



# South Wiltshire Core Strategy

Topic Paper 5 Addendum 2:

*Biodiversity*

July 2009

# TOPIC PAPER 5 - BIODIVERISTY, INCLUDING WATER

## ADDENDA (2)

### 1.0 Executive summary

- 1.1 This report represents a supplementary paper to Topic Paper 5 and the Addenda to Topic Paper 5 both with respect to the Natural Environment and Biodiversity. This has been produced to respond to the 'Core Strategy Preferred Options – Embracing and managing change for the benefit of all' and the subsequent magazine 'Our Place in the Future – Planning the Future in Salisbury and south Wiltshire'. These documents were consulted on commencing in February 2008 and September 2008 respectively. This builds on the original Issues and Options Consultation that took place during the summer and early autumn of 2007.
- 1.2 The paper firstly analyses the representations received as a result of both consultations with respect to biodiversity an the natural environment including water, the section then continues to look at relevant individual comments that were made to ascertain if there were any additional areas that needed looking into to ensure the submission draft is to sound. At the same time the original Topic Paper in this series was also updated with any new evidence that has either been produced by the council or by external bodies. The analysis of all of this information has resulted in the formulation of draft policies for the Core Strategy submission draft, that were then appraised through Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment to identify any amendments required to ensure that the plan and policies are in conformity with the relevant European directives. The amendments made as a result of this appraisal are detailed towards the end of this Topic Paper.
- 1.3 This Topic Paper should also be read in conjunction with the other papers within this series as well as Topic Paper 18 Water.

### 2.0 Introduction, purpose of document and context.

- 2.1 This document is the third element of the series topic papers that were published in order to present an audit trail how firstly the evidence upon which we based our Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation was based and secondly identify the results of the Issues and Options consultation and determine which options to take forward as preferred. This third topic paper now looks at the results of the Preferred Options consultation (both the black book and the OPITF) and determines how options are taken forward to submission. Any amendments or developments in evidence base that have evolved over the period have been written into the initial Topic Paper. At this stage you need to scope any new evidence that has appeared since the Topic Paper's were initially written and up date them factually so that they are as up to date as possible at submission. This Topic Paper approach as been decided upon In order to make it easier for stakeholders to understand how we had reached our conclusions. It has been a key part of identifying the challenges facing our district and feasible options for addressing them. The Topic Papers written are as follows:

- Topic 1 - Climate Change
- Topic 2 - Housing
- Topic 3 - Settlement Strategy
- Topic 4 - Supporting Communities
- Topic 5 – Natural Environment

- Topic 6 - Flooding
  - Topic 7 - Agriculture
  - Topic 8 - Retail
  - Topic 9 - Economy
  - Topic 10 - Tourism & Leisure
  - Topic 11 - Planning Obligations
  - Topic 12 - Waste & Pollution
  - Topic 13 - Conservation
  - Topic 14 - Design
  - Topic 15 - Transport
  - Topic 16 - Inclusive Design
  - Topic 17 – Infrastructure
  - Topic 18 - Water
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- Addendum to Topic 1 - Climate Change
  - Addendum to Topic 2 - Housing
  - Addendum to Topic 3 - Settlement Strategy
  - Addendum to Topic 4 - Supporting Communities
  - Addendum to Topic 5 - Biodiversity
  - Addendum to Topic 6 - Flooding
  - Addendum to Topic 7 - Agriculture
  - Addendum to Topic 8 - Retail
  - Addendum to Topic 9 - Economy
  - Addendum to Topic 10 - Tourism & Leisure
  - Addendum to Topic 11 - Planning Obligations
  - Addendum to Topic 13 - Conservation
  - Addendum to Topic 14 - Design
  - Addendum to Topic 15 - Transport
  - Addendum to Topic 16 - Inclusive Design

- 2.2 The Issues and Options that were identified within the topic papers formed the basis for the consultation document, “Salisbury and South Wiltshire, Our Place in the Future”. This document represented a 'joined up' consultation exercise incorporating questions relevant to the Community Strategy and Salisbury Vision, as well as the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options. This document was the subject of consultation for 10 weeks between the 26<sup>th</sup> July and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2007. Over 50 public events were undertaken, to promote the process, and over 6,000 responses were received.
- 2.3 The Topic Paper Addenda identifies the response received for the Issues and Options consultation and identifies how the result have influenced and evolved to create the Preferred Options. This was called Core Strategy Preferred Options: A plan for Salisbury. Consultation was conducted over a period of 8 weeks from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008 to 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008, details of the consultation can be found CON/15 and CON/16.
- 2.4 Once the representations received during the preferred options consultation had been analysed, much thought was put into how the new consultation on 'evolved' preferred options, as required by Full Council should take form. The preferred options consultation responses showed that the options put forward within the 'Black Book' were largely acceptable however the issues arose over specific sites that had been identified, especially the concept of a new settlement close to Porton Down.
- 2.5 It was felt that the new consultation should therefore focus predominantly on an evolved strategy of the location of the housing and employment sites and that the

focus should be on those sites that would be deliverable within the first five years of the Core Strategies life.

- 2.6 Although the new consultation document produced is focused on the growth strategy it was felt that the public would still also be able to comment on the Preferred options or 'Black Book'. Consultation was conducted over a period of 8 weeks from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 until 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008. This consultation was entitled 'Our Place in the Future' and was in the format of a magazine.

### **3.0 Review of Original Topic Papers**

- 3.1 The next stage in the process is to review the initial evidence base in the original topic paper and update where necessary if you have not already done this. Where factual errors, anomalies or areas requiring clarification have been highlighted by the consultation, then these changes have been indicated on the original topic papers to show their evolution.

### **4.0 Analysis of Results of the Preferred Options Consultation**

- 4.1 The next stage in the process is to review and analyse the results of the Preferred Options (Black book ) and Our Place in the Future magazine consultation. This review together with any changes in the Topic Papers is an essential step on the road to producing the Core Strategy submission draft, this should build on the response of stakeholders to the issues and options we presented in the 'Our Place in the Future' paper. The following are the stages you should undertake to ensure all Topic Papers are reviewed in a robust and consistent manner.

#### **4.2 Assessing the Local Need - Why Are We Developing Policies on Biodiversity and the Natural Environment?**

- 4.3 The need for this topic to be included within the emerging Local Development Framework has emerged clearly from an analysis of national and regional planning policy and an appraisal of the growing body of specialist literature and guidance given to local planning authorities. Furthermore original work that has formed part of the base of evidence which will inform the Local Development Framework process has highlighted that there is a need for a new and effective set of policies to help meet our objectives.

#### **4.4 What are we trying to achieve - what are our overall objectives?**

The core objectives as envisioned at the outset of this project were to develop a set of planning policies, which contribute to the following patterns of land use:

- a) social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- b) effective protection of the environment
- c) prudent use of natural resources
- d) maintenance of high economic growth and employment

- 4.5 On a more specific level the desired outcomes at the outset of this project were:

- a) Understanding the environmental qualities of our area
- b) Considering how to maintain and enhancing the characteristics
- c) Avoid adverse impacts upon, or losses of protected sties
- d) Mitigate and compensate where losses or adverse impacts are unavoidable
- e) Promote benefits and gains for biodiversity

#### **4.6 Taking A Spatial approach**

- 4.7 It would be a crude mistake to develop a set of policies which are based on a 'one size fits all' premise. South Wiltshire is a rich and varied part of the Country and the

issues and challenges within it vary from place to place. For example, is it the case that the demand for affordable housing is uniform across the area or does it vary between settlements and should our policies reflect this. We feel that they should and this way we should produce spatial strategies that are rooted in the distinctive character of specific places and are tailored to solving their particular sets of problems. This is in a nutshell for us, what spatial planning is all about.

- 4.8 One of the drawbacks we have encountered in the past is that of plans and strategies being delivered over disparate areas, when it makes much more sense from the customers perspective to have them coordinated and covering the same areas. This is often called co-terminus service delivery and is based on joining up services and policy solutions so that they are more tailored to where they are needed.
- 4.9 To align our policy solutions to the areas where the issues are arising, we have taken a detailed look at how the diverse character of our district and assessed if there are broad areas which share similar characteristics and present similar sets of challenges.
- 4.10 The Wiltshire community areas were defined in the early 1990's in response to a review of local government boundaries that set greater store by 'natural' communities, i.e. areas that described real patterns of local life (shopping, employment, schooling, etc.) as opposed to administrative boundaries.
- 4.11 A number of dimensions were used to define these areas of local life including:- secondary school catchment areas, local convenience shopping patterns, postcode town boundaries, pre-1974 urban and rural district council boundaries, housing market areas, journey to work catchment areas, a historical study of patterns of local life by local historian, Dr. John Chandler, and the local geology/topography of the county.
- 4.12 Six of Wiltshire's twenty community areas are in Salisbury district, namely:
- City community area
  - Four Rivers community area (also known as Wilton area)
  - Mere community area
  - Nadder Valley community area (also known as Tisbury area)
  - Southern community area (also known as Downton area)
  - Stonehenge community area (also known as Amesbury or Northern area)
- 4.13 On analysis the justification for the Community areas appears just as valid today as it did when they were formed, and are to be continued through into the new Wiltshire Council. The community areas are based on a sound understanding of the hierarchy and function of settlements and how communities view their sense of place. Furthermore the issues and challenges identified do reflect the similarities within these existing areas and also the diversity between them.
- 4.14 However there is little point in rigidly sticking to a spatial pattern of interpreting the District if it is not appropriate to certain issues or challenges. For example the Military issues reach outside of south Wiltshire to the north of the plain in east and west Wiltshire and similarly there is a huge synergy between Wilton and Salisbury. Therefore while, where appropriate the Community Plan areas will form the basis of our spatial model, it will not be pursued dogmatically so, and where the functional relationship between places dictates we will promote a flexible approach. In other words the areas

defined by the community plans should best be considered as soft verges rather than cliff edges.

