

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY
EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**

**MATTER 15:
FLEXIBILITY/MONITORING**

**ON BEHALF OF
PERSIMMON HOMES AND
THE WILTON ESTATE**

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Q15.1 What Happens If?

The CS is very specific about where, how much and what type of development is intended to take place over the life of the CS, particularly in its early years. What contingency plans are in place should this development not take place in the manner anticipated? How would the situation be monitored? What would be the trigger points for implementing any contingency plans?

15.1.1 Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate generally support the South Wiltshire Core Strategy and note its overall soundness. However, further minor changes to the Core Strategy are sought to improve its effectiveness, consistency with national policy and for clarification/updating purposes.

What contingency plans are in place should this development not take place in the manner anticipated?

15.1.2 Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate have strongly supported the approach set out in paragraph 5.37 regarding the degree of contingency and flexibility which has been factored into the plan during its preparation. This approach accords with PPS12¹ para 4.52 which states that:

“To be “sound” a core strategy should be JUSTIFIED, EFFECTIVE and consistent with NATIONAL POLICY.”

15.1.3 Effective means that the document must be deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored. PPS12 paragraph 4.46 provides advice that plans should be capable of dealing with changing circumstances and look over a longer time frame of 15 years.

15.1.4 The Planning Inspectorate have produced guidance on the test of soundness and “Examining Development Plan Documents: Soundness Guidance – August 2009 – 2nd Edition)² and expands upon those points set out in PPS12 relating to soundness. In terms of flexibility three questions are posed:

Is the DPD flexible enough to respond to a variety of or unexpected changes in, circumstances?

¹ Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning – June 2008 Core Document ref NPP/12 A

² PINs Examining Development Plan Documents: Soundness Guidance – August 2009 2nd Edition NPP/43

Is the DPD sufficiently flexible to deal with any changes to, for example, housing figures from an emerging RSS?

Does the DPD include the remedial actions that will be taken if the strategies /policies are failing?

15.1.5 The South Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out a spatial strategy and planning policies for the next 20 years, which is in effect up to 2026 (the end date of the RSS). The Council has acknowledged that the Core Strategy has been produced during difficult economic times and has tried to be flexible in order to address these particular circumstances and to include a contingency that can respond to unexpected changes. The strategy allows for some currently unforeseen slippage and potential delay at particular sites. In this way it enables the land supply to be monitored and managed in a flexible and responsive manner and is therefore sufficiently robust to change as expected by PPS3 and PPS12.

15.1.6 PPS12 states that plans need to be able to show how they will handle contingencies. The Council have “over-allocated” the amount of housing land to meet the emerging RSS 10 housing requirement, and in order to address the historic under provision for new housing in the plan area in readiness for economic recovery. In this way the Council have provided a degree of contingency as sought by PPS12. Appendix 1 provides a table which sets out the position in relation to the emerging RSS requirements.

15.1.7 The Council have indicated in paragraph 1.26 of the Core Strategy that no one site is essential to meet either the PPS3 requirement for a rolling five year housing land supply, or the overall 20 year requirement for new housing and jobs. The Council’s strategy of “over allocating” sites is based on evidence of when the sites are likely to be developed. Should some of these sites not come forward as projected there remains sufficient contingency to ensure that there will be at least a 5 year land supply.

15.1.8 The Council have acknowledged the need to make provision for housing in accordance with the emerging RSS and that previously there was a shortfall against the adopted Salisbury Local Plan. Paragraph 5.23 (c) states that not enough homes had been delivered to meet identified requirements in the past 10 years in South Wiltshire, which has exacerbated issues of affordability. The

Council state that there is a need to address this under provision and to build contingency into the plan so that uncertain market conditions or unforeseen events will not prevent the delivery of the strategy in future.

15.1.9 Consequently a deliberate “frontloading” of the strategy has been produced, with all the Strategic allocations planned to commence delivery in the early years of the plan, post adoption. Whilst this is not an alternative strategy as such, it nevertheless seeks to provide a degree of contingency should not all the sites identified come forward at the rate envisaged.

15.1.10 Given that Salisbury is one of three growth points in Wiltshire and the only growth point in the Salisbury HMA, it is difficult to see how an alternative sustainable strategy could be formulated to address potential uncertainty. The spatial strategy in the Core Strategy is somewhat “predetermined” by the expected level of urban focus in the RSS set out in Development Policy A and Policy HMA11.

