



**Wiltshire Council
Local Development Framework**

**SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT REVIEW**

Examination

**Position Statement for Matter 4: Consistency with
National Policy**

July 2011

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Matter 4. Question 4.0: How consistent are these revised housing and employment figures with the aims of Government policy as set out in Planning for Growth and the objectives of the Core Strategy which include providing everyone with access to a decent, affordable home and delivering a thriving economy which provides a range of job opportunities to match a growing population?

SWCS objectives.

- 4.1 There has been no change in the underpinning objectives of the strategy of providing everyone with access to a decent, affordable home and delivering a thriving economy which provides a range of job opportunities to match a growing population. The step change in delivery focussed around Salisbury remains intact.
- 4.2 In South Wiltshire, an assessment has been made to determine what proportion of the new dwellings required to support the employment growth can realistically be achieved, given the constrained environment.¹
- 4.3 As has been consistently argued by the Council, South Wiltshire is a highly constrained environment and finding developable land to meet local housing and employment needs in a sustainable manner that complies with PPS1 is difficult. The key factors which indicate why it is necessary to reduce the numbers from those in the draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy (dSWRSS) and South Wiltshire Core Strategy submission draft (SWCS) are explained in Topic Paper 20², and are in summary:
- Up to date evidence on housing and employment growth.
 - Prudent use of the constrained environmental capacity in South Wiltshire
 - The need to plan for sustainable growth that complies with the aims of PPS1
 - Recognition of Salisbury’s dominance in a predominantly rural area
- 4.4 There is the pressure for homes caused by an ageing population that must be planned for, together with young families and first time buyers finding it difficult to get on the housing ladder. There is still the need to plan for economic growth by providing the right choices for business that deliver an attractive investment environment and to support the Salisbury Vision through providing new employment (decant) sites. The latest retail evidence still indicates that Salisbury needs a significant boost in its retail offer to avoid decline in the face of increased sub-regional competition. Regeneration of the UKLF site is paramount for future

¹ This work is set out in Topic Papers 19 on the Site Selection Process, and revisited in Section 7 of topic paper 20.

² Topic Paper 20, Section 7, Para 7.4

prosperity of Wilton, as is maintaining the strategy of balanced growth in Amesbury. It is clear that the villages should support modest, high quality, growth commensurate with their role and function.

- 4.5 The evidence and Sustainability Appraisal in particular is still relevant in that within the South Wiltshire context, Salisbury is the dominant settlement, as confirmed in Core Policy 1 of the submitted SWCS, which offers by far the best range of services, employment, and housing and transport choices. As such it should remain as the principle focus for growth. As discussed at the EIP hearing sessions, the amount and location of growth around Salisbury needs to be considered within the context of a highly constrained environment (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Site, European Nature Sites and Floodplains for example) and the need to plan sustainably as set out in PPS1. This underlines the central theme of the Core Strategy, which is to achieve a step change in delivery of homes and jobs which makes the best progress towards meeting economic and affordable housing needs, while planning responsibly in a sustainable way. The underpinning strategy of making the best progress we can towards meeting growth needs within in the context of respecting environmental factors, remains unaltered.
- 4.6 Taking all of the factors identified into account, together with the different economic circumstances discussed in Matter 2, it is clear that the levels of growth in South Wiltshire, should be reduced in a manner which balances locally derived housing based on up to date evidence with environmental capacity and views of the local community. This up to date evidence has led to the focussed changes proposed to the SWCS. These changes are suggesting a slight easing of the rate of delivery, while still maintaining an ambitious growth agenda for South Wiltshire, focussed on Salisbury and Wilton, which remains in general conformity with the SWRSS.

Planning for Growth Agenda

- 4.7 The HM treasury document 'The Plan for Growth'³ and the subsequent statements from Greg Clark⁴ and Eric Pickles⁵ sets out the governments 'call to action' on growth, with an ambitious set of proposals to help 'rebuild' Britain's economy. This agenda identifies that the planning system has a key role to play by ensuring that the sustainable development needed to support economic growth is able to proceed as easily as possible.
- 4.8 It is important to note that much of Mr Clarks statement refers to the determining of planning applications, and not to the production of development plan documents, nevertheless the table below summarises the statements, and compares the SWCS incorporating the changes proposed in the review with the statement and makes an assessment as to whether the document is in accordance with the Governments stated agenda.
- 4.9 The early adoption of the SWCS with up to date policies, including strategic allocations, will enable the delivery of new homes and jobs within South Wiltshire, in

³ EIP document reference, NPP 45 D

⁴ EIP document reference, NPP 45 A

⁵ EIP document reference, NPP 45 B

a manner that promotes sustainable development, consistent with the Government's overriding objective to stimulate growth.

