact that the A350 forms the town's connection to the national strategic network¹⁰. The A350 runs to the west of the town and roughly forms its western boundary.
- 4.2 The A350 is a key part of Wiltshire's Primary Road Network, around Chippenham it is currently a single carriageway two-way road with at-grade junctions, but land has been reserved to allow for its dualling in the future. To the north the A350 connects with the M4 at Junction 17, en route to Malmesbury and Cirencester north of the M4. To the south, it provides a strategic link through Wiltshire, connecting with settlements such as Melksham, Trowbridge and Westbury, before joining the A36(T) at Warminster. The A36(T) connects the Bristol and Bath area with the south coast and the ports of Portsmouth and Southampton.
- 4.3 The A350 carries the highest volume of traffic and HGV movements on Wiltshire's non-trunk road primary routes and has experienced locally significant traffic growth¹¹. Growth in Chippenham over the plan period is likely to lead to increased use of the A350 to the west of Chippenham. Major development by the allocation and delivery of strategic sites west of the A350 would add a far greater burden on its capacity, directly undermining the road's higher strategic role to Chippenham and Wiltshire.
- 4.4 Transport studies have concluded that it was considered essential to protect the strategic role of the A350 within Wiltshire's road network. Mitigation schemes at key junctions on the A350 may be necessary so that the planned growth in Chippenham can be accommodated without detriment to strategic traffic¹².

⁹ EXAM/34b Wiltshire Core Strategy: Pre-submission Document,(Track changes version) April 2014 p223

¹⁰ Chippenham Transport Strategy Development: Final Report, SKM , May 2013 and Chippenham Transport Strategy Development : Land Allocation Report, January 2012

¹¹ Chippenham Transport Strategy Development: Final Report, SKM , May 2013 p25

¹² Chippenham Transport Strategy Development: Final Report, SKM , May 2013 p63

- 4.5 Since the submission of the draft core strategy the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)¹³ prepared by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP) has been developed. This notes that a large number of Wiltshire's most innovative firms are located around the renowned high tech M4 Corridor to the north and along the A350. It is therefore a key economic artery through the west of Wiltshire¹⁴. The SEP has successfully submitted transport investment bids to the Government. These have the aim of ensuring the A350 positively contributes to the economy through improvements that can provide reliable journey times for business in Wiltshire¹⁵. This evidence reinforces the understanding that the A350 has a particularly important wider strategic role. The SEP confirms the wider importance placed upon the A350, which make options for development that involve breaching and building beside it much more difficult to achieve without compromising its strategic role. The A350 therefore represents a barrier to development and a logical boundary to the town.

5. Sustainability appraisal

- 5.1 The strategic areas will also be assessed using sustainability appraisal. Sustainability appraisal is an assessment that reports on the likely environmental, social and economic effects of growth options in order to inform decision making. This work will be carried out independently to the council.

Further information:

For further information in relation to the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan visit the council's web site:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment/planningpolicy/chippenhamsiteallocationsplan.htm>

Or contact Spatial Planning via email: spatialplanningpolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk or telephone: 01225 713223.

Other Briefing Notes:

Briefing Note 1: Chippenham Strategic Site Selection Methodology

Briefing Note 3: The Housing Requirement for Chippenham

Briefing Note 4: Relationship with Neighbourhood Plans

Briefing Note 5: The Role of Strategic Sites

¹³ Aligning Local Innovation With Government Ambition, Strategic Economic Plan, Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership, March 2014

¹⁴ Aligning Local Innovation With Government Ambition, Strategic Economic Plan, Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership, March 2014, p46

¹⁵ Aligning Local Innovation With Government Ambition, Strategic Economic Plan, Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership, March 2014 p11