15.1.11 At the time of the Examination in Public into the RSS, it was agreed that there was evidence pointing to a greater need for housing provision in the Salisbury Housing Market Area. The Secretary of State endorsed the dwelling requirement of 12,400 additional dwellings for the HMA, as recommended by the Panel. This level of growth was considered necessary to delivery the “step change” sought by PPS3.

15.1.12 The Council have, therefore, made a level of provision which responds to changing economic circumstances by over allocating housing, and maintaining an employment land supply which is in excess of that required to meet the figures in the emerging RSS. Therefore the strategy will be able to respond to the market and provide a choice of employment sites to meet different needs. Paragraph 1.27 refers to independent research commissioned by Wiltshire Council, which reported on the economic impact of the slowdown in the economy in 2008.

15.1.13 The Council has demonstrated that it is not relying on a review of the plan as the means of handling uncertainty. The housing trajectory and over supply is based, according to para 5.26 upon a realistic evaluation of housing supply, informed by the SHLAA, which has included evidence from developers regarding

projected building rates, and the requirements and timing of essential infrastructure provision. Topic Paper 17: Infrastructure³ explains what processes have been undertaken to ensure Infrastructure Delivery, for example with essential Infrastructure Providers and the feasibility work that has been undertaken. Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate are support this approach.

15.1.14 The report seeks to identify the main infrastructure requirements for providers and when and how these will be delivered.

15.1.15 Alongside Topic Paper 17 is the Integrated Delivery Plan, which forms Appendix E of the Core Strategy. The Plan sets out how each strategic outcome sought by this strategy will be delivered, by whom and when.

How would the situation be monitored?

15.1.16 In terms of monitoring, each of the Core Policies are subject to monitoring and review and included in the “Policy Box”. Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate suggest that for consistency reference should be made in the “Policy Box” to which Strategic Objectives are being addressed by the policy. This approach would be consistent with the Integrated Delivery Plan, which is based on the Strategic Objectives and how these are met.

15.1.17 In order to be consistent with the PPS12 para 4.47 states that Core Strategies must have clear arrangements for monitoring and reporting results. In essence this is the Wiltshire Council Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). This monitoring report will provide the basis on which the contingency plans within the strategy will be triggered.

15.1.18 The Core Strategy acknowledges that there are a number of areas where there is less certainty over delivery or specific issues and further work will need to be undertaken, although it is acknowledged that the Council has attempted to keep these areas to a minimum.

15.1.19 Deliverability is fundamental to the strategy and the Council has arguably made attempts to foster delivery by encouraging master planning of the strategic

³ South Wiltshire Core Strategy Topic Paper 17: Infrastructure July 2009 Core documents ref TOP/17 A

sites, leading to planning applications. Paragraph 13.1 includes a schedule of progress on some of the main sites.

What would be the trigger points for implementing any contingency plans?

15.1.20 At Appendix A of the Core Strategy the development templates for the strategic growth sites, with the exception of land at The Maltings and Central Car Park include a sub-heading - "Key delivery milestones, monitoring and review". Each template is provided with the milestones that must be adhered to in order to safeguard delivery of housing within the five year period:

- Immediate partnership working with the LPA and stakeholders frontloading matters.
 - A planning application accompanied by a master plan and design code within 18 months of adoption of the Core Strategy
- A section 106 agreement will be required setting key milestones for delivery including that the site shall start delivering housing within 12 months of the grant of planning permission and a phasing agreement setting out completions at agreed milestones moving forward.

15.1.21 Each template has the wording that "*Failure to meet any of the above deadlines without production of compelling justification will lead to conclusion that the site is not deliverable and the site could be de-allocated in a mini-review of the Core Strategy and the site replaced with an alternative site where more certainty exists.*"

15.1.22 Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate have strongly objected to this text in the Core Strategy and believe it should be deleted. The Fugglestone Red scheme is actively being progressed and consequently this eventuality is unlikely to arise. Such text in the plan does not support investor confidence and creates uncertainty rather than certainty. The Hearing Statement for Matter 5 at Appendix 3 has set out a revised development template for the strategic site.

15.1.23 Appendix 2 of the Hearing Statement for Matter 5 has also included a housing trajectory for the Fugglestone Red scheme, and illustrates the phasing of development and that delivery of housing completions will commence in 2013.

15.1.24 It is noted that for all the strategic sites, with the exception of land at the Maltings and Central Car Park and former Imerys Quarry, that they will all be subject to an independent viability review on a site by site basis by Wiltshire Council within two years to review the standards of delivery set in view of the projected recovery from the recession of 2009. This statement for consistency should apply to all of the strategic sites. It is noted that the review will not take place if the developer has demonstrated a firm commitment to delivery in the first two years of the strategy.