## **5.0 FINDINGS OF THE PREFERRED OPTIONS ('THE BLACK BOOK') AND THE OUR PLACE IN THE FUTURE MAGAZINE CONSULTATION**

### **5.1 What did we ask?**

5.2 South Wiltshire is very rich in biodiversity and landscape. Biodiversity is protected not only at the local level through county wildlife sites but also through international 'Natura 2000' designations at European Union level. Again the landscape of south Wiltshire is important within much of the housing market area falling within a nationally designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Biodiversity and the Natural Environment within south Wiltshire is important and is therefore covered within many aspects of the Preferred Options consultation. The Preferred Options rather than asking specific questions, put forward options that had evolved from the 'Issues and Options' as the way forward. The Preferred options then asked for each option whether respondents agreed with the preferred options, if there is anything that they do not like or think we had missed out. This analysis looks at the following areas that are also described here. This does not include the background paragraphs. The analysis later will also look at responses to paragraphs 8.82 to 8.90, 9.45 to 9.48, 10.42 to 10.45, 11.44 to 11.46, 12.45 to 12.47, 13.39 to 13.44)

### **5.3 District wide – spatial vision**

#### **5.4 PO3 F**

**Where we have maintained and in places enhanced our natural environment and improved managed access for the benefit of all.** This represents a real challenge to balance the sustainable growth that we are seeking regarding housing, jobs and services, while ensuring we don't compromise what respondents consider our greatest asset. This will need strong policies which robustly manage and protect the environment so that change is facilitated in a manner which does not compromise the most highly valued asset.

### **5.5 District wide**

#### **5.6 PO22**

The natural environment is one of the most important features to the quality of life in south Wiltshire. We will take the following strategic actions' to ensure that it remains that way:

- a) The natural environment should be protected and enhanced wherever possible.
- b) We will investigate additional controls, over and above existing designations, that will further protect the natural environment
- c) We should improve access to the countryside for everyone through improved footpaths and cycle tracks.
- d) Development should be diverted away from sites that may have an adverse impact on our natural environment
- e) We will ensure that nature conservation measures are incorporated into all new development to ensure that developers address the ecological impact of new building for example the inclusion of appropriate green infrastructure
- f) We will identify, promote and protect locally important landscape and nature sites
- g) We will develop a criteria based policy to protect and enhance the landscape character of the district, this policy could be informed by and be sympathetic to the distinctive landscape character areas identified within the Landscape Character

Assessment (for example: Lower Avon Narrow Chalk Valley) and try to contribute to the active conservation, enhancement and/or restoration of these areas.

### **5.7 Area specific – Salisbury and Wilton (Four Rivers)**

#### **5.8 PO33**

Our Preferred Option for the natural environment in the Salisbury and Wilton Area is as follows:

- a) The 'greening of Salisbury through the implementation of the Salisbury vision projects, in particular, the delivery of a new green landscape setting running to the heart of town through the existing central car park, which also sees the significant enhancement of the watercourses.
- b) Working with the Water Meadows Trust to ensure long-term sustainable strategy for the conservation and managed access to the Water Meadows
- c) The managed growth of Salisbury and Wilton based on an objective scrutiny of the quality and importance of land and habitats, which mitigates impacts and delivers compensation where appropriate.
- d) Working with owners and agents to seek the conservation and enhancements of historic parks and gardens such as Wilton Estate and at Bourne hill
- e) Produce a strategy for the natural environment in and around Salisbury and Wilton which promotes and protects both local and nationally important landscape and nature sites such as the River Avon systems.

#### **5.9 PO 44**

Our Preferred Options for protecting the natural environment in the Stonehenge Community Area are as follows:

- a) Work in partnership to secure the long term future and enhancement of the internationally designated sites of Salisbury Plain, Porton Down, River Avon and Parsonage Down
- b) Promote and protect locally important landscape and nature sites
- c) The managed growth of the Stonehenge area will be based on the objective scrutiny of the quality and importance of habitats. New greenfield development will only be allowed where it has no adverse impacts or where it can be demonstrated to effectively mitigate impacts and deliver compensation where appropriate.

#### **5.10 PO55**

Our Preferred Option for safeguarding the natural environment in the Western community area includes:

- a) Produce a strategy for the natural environment in the Mere Area which promotes and protects locally important landscape and nature sites, such as the chalk downland and Strip Lynchets near Mere.

#### **5.11 PO66**

Strategic objectives to safeguard and where possible enhance the quality of natural environment applies across the district, however actions that will be specific to the Southern Area will include the following:

- b) Produce a strategy for the natural environment in the Southern Area based on the New Forest, Special Areas of Conservation, Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, which promotes and protects, internationally, nationally and locally important landscape and nature sites.
- c) Working with owners and agents to seek the conservation and enhancement of historic parks, gardens and landscapes' such as the extensive Longford Estate.
- d) Balancing the conservation of the local environment, with maintaining and enhancing countryside industries, especially farming, fishing and forestry, including provision of additional affordable dwellings for local rural workers.

## **5.12 PO77**

Our Preferred Option for promoting tourism in the Nadder Valley community Area includes:

- a) Work with partners to produce a consistent policy framework for the conservation and enhancement of the Area of outstanding Natural Beauty
- b) Produce a strategy for the natural environment in the Nadder Valley which promotes and protects locally important landscape and nature sites.

## **5.13 Our Place in the Future – Planning the future in Salisbury and south Wiltshire (magazine)**

5.14 This consultation was a more 'light weight' consultation document that was designed to specifically focus on those issues that were controversial during the previous round of consultation. The relevant paragraphs to the natural environment and biodiversity relevant for this were:

5.15 A key priority is the maintenance of our natural environment and providing improved managed access for the benefit for all

5.16 Our Previous rounds of consultation have brought near unanimity that this challenge is a priority, although it is only fair to acknowledge that there is a very small minority who disagree with the science of climate change.

5.17 A co-ordinated approach will be required, involving decision on where we locate new development, how we provide meaningful choice in transport, the construction of environmentally friendly buildings, the use of renewable energy and doing what we can to minimise waste.

5.18 Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document and you are welcome to make further recommendations should you wish.

## **5.19 Habitats Regulations Assessment**

5.20 At the same time as the authority consulted on the Our Place in the Future magazine a Habitats Regulations Assessment was also published for comments involving the scoping and some screening aspects of the process. Details with respect to this can be found within the full HRA submitted with the submission draft and amendments made as a result of consultation at this stage have been incorporated.

5.21 Further information is also provided within the initially Topic Paper 5 that has been amended.

## **6.0 Summary of responses**

6.1 Please note that all of this analysis summarises comments received,.

## **6.2 PO3 F**

- a) Support spatial vision.
- b) Mention should be made of making the most of our natural environment in the context of tourism,
- c) Protection the natural environment should be at the top.
- d) Spatial vision will make F unachievable as looks at development in both rural and urban areas.
- e) PO should be talking in terms of projects now through active partnership working.

## **6.3 Wiltshire Wildlife Trust**

- a) Natural environment should be an integral part of sustainable development, not balanced against it.
- b) Would like to see more reference to improving informal access to the countryside.

#### **6.4 What does this tell us about PO3F**

- a) That we should be making more of biodiversity and our natural environment.

#### **6.5 PO22**

- a) National Park status for the district should be considered
- b) Could amend the supporting text, there is no mention of protection of biodiversity outside of statutory protected areas, including protected species, BAP habitats and species and county wildlife sites. Include another policy or part of this policy
- c) No reference to the NERC Biodiversity Duty under section 40 of protected species often found outside of protected sites.
- d) Support PO22.
- e) The creation and preservation of bridleways, footpaths and cycle routes is paramount as it he control of off-roaders, and motor cyclists
- f) However larger increases of development proposed are counter to the spirit of this PO.
- g) Careful thought is needed in selecting those areas for development which would cause least impact on the environment in the locality.
- h) Surfaced cycle tracks are not needed in the countryside, cyclists need to use the existing network of rural lanes in safety from motorists.
- i) Do not think PO goes far enough in defining our commitment.
- j) Do not think policy conforms with SMART targets
- k) B - We are not clear what additional controls you have in mind to do this nor what specific problems are in need of addressing by additional controls. Re-word policy to 'we will ensure high quality biological information is used to inform planning decisions. We will ensure the council has adequate resources to give full consideration to natural environment issues when determining planning applications'.
- l) PPS9 good practice guide says that Core Strategies should set out a statement regarding information requirements regarding protected species and planning application, and we would expect this to feature in the final core strategy.
- m) Issues is lack of council resources to delivery PO.
- n) C does not cover new access, nor Local Nature Reserves or a Rights or Way improvement plan. It does not cover the non infrastructure opportunities to increase public us of rights of way (signage etc)
- o) There is a much greater scope to minimise landscape impacts of new development.
- p) Omission with regard to invasive non-native species (Himalayan Balsam, Giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed.
- q) There is an omission in that there is an omission around highlighting water resources as an environmental constraint in the district and the impact on the River Avon SAC.
- r) Concerns that the existing level of abstraction of some of the tributaries is adversely affecting the integrity of SAC's
- s) Building adjacent to NFNP boundary should be prevented
- t) Support criteria based landscape policy
- u) Findings of the LCA and settlement settings assessment need to be carefully considered and interpreted in the site allocation process.
- v) Apply this to Firsdawn
- w) Remove 'wherever possible' from PO22a
- x) Emphasise the requirements of PPS9 para 10.
- y) Do not agree with PO22d
- z) A and c may conflict, cycling can erode land for example
- aa) Would like to see recognition of wildlife corridors in the PO.
- bb) Like to see reference of access to the countryside by bus.

