

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

**MATTER 2: CORE POLICY 1
THE DISTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT
SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY**

**ON BEHALF OF
AMESBURY PROPERTY COMPANY**

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Q2.4 Proposed Levels of Growth in Settlements.

Broadly speaking, have the right levels of growth been allocated to various settlements?

2.4.1 Amesbury Property Company generally supports the South Wiltshire Core Strategy and notes its overall soundness. However, further changes to the Core Strategy are sought to improve its effectiveness, consistency with national policy and for clarification/updating.

2.4.2 The Strategy is based on the existing Community Areas and within the Community Areas the approach is to plan as far as possible for self – contained settlements. Paragraph 5.3 of the Core Strategy¹ states:

“This means focusing growth around settlements with a range of facilities, where local housing, service and employment needs can be met in a sustainable manner.”

2.4.3 The proposed level of growth is primarily focussed on the first three tiers of the settlement strategy i.e. Salisbury, Amesbury and the Garrison villages and Local Service Centres. (paragraph 5.3 of the Core Strategy.) This builds upon the previous urban focus of RPG10 and the adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016. The emphasis is RSS10 is upon increasing the overall level of provision in Salisbury as a Strategically Significant City and Town (SSCT). This approach accords with Development Policies A and B of the emerging RSS10.

2.4.4 Amesbury Property Company supports the amount of residential growth to the Amesbury Community Area, but objects to the lack of employment growth in the Community Area as the existing employment site - Solstice Park, has not been saved as an employment allocation. The key issue is one of balancing employment growth and residential growth in order to achieve higher levels of self containment in accordance with the strategy.

2.4.5 Paradoxically the Core Strategy strengthens the role of Amesbury and encourages self containment. Amesbury is the second largest settlement in the area and:

“Because of the level of services, shops and jobs that Amesbury provides it will be the focus for significant strategic growth outside Salisbury.”²

¹ South Wiltshire Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document – July 2009 – Core Document ref SWCS/01 A

- 2.4.6 The Core Strategy identifies Amesbury and its immediate hinterland for significant housing growth, some 2,650 dwellings of which some 1,960 would appear to be directed to Amesbury itself. The effect of this growth is for Amesbury and its immediate hinterland settlements to accommodate 41.4% of the projected outside Salisbury SSCT 6,400 dwellings.
- 2.4.7 In this regard, it is clear that Amesbury is recognised as having an important service centre role in a Regional context and a high level of housing growth to meet that role.
- 2.4.8 Although it is not within the Salisbury SSCT, and cannot be classified as an SSCT (as these are identified in RSS 10), it nevertheless has an important function as a service centre, Amesbury is recognised in the Core Strategy as having a more significant role than the Local Service Centres. Amesbury is regarded as being in a higher category than a Development Policy “B” settlement which applies to the Local Centres. It therefore has a unique role in the settlement hierarchy for south Wiltshire. Amesbury Property Company supports this strategy for Amesbury.
- 2.4.9 The Panel in their report on the RSS for the South West recognised the role that Amesbury has in provision of employment land. Paragraphs 4.11.12 – 4.11.14³ in particular at paragraph 4.11.13 which states that:

“In the light of all these factors, it is the Panel’s view that the City centre is the best location to accommodate growth in the office sector, with more expansive uses and some other specialist growth sectors being accommodated at the Amesbury locations (Solstice Park and Porton Down), where the Panel notes there are sizeable existing commitments to 2011. Our policy recommendation SR11.2 leaves scope for such distribution through the LDF process.” (My underlining)

- 2.4.10 The Secretary of State in the Proposed Changes to the RSS partially accepted the Panel’s recommendation to Policy SR11.2 but introduced a new single Policy HMA11 for the Salisbury Housing Market Area including the Salisbury SSCT. This incorporated the text of proposed Policy SR11.2 with amendments to clarify that the figure of 37ha of employment land applies to the Salisbury TTWA and to delete references to areas outside Salisbury. The figures therefore apply to the wider TTWA.

³ Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Panel Report – December 2007 Core Document RPP/07

2.4.11 Amesbury Community Area contains the majority of allocated employment land in south Wiltshire (outside the Salisbury SSCT) including Solstice Park which is a £250 million Business Park, and Porton Down which is an international centre of excellence in employment terms for biological research and health protection and Boscombe Down which is a Ministry of Defence airbase. Together with existing housing allocations (saved Policy H.9 Archers Gate) and the proposed strategic housing at Kings Gate – Core Policy 2, the development of the employment land will assist in implementing the vision and spatial strategy for the Amesbury Community Area.