Planning for Growth Agenda	SWCS inc Review	Conformity
The Government wants more development in suitable and viable locations	The SWCS is focussing development around Salisbury, its most sustainable settlement, and the unchanged settlement hierarchy also directs development to the most suitable and viable settlements	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .
The Government will introduce a package of measures to support thriving town centres and build on the Town Centre First policy.	Both the spatial vision and strategic objective 6 support the thriving and town centre first objective	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .
The Government will accelerate the release of public sector land to encourage new homes and jobs.	The strategic site at UKLF is one of these public sector sites that will deliver new homes and jobs for Salisbury and Wilton	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .
The Government's top priority in reforming the planning system is to promote sustainable economic growth and jobs.	This is still the underpinning principle of the SWCS	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .
A strong presumption in favour of sustainable development in the forthcoming National Planning Policy Framework, which will expect local planning authorities to plan positively for new development	The SWCS including the review is still planning positively for new development with 9900 new homes and 10400 new jobs to 2026, in the most sustainable location focussed around Salisbury	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .
Local planning authorities should therefore press ahead without delay in preparing up-to-date development plans and should use that opportunity to be proactive in driving and supporting the growth that this country needs	The fact that the council agreed to carry out a review, shows its commitment to pressing ahead with an up to date development plan	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .
They should make every effort to identify and meet the housing, business and other	The strategy has identified the housing, business and other development needs of the area, and	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .

Planning for Growth Agenda	SWCS inc Review	Conformity
<p>development needs of their areas, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth, taking full account of relevant economic signals such as land prices.</p>	<p>has taken the opportunity to present the most up to date information, taking into account the economic downturn and latest population projections.</p>	
<p>Authorities should work together to ensure that needs and opportunities that extend beyond (or cannot be met within) their own boundaries are identified and accommodated in a sustainable way, such as housing market requirements that cover a number of areas, and the strategic infrastructure necessary to support growth.</p>	<p>Neighbouring authorities have been consulted throughout the preparation of the core strategy, and no cross boundary infrastructure requirements were identified. The south Wiltshire HMA is coterminous with the south Wiltshire core strategy area.</p>	<p>Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .</p>
<p>(i) consider fully the importance of national planning policies aimed at fostering economic growth and employment, given the need to ensure a return to robust growth after the recent recession</p>	<p>Strategic objectives 3 and 6 of the core strategy reflect this aim.</p> <p>The following Core policies still meet the objective of fostering economic growth and employment in south Wiltshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Distribution of growth, • 5 Employment land, • 7 Maltings and central car park, • 12 Porton down • 24 Hotels and conference facilities 	<p>Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .</p>
<p>(ii) take into account the need to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for key</p>	<p>The core strategy is maintaining a flexible and responsive supply of land. This is evidenced in</p>	<p>Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .</p>

Planning for Growth Agenda	SWCS inc Review	Conformity
sectors, including housing	FOC 05 with the retention of the sites at Harnham and Longhedge as future areas of growth.	
(iii) consider the range of likely economic, environmental and social benefits of proposals; including long term or indirect benefits such as increased consumer choice, more viable communities and more robust local economies (which may, where relevant, include matters such as job creation and business productivity)	The core strategy has looked at the economic, environmental and social benefits that all development can bring, and on balance, based on up to date evidence on population projections and economic forecasts, the level of development has been reduced, but will still deliver these benefits in south Wiltshire.	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .
(iv) be sensitive to the fact that local economies are subject to change and so take a positive approach to development where new economic data suggest that prior assessments of needs are no longer up-to-date	The review has fully taken this on board, and the council have used the most up to date evidence to inform the core strategy.	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .
(v) ensure that they do not impose unnecessary burdens on development.	All of the infrastructure requirements put forward are necessary to make this level of development acceptable both individually, and cumulatively. This is why they are referred to as <u>essential</u> infrastructure requirements.	Conforms to this aim of the Planning for Growth Agenda .

- 4.9 In conclusion the decision to carry on with the SWCS and to keep its underpinning ambitious growth agenda in tact, directly accord with the Plan for Growth. The focussed changes accord with the need to take heed of latest economic indicators, but have been used in a manner which complements the underpinning strategy and allows the strategy to continue with only a slight easing of the pace growth.