- cc) Amend word 'could' to 'will'
- dd) Change 'should' to 'will'
- ee) Amend f to 'we will continue to promote and protect existing designations and identify additional locally important landscape and nature sites.'
- ff) Should have explicitly reference to the AONB.
- gg) Many aspects of the historic landscape and heritage environment are not recognised in the options.
- hh) AONB has been undertaking a historic landscape characterisation project that should be taken account of.
- ii) Horse riders should also be listed as users of Rights of Ways, not just walkers and cyclists.

## **6.6 Natural England**

- a) Does not conform with SMART targets, like to see all 'should's' replaced with 'wills'. Expand what is meant by natural environment – presumably wildlife, landscape, water resources and access opportunities to these.
- b) Would like to see reference to South West Nature Map and the Wiltshire BAP.
- c) PO22b – It is additional council resources that is needed, not controls. Re-word to 'We will ensure high quality biological information is used to inform planning decisions. We will ensure the council has adequate resources to give full consideration to natural environment issues when determining planning applications'.
- d) PPS9 GPG says that core Strategies should set out a statement regarding information requirements regarding protected species and planning applications, and we would expect this to feature in the final policy document.
- e) PO22c should cover new access and Local Nature Reserves and relate to the Rights of Way improvement plan. Large areas of the district are designated as 'Open Access' land but there is a missed opportunity to provide access infrastructure.
- f) PO22e reword to 'we will ensure that development enhances biodiversity, not degrades it, either through onsite measures or off site contributions, for example by the inclusion of appropriate green infrastructure'.
- g) PO22g – Landscape. There is much greater scope to minimise the landscape impacts of developments outside of landscape protected areas, we feel that this area needs consideration.
- h) There is an omission with regard to invasive non-native species (Himalayan balsam, Giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed in particular). DC policies are a powerful tool in preventing their spread, by requiring all sites to be free of such species after development as part of planning conditions.
- i) Omission around highlighting water resources – quality and quantity of the River Avon SAC / SSSI, as an environmental constraint within the district.

## **6.7 GOSW**

- a) Rehearses principles which broadly accord with national policy. It is not clear how a criteria-base policy promotes landscape character. Are there areas of the district where the character is particularly sensitive or potentially threatened by change?

## **6.8 Wiltshire Wildlife Trust**

- a) Planning policy should require net biodiversity gain, either on or off site. There is no need for a 'where possible'. Would also like to see reference to the South West Nature Map and the Wiltshire BAP.
- b) Support reference to improved footpaths but suggest more generic 'improved management of the Public Rights of Way network and Access Land'.
- c) Would prefer following policy wording ' We will ensure that development enhances biodiversity, not degrades it, either through on site measures or off site contributions, for example by the inclusion of appropriate green infrastructure'.

- d) The council must have the means to delivery informed active conservation not simply new passive and possibly poorly evidenced protection

#### **6.9 What does this tell us about PO22**

- a) Mention protection of biodiversity outside of statutory protected areas, including protected species, BAP habitats and species and county wildlife sites.
- b) No reference to the NERC Biodiversity Duty under section 40 of protected
- c) PPS9 good practice guide says that Core Strategies should set out a statement regarding information requirements regarding protected species and planning application, and we would expect this to feature in the final core strategy.
- d) Emphasise the requirements of PPS9 para 10.
- e) C does not cover new access, nor Local Nature Reserves or a Rights or Way improvement plan.
- f) Omission with regard to invasive non-native species (Himalayan Balsam, Giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed.
- g) There is an omission around highlighting water resources as an environmental constraint in the district and the impact on the River Avon SAC.
- h) Wildlife Corridors
  - i) Amend word 'could' and 'should' to 'will'
  - j) Building adjacent to NFNP boundary should be prevented
  - k) Findings of the LCA and settlement settings assessment need to be carefully considered and interpreted in the site allocation process.
  - l) Make reference to the AONB

#### **6.10 PO33**

- a) PO33x concerned that wording does not imply any improvements.
- b) Support Preferred Option
- c) Not sure what is being done.
- d) Caution should be used when working solely with the water meadows trust
- e) Ancient rights of way can easily be lost when development occurs
- f) English Heritage and other important bodies should be mentioned here.
- g) Like to see the provision of wildlife corridors.
- h) Green neckless would not increase biodiversity
- i) Do not overlook contribution made by relatively small areas of greenspace.
- j) Also work with the Harnham and Laverstock and Ford Downland and Watermeadow Trusts
- k) Please plant more trees and protect them
- l) There has been no liaison with Harnham Watermeadows Trust
- m) Gives preference to just one Watermeadows trust whereas there are others.
- n) AONB should be mentioned here.

#### **6.11 Natural England**

- a) PO33c concerned that wording does not imply any enhancement revised wording to read '...mitigation and or compensation in all cases and enhancement where appropriate'.
- b) PO33e – WE are concerned it is not clear why this is being done, with whom ,and how it will be implemented. This appropriate for all community areas, not just this area.
- c) It would be appropriate to include enhanced management of the Area's existing greenspace for wildlife.
- d) This area is particularly in need of better access from the city to the countryside

#### **6.12 What does this tell us about PO33**

- a) Concern over the wording

- b) Do not work solely with the Watermeadows Trust there is a Harnham and Laverstock and Ford Trust too.
- c) Protect ancient rights of way
- d) Provide for wildlife corridors
- e) Mention agencies work with – English Heritage etc.
- f) Take account of the AONB.

### **6.13 PO44**

- a) Agree with Preferred Option
- b) PO44a – Interested to know how you see this working. Greatest need is around enhancement of County Wildlife sites and river restoration.
- c) Have you thought about key public right of way enhancements
- d) Stonehenge is a national disgrace.
- e) Change PO44c to ‘New Greenfield development will only be allowed when it is entirely carbon neutral and located close to shops, leisure facilities and public transport links’.
- f) Agree as Durrington needs environmental protection.
- g) Has proper protection of the River Avon and its tributaries been considered.

### **6.14 Natural England**

Interested to know how this will work? Natural England owns and manages Parsonage Down and as such its future is secure, but it could benefit from greater community engagement. Greatest need is around enhancement of county wildlife sites and river system restoration.

### **6.15 RSPB**

RSPB would like to see the inclusion of an option to support enhancement and expansion of the landscape and species interest associated with designated sites. THE WHS has the potential to provide an important link for biodiversity.

### **6.16 What does this tell us about PO44**

- a) Think about key public rights of way enhancements.
- b) Durrington needs environmental protection.
- c) Has proper protection of the River Avon and its tributaries been considered.

### **6.17 PO55**

- a) What does ‘promotes and protects local landscape’ mean.
- b) Strategy should take account of views from protected landscapes over Mere.
- c) Support preferred options
- d) Castle Hill and Long Hill in Mere are locally important historical landscapes which deserve a special mention.
- e) Additional development could have a devastating impact on Castle Hill and Long Hill.
- f) Should include reference to the AONB.

### **6.18 Natural England**

There appears to be little in the way of joined-up-ness in structure with other community area natural environment sections.

### **6.19 GOSW**

The CS should articulate more clearly who will undertake those work, by when, how and what will be delivered.

### **6.20 What does this tell us about PO55**

- a) Take account of views from protected landscapes over Mere
- b) Additional development could have a devastating impact on Castle Hill and Long Hill.

- c) Should include reference to the AONB.

### **6.21 PO66**

- a) There is a high deer population in the southern area which is causing significant degradation of woodland habitats, should be managed deer stalking.
- b) Put housing on estates such as Longford, not protect them.
- c) Boundaries on national parks, AONBs. SSSIs should not be developed.
- d) No mention is made of the Clarendon Estate or Palace.
- e) Investment in parks, landscapes etc must be balanced with public access
- f) Core strategy should identify the need for a natural environment strategy
- g) Support Preferred Option
- h) PO66a – most of the area is already protected so there is no need for a strategy
- i) No need to mention the Longford estate in PO66b, suggest the Moot and Downton and the Downton Moot Preservation Trust instead.
- j) Does not support PO66c
- k) Longford estate considers that it should continue to retain full responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of its own heritage assets. Family has unequalled knowledge of commitment to, respect for and affection for this landscape.

### **6.22 Natural England**

There appears to be little in the way of joined-up-ness in structure with other community area natural environment sections.

6.23 PO66c There is no evidence of this being an issue for this area in particular. This is around rural housing. Not clear what balancing is required, most conservation of the local environment is supporting of countryside industries. Alternative is that there is a spatially specific issue relating to the southern community area namely the high deer population, is causing significant environmental degradation to woodland habitats. We would advocate support be given to activities which benefit both environmental conservation, and the rural economy, such as managed deer stalking.

### **6.24 GOSW**

The CS should articulate more clearly who will undertake those work, by when, how and what will be delivered.