2.4.12 The potential for continuing growth at Amesbury is recognised in the adopted Local Plan and in the Community Strategic Plan⁴, which acknowledges that Solstice Park is expected to play a major role in the expansion of the South Wiltshire economy. The Local Plan proposed phased development of housing and employment land to consolidate the town's role as a local centre for the north of the District, including Solstice Park, Porton Down, Boscombe Down and 550 homes south of Boscombe Road during the period of the Local Plan. The Core Strategy now saves the Local Plan allocations as set out on page 99 of the Core Strategy (i.e. 120 dwellings Netheravon Road, Durrington, 7 hectares of employment land at Boscombe Down and 10 hectares at Porton Down and on page 59 para 5.46 (a) Saved Local Plan allocations 285 dwellings at Archers Gate). It is considered that the saved Local Plan allocation of Archers Gate should be included in the Section 8 Amesbury Community Area on page 99 with the other saved local plan allocations referred to above. However, the local plan policy with reference to Solstice Park has not been saved – this is addressed in response to Matter 4 question 4.6 the potential effect of this is to deny the right level of growth to Amesbury notwithstanding the existence of a planning consent at Solstice Park.

2.4.13 The addendum to Topic Paper 9⁵ recognises that employment should be balanced with housing growth and that the Solstice Park allocation will be an important contributor to further employment opportunities. It also supports options for large proportions for employment land by extending Porton Down and land around Old Sarum. The topic Paper also comments *“Solstice Park will be a fundamental driver in the planned*

⁴ Amesbury Market Town Partnership, 2006, Amesbury Community Strategic Plan 2006 -2016

⁵ Addendum to Topic Paper 9 : the Economy and Employment – February 2008 Core Document ref TOP/09 B

expansion of the local economy, whose population is expected to grow by 10% in 10 years.”

2.4.14 In support of the recent Regional Distribution Centre (RDC) application at Solstice Park a Socio – Economic issues report was prepared which was part of the Environmental Statement. The report examined the social and economic implications of the proposed RDC in relation to the impacts on the supply of land for employment, the numbers of jobs the RDC will accommodate, the labour force arising from the surrounding area’s population, future growth in the local labour supply and the implications for employment structure, commuting and housing demand.

2.4.15 Estimates of the employment that may be accommodated by the RDC have been based on the proposed floor areas and published sources of information on employment densities. The proposed floorspace of the RDC is 94,144 sq metres including 6% of ancillary offices (6,065 sq metres). An appropriate employment density to apply to the RDC is considered to be 80 sq metre per workspace including the ancillary offices, which implies 1,177 jobs. This is only an estimate as the occupiers of the RDC are as yet unknown.

2.4.16 The RDC represents just one (albeit a very significant part of Solstice Park) of a number of sites with planning consent (or minded to be approved), the other major areas being offices (Plot C1), a Data Centre (Plots C4 and C6), remaining parts of C2 and B2/B8 uses on Zone A. The Plan at Appendix 1 shows the commitments. Of course we cannot guarantee that the particular consents will be implemented. If they are not, it will be important to retain the allocation to underpin any revised employment proposals that may come forward.

2.4.17 The addendum to Topic Paper 9 does not address important distinctions between the numbers of jobs, areas of floorspace and site areas. However, the emphasis of employment growth is on the city in terms of numbers of jobs and these are expected to be higher density activities, including a high proportion of office employment. Lower density forms of specialist employment are considered to occupy more extensive areas of land outside the city such as Solstice Park.

2.4.18 In terms of increasing self containment, development at Solstice Park will also have the affect of generating additional employment of one job for every 3 jobs created

initially⁶ (perhaps another 400 jobs resulting from the RDC in suppliers and services, including shops, schools and other local facilities.) This will provide jobs in the Amesbury Community Area and will assist in the strategy of self containment and help to balance with the new housing at Archers Gate and Kings Gate, there will also be a number of people from the military garrisons. {Amesbury Community Area has the highest number of military families associated with the Super Garrison sites of all the Community Areas and will therefore be a focus (with Tidworth) for population changes resulting from personnel increases to the Super Garrison}. The majority of the families of the relocating personnel are expected to remain in the Amesbury Community Area as no new Service Family accommodation is available in Tidworth

2.4.19 Data from the 2001 Census for commuting indicates that about 42% (6,393) of those working in the Amesbury Community Area (15,217) lived elsewhere, whilst there was an outflow of about 46% (7,624) of the resident workforce (16,448) to jobs elsewhere: a net commuting outflow of 1,231 people from the Amesbury Community Area.

