

Question 2.1 and 2.5

Representor Number : 2927

South Wiltshire Core Strategy

Chapter 5 – Delivering the Vision – the spatial strategy for south Wiltshire.

5.2 Strategy is based on existing community areas. These areas were devised to reflect “natural” communities defined in terms of real patterns of local life (shopping, employment, schooling, etc) and are still relevant today.

5.3 Within these Community Areas the approach is to plan as far as possible for self-contained settlements. This means focussing growth around settlements within a range of facilities, where local housing and employment needs can be met in a sustainable manner. A hierarchy has been identified based on the size and function of settlements, which is the basis on setting out how the Spatial Strategy will deliver the levels of growth for the south Wiltshire area. Growth will be primarily focussed on settlements in the first three tiers of the settlement strategy

Tiers: A – Salisbury

B – Amesbury and the Garrison Villages

C – Local service Centres – Downton, Mere, Tisbury and  
Wilton

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) states that the smaller towns and villages identified through Policy C should be the **primary** focus of development permitted in the wider countryside away from Policy A & B settlements.

The Core Strategy does not identify specifically Policy C settlements; it merely states that C – Local Service Centres are the equivalent of Policy B settlements in the RSS and I have assumed therefore that D - Secondary Villages are RSS Policy C Settlements, where levels of growth proportionate to their size, character and environment will be supported. In other words, these settlements will be those where the primary focus of development will be permitted in the wider countryside.

Below that, we have

E – small villages where it is proposed that development will be restricted to only infill and exceptional development, and

F – Other settlements in the Countryside, in remote rural areas and with no facilities of their own. They represent the most unsustainable location for new growth and hence new development will not be permitted in these villages and therefore the Housing Policy Boundaries are removed.

It is the seemingly arbitrary way that the villages have had their HPBs removed by grouping them into the F classification yet a fairly rudimentary study of many of those villages would show that they are not necessarily in remote rural areas, neither do many of them have no facilities of their own. Zeals, for example, is listed as an E: small Villages type settlement, while Kilmington is an F: Other Settlement. Why is this? The Zeals and Kilmington primary schools amalgamated a few years ago to form White Sheet primary school sharing the two sites. Both villages have pubs. Zeals has a small shop and post office attached to the garage. The villages, and including Stourton in between and Maiden Bradley beyond, which also provide children for the school, are interdependent on each other, particularly to keep the school viable, yet Stourton, Kilmington and Maiden Bradley are not given any ability for any growth at all.

And those villages which are remote and do not have any facilities are being forever cast into that mould and are, effectively, being abandoned. This is a huge concern when many of those villages contain social housing and are the subject of much rural poverty. This classification is never going to help those communities. This abandonment is concerning in two ways. Let me take 2 examples, East Knoyle and West Knoyle, given that I know them both well, but they are representative of many villages and interdependent groups of villages.

East and West Knoyle are two very different villages, separated by a hill, a knoll or knole. East Knoyle is a village made up of four different hamlets with 2 pubs and a village shop. It is a thriving community with many events taking place in the village hall adjoining the church and the village shop, run entirely by volunteers, has helped promote a cohesive community spirit. By recent accidents of fate it has no school any longer nor a doctors surgery (the outreach surgery that was held in the village hall had to be closed on health and safety grounds). Primary school children travel to the schools in Hindon or Semley or even Mere. Semley has a school and a pub but no village shop, apart from an off-licence. Hindon has a doctor's surgery, a school, 2 pubs and a newly opened community shop which drew heavily on the East Knoyle model, to replace the old shop which was closing down because the incumbents were retiring.

East Knoyle lies adjacent to the A350 allowing quick and easy access to Shaftesbury, just over the county boundary in Dorset, a much larger and expanding market town 4 miles to the south and an RSS Policy B settlement. Shaftesbury has a secondary school which many East Knoyle children attend. Gillingham is a similar settlement, also having a secondary school which many East Knoyle children attend and is 5 miles from the village.

East Knoyle has been included in the Mere Community Area, probably for ease of drawing a line between that and the Tisbury Community Area, likewise Sedgehill and Semley, but it is unlikely that either of these two parishes feel any connection with Mere. They are far more likely to look to Shaftesbury as their natural wider community centre.

East Knoyle has a good mix of private housing and social housing but if the HPB or HRA is removed so that no new development can take place the village is actively being discouraged from being sustainable.

By contrast, West Knoyle is a small hamlet which has been doubled in size post-war by the building of a substantial number of council houses (some properties purchased by the tenants) and more recent housing association development. It has no facilities apart from the Victorian village school, now the village hall and social club, and a small play area for the children. West Knoyle lies about 4 miles east of Mere, 7 miles each from Gillingham and Shaftesbury.

It is true to say that West Knoyle, in modern terms, is an unsustainable community. However, many of the residents in the social housing are long term residents and their own children live in social housing. Where are the next generation to live if they want to be with their families? If no further development is permitted, how can the village expand to accommodate those who want to live there?

**None of those villages where it is proposed to remove the HPB are asking for a large number of houses to be built. The parish councils in those villages wish to be able to make that choice, however. They have the detailed local knowledge and the parishes should be able to decide where the HPB should be if they wish to see a small amount of development to prevent their communities from atrophy and death. If these parishes are labelled as unsustainable this may well become a self-perpetuating truth.**

Nowhere in the RSS does it state that this should happen. Indeed the RSS, as well as the south Wiltshire Core Strategy, talks about the primary focus of development. Primary focus means just that. It does not mean “only” and the meaning is that some of the Secondary Villages and the Other Settlements in the Countryside should have a small amount of development.

The RSS also discusses Sustainable Communities and describes linking the provision of homes, jobs and services based on role and function so that cities towns and villages and **groups of places** have the **potential** to become more self-contained and the need to travel is reduced. Many of the smaller villages are interdependent and that interdependence needs to continue to support what facilities they do have and which they share. The removal of the HPBs and HRAs will only result in those villages or groups of villages being unable to have any potential to become more self-contained.

In my opinion, the Core Strategy, by removing the HPBs and HRAs, will have the opposite effect of encouraging villages and groups of places from becoming self-contained. It will be the kiss of death for those villages where no development of any kind is to be permitted. They will lose their facilities, their shops and the local schools and those that live in these villages will have to travel further distances to access those services.

**Matter Number: 2**  
**Question 2.4**

**Representor Number : 2927**

**Question 2.4 Proposed Levels of Growth in Settlements.** Broadly speaking, have the right levels of growth been allocated to various settlements?

Since writing my original submission in September 2009, I am no clearer on the allocation of housing contained in the Vision for the Wilton Community Area.

As far as I understand the document, there are to be 1570 new homes, 450 of which are to be on the UKLF site and a further 170 in Wilton, presumably including the 45 dwellings at Bulbridge (Saved Local Plan allocation). This leaves a further 950 to be allocated in the rest of the Wilton Community Area. There are 3 Secondary Villages listed in Chapter 7 but Chapter 5, page 46 states that the Community Area has 2 secondary villages, Broadchalke and Dinton, where "limited" growth will be appropriate.

If the secondary villages are the settlements where the majority of the development is to take place outside the local service centre of Wilton, but at the same time the document only specifies limited growth, there is a complete lack of clarity regarding where the 950 homes are to go. Simply relying on a subsequent Site Specific Allocations DPD to identify where exactly the growth is to take place does not give confidence to the interested parishes and the public that the Core Strategy can ensure that the secondary villages and other settlements further down the food chain will not become over developed. 950 unidentified new homes leaves the community area unprotected and unable to comment on the Core Strategy as to whether the settlements can accommodate that level of growth.

Submission from:  
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