### **6.25 What does this tell us about PO66**

- a) Boundaries on national parks, AONBs, SSSIs should not be developed.
- b) high deer population in the southern area which is causing significant degradation of woodland habitats
- c) No mention is made of the Clarendon Estate or Palace
- d) Investment in parks, landscapes etc must be balanced with public access
- e) No need to mention the Longford estate in PO66b, suggest the Moot and Downton and the Downton Moot Preservation Trust instead.
- f) Longford estate considers that it should continue to retain full responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of its own heritage assets

### **6.26 PO77**

- a) Support the Preferred Option
- b) Contradictory as area is in the AONB.
- c) Flora and Fauna of area and landscape should be protected at all costs.
- d) VDS's, CAA's and management plans and the Living River initiative should all be mentioned here.
- e) Nothing must threaten the surrounding AONB.
- f) AONB needs to be given more clout.
- g) Building here seems at odds with this preferred option.

- h) AONB needs to be mentioned in other spatial areas.
- i) Little emphasis seem to be given to the duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty.
- j) Section should be reviewed with much greater emphasis on the AONB.
- k) Access into the AONB is also a major issue.

### **6.27 Natural England**

This should be a district wide policy.

### **6.28 What does this tell us about PO77**

- Contradictory as area is in the AONB.
- VDS's, CAA's and management plans and the Living River initiative should all be mentioned here
- Section should be reviewed with much greater emphasis on the AONB.

### **6.29 GOSW**

The CS should articulate more clearly who will undertake the work, by when, how and what will be delivered.

### **6.30 Other comments**

#### **6.31 South west regional assembly:**

Draw your attention to policy GI1 of the draft RSS. The policies would be supported if the Core Strategy included policies setting out broad locations for GI appropriate to the extent and distribution of development proposed, co-ordinated across administrative boundaries, if appropriate. GI plans should also provide for maintenance, restoration and enhancement of habitats and species.

#### **6.32 GOSW**

Note the response to the previous consultation on the Core Strategy from Natural England has raised some concerns regarding the proposed scale of housing development on the long term demand on water resources and water quality on aquatic habitats and the River Avon Special Area of conservation (SAC). Natural England have stated that developments must be considered in the context of the EA's Review of Consents for the River Avon SAC. Natural England suggests that the water quality standards may possibly need to be raised and the numbers of abstraction licences reduced after this review.

6.33 Concerns over the water quality of the River Avon SSSI and SAC in terms of phosphate and suspended solids loading is a key issue for the Core Strategy in view of the statement from Natural England that concentrations of phosphates area 'already adversely threatening' the integrity of the River Avon SAC, and that the EA have not (as of April 2008) been able to ascertain whether the Sewage Treatment Work discharges are having a similar impact on the River Avon SAC.

6.34 We place considerable weight on the views of Natural England as the Government's statutory advisors on nature conservation. There are potentially important constraints that may need to be addressed to deliver a sound spatial strategy for Salisbury and south Wiltshire. You assured us that you would continue to work closely with both Natural England and the EA in order to understand and resolve these issues.

#### **6.35 New Forest National Park Authority**

Object on the basis that it does not demonstrate how decisions on the location of new development have been influenced by your key priority of maintaining the natural environment in relation to the national park. We request a clear demonstration of how the national and internationally designated landscapes of the New Forest National Park have

been taken into account in determining the housing allocations for the Southern Area, most of which is proposed for settlements on or very close to the Park boundary.

## **7.0 SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

### **7.1 Implications on a district-wide or wider area**

- a) That we should be making more of biodiversity and our natural environment.
- b) Mention protection of biodiversity outside of statutory protected areas, including protected species, BAP habitats and species and county wildlife sites.
- c) No reference to the NERC Biodiversity Duty under section 40 of protected
- d) PPS9 good practice guide says that Core Strategies should set out a statement regarding information requirements regarding protected species and planning application, and we would expect this to feature in the final core strategy.
- e) Emphasise the requirements of PPS9 para 10.
- f) C does not cover new access, nor Local Nature Reserves or a Rights of Way improvement plan.
- g) Omission with regard to invasive non-native species (Himalayan Balsam, Giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed.
- h) There is an omission around highlighting water resources as an environmental constraint in the district and the impact on the River Avon SAC.
- i) Wildlife Corridors
- j) Amend word 'could' and 'should' to 'will'
- k) Findings of the LCA and settlement settings assessment need to be carefully considered and interpreted in the site allocation process.
- l) Make reference to the AONB
- m) Draw your attention to policy GI1 of the draft RSS.
- n) Note the response to the previous consultation on the Core Strategy from Natural England has raised some concerns regarding the proposed scale of housing development on the long term demand on water resources and water quality on aquatic habitats and the River Avon Special Area of conservation (SAC).
- o) Natural England suggests that the water quality standards may possibly need to be raised and the numbers of abstraction licences reduced after this review.
- p) Concerns over the water quality of the River Avon SSSI and SAC in terms of phosphate and suspended solids loading is a key issue for the Core Strategy

### **7.2 Implications for the six community areas**

#### **7.3 Mere and District**

##### **7.4 *Local centre: Mere***

- a) Take account of views from protected landscapes over Mere

##### **7.5 *Rural issues:***

- a) Additional development could have a devastating impact on Castle Hill and Long Hill.
- b) Should include reference to the AONB.

#### **7.6 Nadder valley**

##### **7.7 *Rural issues:***

- a) Contradictory as area is in the AONB.
- b) VDS's, CAA's and management plans and the Living River initiative should all be mentioned here
- c) Section should be reviewed with much greater emphasis on the AONB.

## **7.8 Stonehenge**

### **7.9 Northern urban cluster: Amesbury, Bulford, Durrington**

- a) Durrington needs environmental protection.

### **7.10 Rural issues:**

- b) Think about key public rights of way enhancements.
- c) Has proper protection of the River Avon and its tributaries been considered.

## **7.11 Four rivers: Ebble, Nadder, Wylde, Till.**

### **7.12 Rural issues:**

- a) Take account of the AONB.

## **7.13 Southern**

### **7.14 Local centre: Downton**

- a) No need to mention the Longford estate in PO66b, suggest the Moot and Downton and the Downton Moot Preservation Trust instead

### **7.15 Rural issues:**

- a) .We request a clear demonstration of how the national and internationally designated landscapes of the New Forest National Park have been taken into account in determining the housing allocations for the Southern Area, most of which is proposed for settlements on or very close to the Park boundary.
- b) Building adjacent to NFNP boundary should be prevented
- c) Boundaries on national parks, AONBs, SSSIs should not be developed.
- d) high deer population in the southern area which is causing significant degradation of woodland habitats
- e) No mention is made of the Clarendon Estate or Palace
- f) Investment in parks, landscapes etc must be balanced with public access
- g) .
- h) Longford estate considers that it should continue to retain full responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of its own heritage assets

## **7.16 Salisbury City**

- a) Do not work solely with the Watermeadows Trust there is a Harnham and Laverstock and Ford Trust too.
- b) Protect ancient rights of way
- c) Provide for wildlife corridors
- d) Mention agencies work with – English Heritage etc.

## **8.0 FOLLOW-UP WORK REQUIRED AS RESULT OF CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Continue to work closely with both Natural England and the EA in order to understand and resolve the water level and quality issues within the River Avon SAC. Work with the New Forest National Park Authority to ensure recreational concerns are considered.

**9.0 INITIAL THE IDENTIFICATION OF POLICY FOR THIS TOPIC AREA AND CHANGES AS A RESULT OF SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL, STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT AND EDITING REFINEMENT**

**9.1 CORE POLICIES 15 AND 16 (NOW CORE POLICIES 19 AND 20)**

**9.2 Initial policy text in Core Strategy version subjected to SA / HRA**

**9.3 (i) Water Abstraction**

9.4 The flow in the Avon is affected, albeit indirectly, by consumer demand for water. A system of licensing by the Environment Agency (“EA”) ensures that minimum river flows are protected during dry periods, when consumer demand is highest. Water companies plan and deliver their infrastructure investments in this context and their licence conditions protect the river as they develop new sources or upgrade infrastructure to meet demand. A review by the EA of the long-term balance between supply and demand indicates there is capacity available, or planned to be available, to meet anticipated growth in this area.

9.5 Long-term predictions point to reduced river flows during dry summer periods of up to 50% compared to current conditions, due to climate change. Such a scale of change will place stress on the river system and it is important that new development uses water efficiently to limit this stress.

9.6 Water efficient homes use less hot water and have a reduced carbon footprint compared to existing stock. Water efficient homes also have reduced water bills. The Code for Sustainable Homes provides a graded standard for new homes that is already widely applied. Code level 3 is readily achievable at marginal extra cost and should ensure a consumption rate of 105 litres per head per day.

9.7 Due to the diverse nature of non-residential development, there is no universal standard for water consumption, although standards will be applied in the next few years to some types of commercial property. The council will however work closely with the EA and Natural England to ensure that water efficiency measures are secured in non-residential development. In the final document this is renumbered as Core Policy 19.

**Core Policy 15 - Water Efficiency and the River Avon Special Area of Conservation**

In order to protect the River Avon Special Area of Conservation, all new residential development will be required to incorporate water efficiency measures to a minimum standard equivalent to Level 3 of the ‘Code for Sustainable Homes’.

Non-residential development will be required to incorporate water energy efficiency measures in their developments. Developers will be expected to submit details of how water efficiency has been taken into account during the design of proposal.