15.1.25 It appears that the contingency for a shortage created by some strategic allocations coming forward and thus not meeting the “milestones” is for the degree of sites or site to be de-allocated in a mini review of the Core Strategy. Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate would question the feasibility of a mini review of the South Wiltshire Core Strategy, especially given the need to progress the Wiltshire Wide Core Strategy. Given the degree of over-allocation, a mini review is important and any issues could be addressed in a Wiltshire wide Core Strategy.

15.1.26 The Planning Inspectorate guidance on the test of soundness referred to above provides further questions on monitoring:-

- Does the DPD contain targets and milestones which relate to the delivery of the policies, including housing trajectories where the DPD contains housing allocations?
- Is it clear how these are to be measured and are these linked to the production of the Annual Monitoring Report?
- Are suitable targets and indicators present (by when, how and by whom?)
- Is it clear how the significant effects identified in the Sustainability Appraisal report will be taken forward in the ongoing monitoring and implementation of the plan, through the AMR?

15.1.27 The Core Strategy contains targets, which are included in each of the Core Policies, but some are set out in the policy itself, others are included in the target and set out specifically in numerical terms e.g. the number of affordable housing units annually, where as other targets are more like an objective e.g. reduction in

local unemployment figures or agreement of a management plan and have no timescale/milestone.

15.1.28 Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate consider that the presentation of targets and milestones should be more transparent. The Integrated Delivery Plan is set out by Strategic Objectives rather than the Core Policies, if this approach is to continue it would be useful to cross reference the policies in the actual Core Strategy Document to the Strategic Objectives. Alternatively the Integrated Delivery Plan could be improved and presented by Core Policies with clear references to the AMR national, regional and local indicators.

15.1.29 Most of the policies are to be monitored through the AMR according to the "Policy Box" but the indicators, both national and local are listed in the Integrated Delivery Plan and there is no reference to the production of the AMR and again the timescale is not clear.

15.1.30 Suitable targets and measures and indicators are set out in the Integrated Delivery Plan, the delivery mechanism and the lead agency are clear, and the timescale it is assumed is as precise as possible. However, it is not clear how these are to be linked to the production of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The Integrated Delivery Plan could be improved by referencing to the AMR.

15.1.31 The significant effects identified in the Sustainability Appraisal Report should be taken forward in the monitoring and implementation of the plan, and should be included in the Integrated Delivery Plan. The effects both positive and negative are set out on page 35 and 36 of the Sustainability Appraisal⁴, these should be referred to in the Integrated Delivery Plan.

15.1.32 It is not altogether clear what the trigger points would be for any contingency plans for the Core Policies apart from Core Policy 2, templates in Appendix A for the Strategic Sites which includes a reference that if sites do not come forward then there will need to be a mini review of the CS.

Conclusions

⁴ South Wiltshire Core Strategy Proposed Submission Draft: Sustainability Appraisal Report - July 2009 Core Document ref SWCS/03

15.1.33 Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate broadly support the approach taken to the Core Strategy to ensure that it is deliverable. The “in built” contingency and flexibility will enable the strategy to be monitored and achieved. Persimmon Homes and the Wilton Estate note that the detailed mechanism for bring forward reserve sites into the rolling five –year housing supply will be set out in the SPD/Site Allocations DPD. This would accord with PPS3 para 63. There is scope for some clarification in terms of the monitoring of the Core Policies and the cross referencing to the strategic objectives and milestones.

APPENDIX 1

Table 1 Housing Requirements and Provision

Requirement side

RSS Proposed Changes	Number of Dwellings
Salisbury SSCT	At least 6,000 dwellings
Rest of Salisbury District	At least 6,400 dwellings
Salisbury Housing Market Area	At least 12,400 dwellings

Supply side

Proposed South Wiltshire Core Strategy Housing and Employment provision

Area	Number of dwellings	Hectares of employment land
Salisbury Community Area	7,480	36 ha
Wilton Community Area	1,570	3 ha.
Amesbury Community Area	2,650	17 ha.
Southern Wiltshire Community Area	740	-
Mere Community Area	290	3 ha.
Tisbury Community Area	440	1.4 ha
Core Strategy Total Provision	13,170	60.4 ha
Salisbury SSCT	7,480	
Rest of District	5,690	

The above table shows the figures contained within the submitted Core Strategy which we do not necessarily accept. They are used simply to demonstrate how a distribution table might look in the adopted Core Strategy.