2.4.20 There is clearly scope to expand local employment in Amesbury to enhance the opportunities for the residential labour force, which will assist in reducing outward commuting. This is particular an issue when the changes from the Super Garrison are taken into account.

2.4.21 It is important to note that Amesbury Community Area and Salisbury Community Area make up some 66% of the total population of the District. They are projected to take over 90% of the District's total growth in labour force on the basis of projections controlled to the RSS housing proposals.

2.4.22 The 7,600 out-commuters from the Amesbury Community Area (including the 3,600 who travelled outside the district) and the 3,800 people who travelled outside the district from Salisbury Community Area could potentially augment the local workforce when new jobs area created at Amesbury and Porton Down.

2.4.23 The Socio-Economic Report to support the RDC application (attached at Appendix 2) acknowledges that major economic development at Amesbury and Porton Down will also attract in-commuters to augment the labour force, but this will depend on the mix of occupations and skills required. There may be some additional journeys of this kind, but they are likely to be outweighed by the increased opportunities for current

⁶ ProLogis, January 2006, Not Just Stacking Shelves – Tackling pre-conceptions about employment in the logistics industry.

out-commuters to work locally. There are therefore opportunities for net reductions in journeys to work from the two Community Areas and the wider district.

2.4.24 Employment in the Amesbury Community Area has a high concentration in public administration and defence (30.8% of employed people, compared with 15.2% for the district and 5.7% nationally). The occupation structure of the Amesbury Area showed high proportions of employed residents in “associate professional and technical occupations” (technician and professional support roles (25.3% compared with 17.3% for the District and 5.7% nationally). There were lower proportions employed in managerial and professional occupations (21.4% compared with 26.5% nationally) or as process, plant and machine operatives (5.5% compared with 8.4% nationally).

2.4.25 Solstice Park is allocated for a wide range of employment (B1, B2 and B8) and leisure uses in the adopted Salisbury Local Plan under Policy E8A. The whole of Solstice Park is subject to an outline planning consent granted in 2002. The Local Plan allocation did not restrict the type of employment use so as to ensure that it is able to respond to the market demand for differing types of employment use.

2.4.26 Infrastructure at Solstice Park has been implemented following the granting of planning permission to attract a wide range of businesses (employment and leisure). The development of Solstice Park meets one of the main planning objectives of Amesbury which is to secure improved social and community facilities. The development will help to facilitate increased levels of self containment for Amesbury Community Area.

Conclusions

2.4.27 Amesbury Property Company supports the allocation of Kings Gate and the saved allocation of Archers Gate – this is consistent with the Core Strategy and with national and regional guidance. However, for reasons which will have been discussed in Matter 1.3 and will be expanded upon in detail in Matter 4.6 the level of employment growth allocated to Amesbury does not recognise the existing employment allocation of Solstice Park and there is an imbalance with the amount of residential growth. Solstice Park should be saved as an employment allocation (a suggested wording is included in response to Matter 4, question 4.6) in order to be consistent with the strategy to improve the self containment of settlements. Development of Solstice Park will not prejudice the strategy for employment; it will

contribute to the overall strategy and provide for managed growth to support the delivery of new homes to meet local needs in the Amesbury Community Area.

2.4.28 Employment development at Solstice Park will help to meet the economic development needs of Amesbury. It will contribute to the economic development of the town and the Community Area: providing employment for the areas growing labour force associated with new housing development and opportunities to reduce the levels of out commuting.

2.4.29 Amesbury has a unique position in the settlement hierarchy and can act as a focal point for the provision of locally significant development where there is an existing concentration of business and employment. The settlement strategy seeks to promote increased self –containment, enhanced social and community facilities and improved public transport links where such a settlement clearly meets to the needs of a wider area as in the case of Amesbury. The strategy for the Salisbury Housing Market Area (HMA) is set out in the emerging RSS. The contribution of the significant concentrations of jobs at Amesbury is recognised and the opportunities for future job growth at locations such as Amesbury are also acknowledged. Amesbury Property Company therefore consider that the wrong levels of employment growth have been allocated to the settlements – in respect of Amesbury, especially given the amount of residential growth, and when other factors are also taken into account such as the affect of the Super Garrison.

Appendix 1 Plan of Solstice Park

Appendix 2 Socio Economic Report produced to support the Solstice Park planning application