**Targets:** No approvals against policy, maintenance of River Avon SAC in favourable condition

**Monitoring and Review:** AMR

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, EA, Natural England, Water Companies, Developers

**Policies replaced:** None

### 9.8 (ii) Phosphate Levels in the River System

9.9 The HRA of the RSS concluded that, subject to programmed investment being carried out to reduce the phosphate load from major sewage treatment works in the River Avon system, there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC from proposed development. However, there are other phosphate inputs besides those attributable to sewage works, and initiatives are underway to better understand this issue and implement measures that will lead to a long-term reduction in phosphate concentration in the river.

9.10 Development in the SAC catchment should support this wider agenda to protect the river, and developers of the strategic sites identified in this Strategy will be required to contribute to an overall mitigation strategy through Section 106 agreements. This mitigation strategy will identify and implement measures to further reduce the phosphate levels in the SAC.

### Core Policy 16 - Managing Phosphate Levels in Watercourses

All strategic developments identified in the Core Strategy will be required, by means of financial contribution to a Management Plan, to ensure that their development will not cause detriment to watercourses through the unmitigated addition of phosphates.

**Targets:** Production of a phosphate management plan, maintenance of River Avon SAC in favourable condition

**Monitoring and Review:** Implementation of the phosphate management plan

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, EA, Natural England, Water Companies, Developers

**Policies replaced:** none

### 9.11 The nature of the suggested changes

9.12 The draft core strategy and the initial policy text shown above were subjected to a sustainability appraisal (SA) and also appraisal under the Habitats Regulations, Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations. These appraisals produced a number of recommendations for how to improve and strengthen the policy

9.13 At the same time as the SA, SEA and HRA assessment of the core strategy, the initial draft was subjected to editing to ensure that central and regional policy are not repeated and to take account of recommendations for Government Office of the South West (GOSW). These editing changes resulted in numerous structural changes to the document and also the removal of a number of policies.

### 9.14 Suggested changes: water efficiency

The SA/SEA scores the water efficiency policy highly against the environmental sustainability criteria. It recognises that there will be an additional cost incurred by house builders but concludes that these will not be significant and would themselves contribute to savings in running costs. The SA/SEA report has concluded that policy 15 should remain unaltered.

9.15 The HRA of the core strategy concludes that there will be no adverse effect on the River Avon SAC. The HRA has not recommended any change to the policy. However, attention is drawn in the report to the fact that, following changes to the building regulations, the policy may be superseded.

**9.16 Suggested changes: water quality**

As with the water efficiency policy, the SA/ SEA concludes that the policy performs well against the environmental sustainability criteria. The reports conclusion of the recommends that the wording of the policy is altered to allow for alternative means of avoiding and mitigating impact on the River Avon.

9.17 The HRA has suggested that the wording of this policy is altered to include the words 'such as 'before 'by means of financial contribution'. This rewording will allow developers the option of addressing mitigation through other means, particularly until a PMP is completed.

**9.18 Suggested changes: editing**

Although the wording of policies 15 and 16 above did not alter significantly, the structural changes in the document resulted in the policy numbering being changed. Policy 15 (water efficiency) became policy 22 while policy 16 (managing phosphates) became policy 23.

**9.19 The Revised Policy**

The wording of the water efficiency policy will remain unaltered while the phosphate management policy will be revised in light of the SA/SEA/HRA for inclusion in the submission draft....

**Core Policy - Managing Phosphate Levels in Watercourses**

All strategic developments identified in the Core Strategy will be required, such as, by means of financial contribution to a Management Plan, to ensure that their development will not cause detriment to watercourses through the unmitigated addition of phosphates.

9.19a As a result of further refinement through the HRA process and discussion with Natural England and the HRA Steering Group this policy has been further amended to the following.

**Core Policy 20- Pollution and phosphate Levels in the Water Environment**

In order to avoid and reduce the potential environmental effects on water quality in the River Avon Special Area of Conservation, appropriate schemes of mitigation, including consideration of suitable buffer zones along watercourses, habitat enhancements and river access management measures, will be required to mitigate potential disturbance effects.' A Construction Management Plan should also be submitted to the Local Planning Authority to ensure measures proposed during construction are satisfactory

All developments identified in this Core Strategy will be required, by means of financial contribution, to contribute to the undertaking and implementation of a Management Plan, to ensure that their development will not cause detriment to watercourses through the unmitigated addition of phosphates.

**Targets:** Production of a phosphate management plan, maintenance of River Avon SAC in favourable condition

**Monitoring and Review:** Implementation of the phosphate management plan

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, EA, Natural England, Water Companies, Developers

**Policies replaced:** none

**9.20 CORE POLICY 18 – NOW CORE POLICY 23  
GREEN INFRASTRUCTRE**

**9.21 Initial policy text in Core Strategy version subjected to SA / HRA**

**9.22 (e) Green infrastructure**

Green infrastructure (“GI”) is the physical environment within and between our cities, towns and villages. It is a network of multi-functional open spaces, including formal parks, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, waterways, street trees and open countryside.

9.23 Within south Wiltshire there are many designated nature sites, which are protected from damage by new development by Core Policy 42, however, there are also large areas of land that do not have formal designations. One of the key aims of the Wiltshire GI Plan, which is currently in production, will be to maintain and improve biodiversity. GI features are not only important in themselves, but also as a way of providing links between designated and other sites, helping species colonise and populate new areas, thus increasing their range, and also helping species adapt to climate change.

9.24 Sympathetic design of new development can enhance biodiversity and contribute to GI networks.

<p><b>Core Policy 18 - Green infrastructure and Habitat networks</b></p> <p>Proposals for development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of the Green Infrastructure network. Where development is permitted the Local planning Authority will require developers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute towards the objectives of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Plan;</li> <li>• Put measures in place to ensure appropriate future management of Green Infrastructure;</li> <li>• Create new or replacement Green Infrastructure equal to or above the current ecological value of the existing if damage or loss is unavoidable.</li> </ul> <p>Development that would adversely affect the integrity and value of the existing Green Infrastructure Network, or prejudice the implementation of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Plan will not be permitted</p> <p><b>Targets: Contributions towards</b> achievement of Wiltshire BAP targets (GAPT2-5); Implementation of the Wiltshire GI Plan</p> <p><b>Monitoring and Review:</b> Environmental and biodiversity audit. Post development review</p> <p><b>Delivery Responsibility:</b> Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, BAP working groups (Built Environment &amp; HAP Group)</p> <p><b>Polices replaced:</b> None</p>
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**9.25 Changes as a result of Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and editing refinement**

This initial policy text, was then subjected to Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment as well as editing refinement and advice from parties such as GOSW. As a result re-drafting the policy was removed from version 7. However due to the following it is recommended that this policy is re-introduced and re-drafted to ensure conformity with both European Directives as well as ensuring central and regional policy are not repeated and future editing ensured.

#### **9.26 Comments from SA:**

- a) This policy will have long-term positive impacts on biodiversity in South Wiltshire through the protection and provision and management of green infrastructure networks, and through required contributions to the future Wiltshire GI Strategy, one of the key aims of which will be to maintain and improve biodiversity. If it is determined that there will be loss or damage to GI, compensation will be required of at least equivalent ecological value. The policy will help ensure that development will only be permitted where mitigation measures are provided to ensure that there are no adverse effects on biodiversity in green networks outside and between designated nature conservation sites. HRA recommended reference is included to the role of greenspace provision and quality/accessibility improvements as avoidance and mitigation measures for potential recreational impacts on Natura 2000 sites. HRA also recommended that reference be made to the expected standards of greenspace provision with reference to Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards.

#### **9.27 SA suggested Mitigation/Enhancement Recommendations:**

- a) The policy has very positive benefits for biodiversity, landscape, open spaces and health objectives, and minor benefits for other social and environmental objectives. Uncertainties remain as to the standards of provision to be required under this policy. The policy may increase costs for developers but is also likely to improve the local environment of new developments, with potential for economic benefits as a result.
- b) Reference to specific standards of green infrastructure provision should be included in the policy, and/or to the role of greenspace provision and quality/accessibility improvements as avoidance and mitigation measures for potential recreational impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

#### **9.28 Comments from HRA**

- a) Policy was reviewed for their likely effectiveness as avoidance and mitigation measures:
- b) Main mitigation against any recreational impact on the New Forest and Salisbury Plain suggested in the draft SW RSS and the adopted SE RSS in the provision of alternative natural greenspace with residential developments
- c) Open Space Audit has examined the distribution and quality of provision and recommends that the council concentrate on quality and access to current sites in Salisbury City and Amesbury rather than new provision, although this is in relation to meeting existing needs.
- d) Draft CP11 requires the provision of quality and accessibility to natural or semi-natural greenspace sites or green corridors as a result of new development to be assessed on a site-by site basis.
- e) Draft Core Policy 18 requires development proposals to retain and enhance Green Infrastructure networks and contribute towards the objectives of the Wiltshire GI strategy.
- f) Concludes that it should be possible for mitigation to be provided through greenspace provision and access or quality improvements, as a minority of disturbance effects on N2K sites are generated directly from the Core Strategy.
- g) Core Policy 18 (and 11) should be strengthened to include specific reference to the role of greenspace provision and improvements to access and quality of existing greenspace, with standards of provision and accessibility above national standards that would be required in any case to meet local open space needs, as a means of providing avoidance and mitigation measures for potential recreational impacts on the Salisbury Plain and New Forest N2K sites.
- h) More certainty in Core Policy 18 that the objectives of the Wiltshire GI strategy will include ensuring suitable alternative natural greenspace provision, access or quality

improvements in order to offset increase public use of N2K sites and other sensitive sites.

- i) Other types of measures recommended by the RSS HRA's include site habitat management measures and visitor access management measures at or around N2K sites.
- j) As the majority of the potential recreational pressures from new housing on the N2K sites are generated from sites not yet allocated whose location within the Stonehenge Community Area (Salisbury Plain) and the Southern community area (New Forest) will be defined within the Site Specific allocations DPD HRA report suggests mitigation measures that should be considered for the HRA for that DPD when produced
  - a. high specific standards of greenspace provision for all developments;
  - b. identification of one or more specific greenspace sites to be provided;
  - c. contributions to specific site habitat improvement projects or visitor access management within N2K sites as mitigation, for example:
    - i. Stone Curlew plot creation within Salisbury Plain in collaboration with Defence Estates/RSPB;
    - ii. habitat enhancement for Nightjar, Woodlark or Dartford Warbler within the New Forest, or recreational access management project, through a future joint working arrangement with the NFNPA.
  - d. to be provided through greenspace provision and access or quality improvements.
- k) Assuming these mitigation measures are included within the Core Strategy and referred to as a requirement for the future DPD, it is concluded that the Core Strategy should have not adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain or New Forest N2K sites as a result of recreational access from new housing development.

**9.30 It is therefore recommended that Core Policy 18 equivalent is re-introduced and redrafted as:**

**9.31 (e) Green infrastructure**

Green infrastructure ("GI") is the physical environment within and between our cities, towns and villages. It is a linked network of multi-functional open spaces, including formal parks, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, waterways, street trees and open countryside. The RSS requires authorities to produce Green Infrastructure Plans.

- 9.32 Within south Wiltshire there are many designated nature sites, which are protected from damage by new development by PPS9, however there are also a number of European protected nature sites and species where a significant effect as a result of the plan must not occur. This results in potentially mitigation measures in excess of what PPS9 requires. For sites such as Porton Down and the River Avon specific measures have been identified within this Core Strategy, however for sites such as Salisbury Plain and New Forest more general green infrastructure requirements are necessary with respect to Green Infrastructure to insure that any impact such as recreation is mitigated against. To that end any development allocated within the southern community area or stonehenge community area within the site specific allocations DPD will be required to provide the following:
- a. high specific standards of greenspace provision for all developments;
  - b. identification of one or more specific greenspace sites to be provided;
  - c. contributions to specific site habitat improvement projects or visitor access management within N2K sites as mitigation, for example:
    - i. Stone Curlew plot creation within Salisbury Plain in collaboration with Defence Estates/RSPB;

- ii. habitat enhancement for Nightjar, Woodlark or Dartford Warbler within the New Forest, or recreational access management project, through a future joint working arrangement with the NFNPA.
- d. to be provided through greenspace provision and access or quality improvements.

Further research may also be undertaken by the council in order to inform these DPDs.

9.33 There are also large areas of land that do not have formal designations. One of the key aims of the Wiltshire GI Plan, will be to maintain and improve biodiversity. However, the GI plan's objectives will also be aim to achieve the objectives of Core Policy 18. GI features are not only important in themselves, but also as a way of providing links between designated and other sites, helping species colonise and populate new areas, thus increasing their range, and also helping species adapt to climate change.

9.34 Sympathetic design of new development can enhance biodiversity and contribute to GI networks.

**Core Policy 18 - Green infrastructure and Habitat networks**

Proposals for development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of the Green Infrastructure network. Where development is permitted the Local planning Authority will require developers to:

- Contribute towards the objectives of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Plan.
- Provide for any suitable alternative natural greenspace provision, access or quality improvements as well as proving linkages between greenspaces in order to offset increased public use of the New Forest and Salisbury Plain N2K sites, where appropriate
- Put measures in place to ensure appropriate future management of Green Infrastructure;
- Create new or replacement Green Infrastructure equal to or above the current ecological value of the existing if damage or loss is unavoidable.

Other measure that could also be considered include site habitat management measures and visitor access management measures at or around N2K sites, especially the New Forest and Salisbury Plain

Development that would adversely affect the integrity and value of the existing Green Infrastructure Network, or prejudice the implementation of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Plan will not be permitted

**Targets: Contributions towards** achievement of Wiltshire BAP targets (GAPT2-5); Implementation of the Wiltshire GI Plan

**Monitoring and Review:** Environmental and biodiversity audit. Post development review

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, BAP working groups (Built Environment & HAP Group)

**Polices replaced:** None

9.34a As a result of further refinement through the HRA process and discussion with Natural England and the HRA Steering Group this policy has been further amended.

### **Core Policy 23 - Green infrastructure and Habitat networks**

Proposals for development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of existing Green Infrastructure. Where development is permitted the Local Planning Authority will require developers to:

- Contribute towards the implementation of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Plan.
- Provide for any suitable alternative natural greenspace provision, access or quality improvements as well as proving linkages between greenspaces in order to deter increased public use of the New Forest and Salisbury Plain N2K sites, where appropriate.
- Put measures in place to ensure appropriate future management of Green Infrastructure.
- Retain and enhance existing on site Green Infrastructure and create new or replacement Green Infrastructure equal to or above the current ecological value of the existing if damage or loss is unavoidable.
- Maintain the integrity of the existing Green Infrastructure network and prevent habitat fragmentation

Other measure that could also be considered include site habitat management measures and visitor access management measures at or around N2K sites, especially the New Forest and Salisbury Plain

Until such time as the Green Infrastructure Plan is produced a development that would adversely affect the integrity and value of the existing Green Infrastructure network, or prejudice the implementation of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Plan will not be permitted

**Targets: Contributions towards** achievement of Wiltshire BAP targets (GAPT2-5);  
Implementation of the Wiltshire GI Plan

**Monitoring and Review:** Environmental and biodiversity audit. Post development review

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, BAP working groups (Built Environment & HAP Group)

**Polices replaced:** None

## **9.35 CORE POLICY 39 – NOW DELETED (LANDSCAPE)**

### **9.36 Initial policy text in core strategy version subjected to SA / HRA**

#### **9.37 Landscape**

The visual character resulting from a pattern of settlements surrounded by undeveloped countryside has a significant influence on the quality of life for communities in south Wiltshire. In line with Government policy, the Council affords high priority to the protection, conservation and enhancement of landscape and townscape character whilst delivering sustainable development. Well-designed high quality new development and associated infrastructure can help sustain and/or create landscapes and townscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity. Retaining the separate identity, character and visual and functional amenity of settlements, and preventing coalescence is also a key objective. Where development is permitted the Council may use planning conditions and/or legal agreements to secure protection and enhancement of the landscape and positive mitigation measures.

9.38 Most of the western part of south Wiltshire is covered by the AONB, within which particular attention will be placed on the preservation of the character and scenic quality of the environment. Where proposals come forward within the AONB emphasis will be placed on their scale, location, siting, design, materials and landscaping. Where possible, proposals should aid the delivery of the AONB Management Plan. Applications for development within and adjoining the AONB should have regard to the AONB Landscape Character and Historic Landscape Character Assessments.

**Core Policy 39 - Landscape**

Proposals for development should be informed by and be sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in all relevant Landscape Character Assessment and Settlement Settings Assessments studies, and should contribute to the active conservation, enhancement and/or restoration of these areas.

Development will be permitted where it can demonstrate that its location, scale and design will protect, conserve and/or enhance:

- The special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area (including its historical, biodiversity and cultural character and its tranquility);
- The visual and historical relationships between settlements and their landscape setting, with particular reference to Salisbury and Wilton;
- Distinctive character of streetscapes and settlement morphology;
- The pattern of distinctive landscape features, such as watercourses, woodland, trees and field boundaries, and their function as ecological corridors for dispersal of wildlife;
- Visually sensitive skylines, hillsides, valley sides and geological features;
- Nocturnal character;
- The setting of, and views from and into the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs and New Forrest National Park

**Targets:** No approvals against policy, continued national designation of landscape

**Monitoring and Review:** AMR; External reviews (for example by AONB Management Board)

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council.

**Policies replaced:** C4, C5, C6, C7 and C8

**9.39 Changes as a result of Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and editing refinement**

This initial policy text was then subjected to Sustainability Appraisal and editing. The policy was not screened into the Habitats Regulations Assessment. As a result of this the policy has been deleted from the Core Strategy. It was questioned whether the policy is necessary and appropriate for the Core Strategy, within the context of LGR as this is a development management policy which will be dealt with within a Wiltshire wide development management DPD. Landscape will continue to be protected through existing saved policies. It is necessary to ensure that C4, C5, C6, C7 and C8 continue to be saved.

**9.40 CORE POLICY 40 – NOW DELETED (BIODIVERSITY)**

9.41 Initial policy text in core strategy version subjected to SA / HRA

#### **9.42 Biodiversity**

- 9.43 Biodiversity is a way of describing the variety of living things and encompasses all species of plants and animals and the ecosystems of which they are a part. South Wiltshire has a high quality natural environment, which is evidenced by the abundance of locally, regionally, nationally and internationally designated sites. These included county wildlife sites, national nature reserves, sites of geological and natural special scientific interest (“SSSI”), Special Protection Areas (“SPA”) and Special Areas of Conservation (“SAC”). These sites are shown on the proposals map accompanying this Strategy.
- 9.44 Salisbury Plain is the largest known expanse of unimproved chalk downland in northwest Europe and, along with Porton Down, supports two of the largest SSSIs in Britain. Together these areas support a huge diversity of flowers and butterflies and provide cover, foraging and nesting habitat for farmland birds including the rare Stone Curlew. The south Wiltshire landscape is also characterised by chalk streams and rivers. The aquatic environment is made up of five main river systems: the Avon, Nadder, Wylye, Bourne and Ebbles. Collectively these rivers form the River Avon SAC, designated for its wide variety of fish and invertebrates.
- 9.45 SPA and SAC sites are covered by the Habitats Regulations 1997, which require rigorous assessment of proposals that might affect the integrity of the site. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate they will not, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on the integrity of the site. Proposals that have a significant effect on the integrity of a designated site will only be permitted where there are overriding reasons of public interest. A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken on this Strategy and has concluded that it will not have a significant effect on the integrity of a European designated site (see [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)).
- 9.46 Many species of flora and fauna within England are subject to special protection under Part I of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations. Other species are protected under their own legislation, which operates outside of the planning process. In addition, conservation objectives for some species and habitats are identified in the UK and Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plans.
- 9.47 Developers should refer to PPS 9 where they are proposing development that may directly or indirectly affect designated sites. Where the Council considers that proposals may affect any site designated for biological or geological conservation, or any qualifying species, an ecological assessment will be required.

#### **Core Policy 40 - Biodiversity**

Development likely to have either a direct or indirect adverse affect on a nationally or internationally designated site will not be permitted unless it can clearly be demonstrated that exceptional reasons of public interest for the development override any impact on its features of ecological or geological importance and/or on the national network of designated sites. Where development proposals are permitted they must further the conservation and enhancement of the site.

Development that is likely to have either a direct or indirect adverse affect on a regional or locally designated site will not be permitted unless it can clearly be demonstrated that:

- a. Development cannot reasonably be located on an alternative site;
- b. Exceptional reasons of public interest for development clearly override its

<p>features of ecological importance;</p> <p>c. The need for development clearly outweighs any harm which may be caused to the ecological or geological conservation value of the site;</p> <p>d. Harm can be reduced to acceptable limits; and</p> <p>e. Positive environmental mitigation measures can be implemented either on site or in a suitable alternative location.</p> <p>3. Where development is permitted the Council will require developers to:</p> <p>a. Minimise disturbance;</p> <p>b. Protect and enhance the site's ecological value;</p> <p>c. Ensure appropriate management;</p> <p>d. Ensure appropriate mitigation measures are designed into the proposal and work on the site does not commence until these measure are in place;</p> <p>e. Work to approved methods; and</p> <p>f. Create new or replacement habitats equal to or above the current ecological value of the site if damage or loss is unavoidable.</p>
<b>Targets:</b> Contributions towards achievement of Wiltshire BAP targets (GAPT2-5)
<b>Monitoring and Review:</b> AMR; External reviews (for example by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust)
<b>Delivery Responsibility:</b> Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, BAP working groups (Built Environment & HAP Group)
<b>Policies replaced:</b> C10, C11, C12, C13, C14 and C16.

#### **9.48 Changes as a result of Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and editing refinement**

9.49 This initial policy text was then subjected to Sustainability Appraisal and editing. SA suggested no mitigation measures. The policy was screened into the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Version 7 draft questioned whether the policy is necessary the policy was in effect repeating PPS9 and had been removed.

9.50 The policy has therefore been deleted to ensure not repeating government guidance. This subject area will be assessed again through a Wiltshire wide development management DPD.

#### **9.51 CORE POLICY 51 (NOW CORE POLICY 12)**

##### **9.52 Initial policy text in core strategy version subjected to SA / HRA**

##### **9.53 (a) Porton Down**

The scientific community at Porton Down is a prized asset in south Wiltshire. It comprises three organisations, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the Porton Down Science Park operator (Tetricus). DSTL is the centre of scientific and engineering excellence for the Ministry of Defence. The HPA is an independent organisation, which aims to protect the public from threats to their health from infectious diseases and environmental hazards, prevent harm and prepare for threats. It plays a critical role in preparing for and coordinating responses to healthcare emergencies include potential terrorist threats. In addition the HPA carries out research into understanding infectious diseases and manufactures a number of healthcare products, including vaccines. The Porton Down Science Park (PDSP) was founded in October 1997 in order to meet the key defence diversification objectives through transfer of non-defence technology between public and private sectors. The PDSP will be developed

as both a science park and business incubation facility with an emphasis on bioscience sector. This site has 10 ha allocated within the Local Plan and this is carried forward by this Strategy.

- 9.54 In January 2007 the Council adopted the Porton Down Master Plan as supplementary planning guidance to the local plan. This document represented a framework to guide future development and was produced in close cooperation with the three key organisations resident at Porton Down, local communities and key stakeholders. This Master Plan sets out a holistic picture of how each organisation can develop over the next 10 years and identifies the barriers to such expansion and how these may be mitigated. A good example of this effective joint working is the production of an excellent Travel Plan which seeks to overcome the constrained nature of the road network serving the site through providing alternative travel to work arrangements for staff. The Master Plan has been reviewed as part of the production of this Strategy and is still relevant, effective and valued by all parties. It is not proposed it should be reviewed at this time.
- 9.55 However, a particular issue has been raised that is both holding back implementation of the master plan and producing a real threat to some outstanding nature conservation assets. This Strategy seeks a comprehensive resolution to this issue to seek habitat protection and enhancement in a manner that will allow the important work of Porton to progress unfettered.
- 9.56 Porton Down is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds, and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitat Regulations 1994. Porton Down is a habitat for many protected species including 10% of the British Stone Curlew population.
- 9.57 While all parties understand and are working positively to mitigate the impacts of the Porton activity on habitats it is clear that currently the issue has been addressed in an ad hoc and piecemeal fashion. Each planning application received, even for very minor works, is assessed through the Habitat Regulations and correctly checked for cumulative impacts. This is slowing the development process, even where proposals are clearly in accordance with the adopted Master Plan, and also not leading to a long term solution for the stone curlew.
- 9.58 While the Master Plan is still effective there have been recent changes in aspiration of the parties at Porton, specifically the Governments announcement to invest some £400 million in redevelopment and modernisation of the HPA site. This represents a valuable contribution to the south Wiltshire economy but brings the potential conflict with nature conservation interests into sharper focus. A balance must be found between facilitating the aspirations of an essential local employer and internationally important organisation while finding a lasting a permanent habitat protection for the stone curlew. The Council has been exploring this issue in detail with interested parties, including the three organisations at Porton and Natural England, RSPB and county ecologists. It is clear that there is a shared desire to take this opportunity to find a lasting and comprehensive solution to this problem.
- 9.59 This solution will be based on the agreement of a Wildlife Management Plan under which significant areas of land under the control of the DSTL will be provided for habitat enhancement and stewardship in a manner that will not only offset the impacts of the ongoing development of Porton Down, but will actually enhance the scale and availability of habitat for the stone curlew and other conservation interests. The Wildlife Management Plan will include as much information on the future development aspirations of the organisations as is possible (accepting there are

national security issues) so that all parties will have clarity of what is proposed and when. The Management Plan will then be subject of a full appraisal under the Habitat Regulations. This Management Plan will be agreed on the basis that the future plans of all three organisations will be able to progress with the work programme agreed in the plan without the need for further detailed habitats work and the stone curlew will benefit greatly from an enhanced and settled habitat.

#### **Core Policy 51 - Porton Down**

The Council recognises the important contribution the Porton Down science community makes to the south Wiltshire economy. New development will be permitted in accordance with the Area Action Plan once adopted. This plan will set out how habitat creation and land stewardship schemes will be used to enhance local habitats and not be compromised by future development. Successful implementation of the plan will allow future development proposals as outlined in the plan to be brought forward without further objection on nature conservation grounds.

In the interim, applications will be permitted, providing it can be demonstrated that the proposal either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, does not have a significant impact on the integrity of the Porton Down SPA, SAC or SSSI.

**Targets:** % habitat at Porton Down in favorable condition. Number of breeding pairs of Stone Curlew  
Speed of processing planning applications for Porton Down

**Monitoring and Review:** AMR,

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council.

**Polices replaced:** None

#### **9.60 The nature of the suggested changes**

9.61 The draft core strategy and the initial policy text shown above were subjected to a sustainability appraisal (SA) and also appraisal under the Habitats Regulations, Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations. These appraisals produced a number of recommendations for how to improve and strengthen the policy.

9.62 At the same time as the SA, SEA and HRA assessment of the core strategy, the initial draft was subjected to editing to ensure that central and regional policy are not repeated and to take account of recommendations for Government Office of the South West (GOSW). These editing changes resulted in numerous structural changes to the document and also the removal of a number of policies.

#### **9.63 Suggested changes: Porton Down**

9.64 The SA/SEA highlights that the lack of certainty over the likely future development plan at Porton Down. The SA/SEA also highlights the need for a comprehensive travel plan at the site given its fairly remote location. However, it should be noted that at the time of writing, a travel plan has been agreed and adopted as part of a recent application at the DSTL facility. The travel plan effectively covers the whole site but will need to be updated to take into account future development at Porton Down.

9.65 The HRA has made a number of recommendations have been made in order to conclude 'no significant effects'. These recommendations are...

- a) Clarification that as to the extent that development will be allowed to continue under core policy 24 (Continuation of existing employment allocations) in the absence of the WMP.
- b) Specific cross reference to the requirements of policy 51 in the text of policy 24.
- c) Clarification that the WMP will form part of the Area Action Plan (AAP)
- d) Clarification that the Porton down Master Plan will be replaced by the AAP.

9.66 The editing refinements made to the core strategy resulted in the re wording and renumbering of the Porton Down policy. The revisions to this policy come after discussions with the make stakeholders at Porton Down, including NE and the RSPB. These discussions are ongoing but have resulted in the creation of a steering group which will guide the production of the WMP.

9.67 The redrafted text is as follows...

**Core Policy 15 - Porton Down**

The Council recognises the important contribution that the Porton Down science community makes to the economy, both nationally and within south Wiltshire. The council will work with partners on the production Wildlife Management Plan for the Porton Down SAC, SPA and SSSI.

Once finalised, this will enable the scientific community's aspirations to be met while at the same time providing a comprehensive framework for wildlife protection and enhancement at the site. New development in connection with DSTL, HPA and the Porton Down Science Park will be permitted where it contributes to the objectives of the wildlife management plan.

Until such time as the Wildlife Management Plan is agreed, new development proposals will only be permitted where they can demonstrate that either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, they do not have a significant impact on the integrity of the Porton Down SPA, SAC or SSSI.

9.68 The main difference between the two policies is the removal of reference to an AAP for the site. Following the review of this policy it was concluded that the creation of an AAP would lead to an unnecessary delay in realising the aspirations of the scientific community at Porton Down. It is envisaged that the WMP will become supplementary planning guidance (SPD) so that it hold 'weight' in the local development framework. The adoption of the WMP as and SPD will ensure that it is subject to appraisal under the SA/SEA legislation and assessment under the Habitats Regulations. The WMP will solely concern itself with the management of the conservation interests at the site. The WMP will pull together baseline data and identify opportunities to enhance the sites biodiversity, particularly with regard to the SPA and SAC features. However, unlike the AAP, the WMP will not include any policies that deal with the allocation of land employment land. The aim is not to supersede the existing masterplan, but rather complement it by providing wildlife management information. In an effort to ensure that the WMP provides a comprehensive evidence based document, it will be informed by the future plans of the scientific community. This will make sure that there is sufficient detail that can be drawn upon to prove 'no significant effects' at the project level.

9.68a As a result of further refinement through the HRA process and discussion with Natural England and the HRA Steering Group this policy has been further amended.

**Core Policy 12 - Porton Down**

The Council recognises the important contribution that the Porton Down science community makes to the economy, both nationally and within south Wiltshire. The council will work with partners on the production of a Wildlife Management Plan (WMP) to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the Porton Down SAC, SPA and SSSI.

Once finalised, this will enable the scientific community's aspirations to be met while at the same time providing a comprehensive framework for wildlife protection and enhancement at

the site. New development in connection with DSTL, HPA and the Porton Down Science Park will only be permitted where it contributes to the objectives of the WMP and accords with the measures within the WMP to avoid and mitigate potential adverse effects on the integrity of the European sites and other nature conservation interests.

Until such time as the WMP is agreed, new development proposals will only be permitted where they can demonstrate that either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, they do not have a significant impact on the integrity of the Porton Down SPA, SAC or SSSI.

**Targets:** Percentage of planning applications granted on the Porton Down site which contribute to the objectives of the WMP (target 100%)

**Monitoring and Review:** AMR, Wildlife management plan

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, RSPB, DSTL HPA, PDSP Natural England

**Policies replaced:** None

## 9.72 CORE POLICY 52 (NOW CORE POLICY 18) NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

### 9.73 Initial policy text in Core Strategy version subjected to SA / HRA

#### Core Policy 52 – New Forest National Park

Development will only be permitted where it does not have a negative impact on the:

- Conservation and enhancement of the unique character and environment of the New Forest National Park, and in particular the special qualities of its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage;
- Encouragement of understanding and enjoyment of the New Forest National Park's special qualities;
- Social and economic wellbeing of local communities in ways that sustain the National Park's special character.

**Targets:** No approvals as exception to policy

**Monitoring and Review:** AMR.

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, New Forest National Park Authority.

**Policies replaced:** None

### 9.74 Changes as a result of Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and editing refinement

9.75 The initial policy text was subjected to Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment as well as editing refinement and advice from parties such as GOSW. As a result of this the following amendments were made to the text to ensure conformity with both European Directives as well as ensuing central and regional policy are not repeated and future editing ensured.

#### 9.76 Sustainability Appraisal

The SA noted that the National Park brings prosperity to south Wiltshire, as it is an integral part of the whole area's attraction for tourists. Therefore this policy would have positive and long-term benefits for the local economy, particularly for tourist accommodation and Salisbury city centre. The policy would also have direct positive impacts for SA objectives relating to heritage, culture, biodiversity and landscape.

9.77 However, the proximity of the National Park does lead to an increase in house prices, which leads to young people being unable to enter the housing market. The performance of the policy could be slightly improved by taking a more positive and proactive approach to development that would have a positive impact on the social and economic wellbeing of local communities, rather than stating that development should simply not have a negative impact.

9.78 It was therefore recommended that, although this needs to be a controlling policy, consideration could be given to taking a more positive approach to the provision of affordable housing and community facilities, which will have a positive impact on the social wellbeing of the area.

#### **9.79 Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- a) Policy was reviewed for their likely effectiveness as avoidance and mitigation measures:
- b) Main mitigation against any recreational impact on the New Forest and Salisbury Plain suggested in the draft SW RSS and the adopted SE RSS in the provision of alternative natural greenspace with residential developments
- c) Open Space Audit has examined the distribution and quality of provision and recommends that the council concentrate on quality and access to current sites in Salisbury City and Amesbury rather than new provision, although this is in relation to meeting existing needs.
- d) Draft CP11 requires the provision of quality and accessibility to natural or semi-natural greenspace sites or green corridors as a result of new development to be assessed on a site-by site basis.
- e) Draft Core Policy 18 requires development proposals to retain and enhance Green Infrastructure networks and contribute towards the objectives of the Wiltshire GI strategy.
- f) Concludes that it should be possible for mitigation to be provided through greenspace provision and access or quality improvements, as a minority of disturbance effects on N2K sites are generated directly from the Core Strategy.
- g) Core Policy 18 (and 11) should be strengthened to include specific reference to the role of greenspace provision and improvements to access and quality of existing greenspace, with standards of provision and accessibility above national standards that would be required in any case to meet local open space needs, as a means of providing avoidance and mitigation measures for potential recreational impacts on the Salisbury Plain and New Forest N2K sites.
- h) More certainty in Core Policy 18 that the objectives of the Wiltshire GI strategy will include ensuring suitable alternative natural greenspace provision, access or quality improvements in order to offset increase public use of N2K sites and other sensitive sites.
- i) Other types of measures recommended by the RSS HRA's include site habitat management measures and visitor access management measures at or around N2K sites.
- j) As the majority of the potential recreational pressures from new housing on the N2K sites are generated from sites not yet allocated whose location within the Stonehenge Community Area (Salisbury Plain) and the Southern community area (New Forest) will be defined within the Site Specific allocations DPD HRA report suggests mitigation measures that should be considered for the HRA for that DPD when produced
  2. high specific standards of greenspace provision for all developments;
  3. identification of one or more specific greenspace sites to be provided;
  4. contributions to specific site habitat improvement projects or visitor access management within N2K sites as mitigation, for example:
  5. Stone Curlew plot creation within Salisbury Plain in collaboration with Defence Estates/RSPB;
  6. habitat enhancement for Nightjar, Woodlark or Dartford Warbler within the New Forest, or recreational access management project, through a future joint working arrangement with the NFNPA.
  7. to be provided through greenspace provision and access or quality improvements.
- k) Assuming these mitigation measures are included within the Core Strategy and referred to as a requirement for the future DPD, it is concluded that the Core Strategy should have not adverse effects on the Salisbury Plain or New Forest N2K sites as a result of recreational access from new housing development.

9.80 These mitigation measures have been included within Core Policy 18 (version 3) Green infrastructure and therefore it is felt that a reference back to this policy is necessary.

It is therefore recommended that Core Policy 52 (now Core Policy 18) is re-drafted as a result of the SA/HRA as:

**New Forest National Park**

Development which will have a positive impact on the social and economic wellbeing of south Wiltshire and/or the New Forest National Park will be permitted, where mitigation can be provided to any negative impact on the:

- Conservation and enhancement of the unique character and environment of the New Forest National Park, and in particular the special qualities of its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage;
- Encouragement of understanding and enjoyment of the New Forest National Park's special qualities;
- Social and economic well being of local communities in ways that sustain the New Forest National Park's special character.

Any development should also meet the requirements of Core Policy X (Green Infrastructure).

**Targets:** No approval as exceptions to policy

**Monitoring and Review:** Annual Monitoring Report; Liaison with National Park Authority

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, New Forest National Park Authority

**Policies replaced:** None

9.81 As a result of further refinement through the HRA process and discussion with Natural England and the HRA Steering Group this policy has been further amended back to how it was originally drafted.

**Core Policy 15 – New Forest National Park**

Development will only be permitted where it does not have a negative impact on the:

- Conservation and enhancement of the unique character and environment of the New Forest National Park, and in particular the special qualities of its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage;
- Encouragement of understanding and enjoyment of the New Forest National Park's special qualities;
- Social and economic well being of local communities in ways that sustain the National Park's special character.

**Targets:** No approvals as exception to policy

**Monitoring and Review:** Annual Monitoring Report; Liaison with National Park Authority

**Delivery Responsibility:** Wiltshire Council, New Forest National Park Authority

**Policies replaced:** None