

Salisbury Campaign for Better Transport
Matter 5. Core Policy 2. Delivery of Development – Strategic Allocations

Question 5.4. Development Milestones and Phasing.

With the exception of the Central Car Park site the intention is that all of the strategic allocations will have been the subject of a planning application within 18 months of the adoption of the CS, that delivery will start within a further 12 months and that thereafter it would proceed in accordance with an agreed phasing plan. How reasonable is this and how feasible? Why is the Central Car Park not subject to such requirements when the housing trajectory appears to show it delivering housing from 2012/2013 onwards? Why is Churchfields the subject of such requirements when the CS acknowledges that it is a longer term project because of its complex nature?

- 5.4.1 From the point of view of developing sustainable infrastructure, including transport, it would be preferable to build on the strategic allocations serially rather than in parallel. There is the risk otherwise that developments will stall as the housing market gets saturated, and promised infrastructure may get delayed. As an example, the housing development at Old Sarum is currently well behind schedule¹ - in December 2009 some 124 houses of the 630 planned were built or being constructed. As a consequence of the slow development the building of a planned primary school has been delayed – which adversely impacts those families who have already moved in. We would not want this same situation repeated on strategic sites all around Salisbury. Existing partially completed allocations should be completed before starting development on new green field sites.
- 5.4.2 The re-development of brown field sites is preferable on environmental grounds. Phasing of developments should try to bring forward brown field sites (e.g. Churchfields, Central Car Park, UKLF Wilton) at an early stage.

Question 5.5 Transport. An Insurmountable Barrier?

The CS states that there are in, highways and transportation terms, no insurmountable barriers to delivery; that the transport network, with improvements, will be able to support the levels of growth over the plan period; and that it is unlikely that new road building will be required. What is the evidence to support these statements?

General Comments

- 5.5.1 We support many of the proposals put forward in the 'Radical' option, which Atkins have suggested in the Options Assessment (OA) should be refined and taken forward. However we have some concerns, as follows:
- This is just an options assessment – there is reference to the further work which needs to be done to arrive at an agreed Transport Strategy (OA para 7.13 "Certain of the interventions require more detailed confirmation of their effectiveness design and cost".)
 - There is reference to the further stakeholder consultation which is required, and we as a group would have many ideas of additional

¹ See Minutes of Wiltshire Council Southern Planning Committee 10.12.2009, agenda item 09

measures which should form part of a 'radical' approach (see 'comments on content and omissions' below).

- There is no indication as to whether Wiltshire Council will in fact back the 'radical' approach which their consultants have recommended (see 'potential barriers to delivery of a 'radical' transport strategy' below).
- The options assessment does not include all of the South Wiltshire area – Downton, Mere, Tisbury and Amesbury are excluded. This latter is particularly of concern since it includes one of the strategic growth sites (Kings Gate).

Comments on content and omissions

5.5.2 The group have many comments to make on the Salisbury Transport Strategy documents which have been published to date. We are aware that this is not the forum to make such detailed comments, we would however like to make the following points, since these are areas which we feel could be strengthened considerably and provide a much more robust transport strategy to support planned growth in the district.

Rail

5.5.3 Salisbury is well placed on two railway lines and much more could be made of the potential which exists to develop this mode of travel further. Given the cost and environmental constraints on new road building around Salisbury, and the protected river valleys and countryside in South Wiltshire, options to make better use of existing rail infrastructure should be given serious consideration, as should rail infrastructure improvements.

- One of Salisbury's two railway lines runs parallel to the A36 from Southampton through to Bristol and is capable of diverting a lot of traffic from this trunk road. There has been much public support for the Trans-Wilts rail campaign² which is calling for better services on the line from Salisbury through to Swindon. This would improve links to the five major urban centres in Wiltshire – Swindon, Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge and Salisbury, as well as other population centres like Westbury, Warminster and Dilton Marsh. An improved service could be delivered without the need for rail infrastructure improvements.
- We would like to see consideration given to new stations – Wilton was mentioned as a 'priority' new station in LTP1³ and Codford, Wyllye, Dinton, Alderbury and Porton were all considered 'possible' new stations.
- Opening halts/stations at those Park & Ride sites which are adjacent to the railway line – London Road, Petersfinger and Wilton – should also be considered. Traffic congestion on the A30 and A36 could be radically reduced if shuttle train/light rail served these P&R sites and could be used as a rapid means of transport into Salisbury not just by P&R users but also by residents on the outskirts of Salisbury or in Wilton who could walk/cycle to transport 'hubs' at the P&R sites.
- Given the development of Amesbury and the removal of aspirations to dual the A303 from the latest RSS we would also like to see reopening of a railway line to Amesbury considered, either as a rail or light rail link. This would also serve the major employment site at Porton. The former

² See www.transwilts.org.uk

³ Wiltshire County Council Local Transport Plan 2001/2 – 2005/6 figure 3.6.6 Location of existing and possible new stations in rail passenger service network

railway line enters Amesbury along the southern boundary of Solstice Park – a station/transport hub here could radically improve the transport links to that site.

Walking/cycling

5.5.4 The possibilities for improving walking/cycle infrastructure in Salisbury and surrounds have not been adequately covered in the Options Assessment, and the Cost Summary in Table 6.7 does not allocate any money to these measures. Given that walking and cycling are the healthiest and most environmentally sustainable of all modes it would be good to see this area rather better covered.

5.5.5 We note that Devon County Council recently allocated £25million in the period to 2011/12 to the County's cycling strategy⁴ and it was noted that the "Cycle Exeter" project has helped increase cycling in the city by 37% over the past three years, the aim now being to achieve similar success across the county⁵. It would be good to have equally strong support for cycling measures in South Wiltshire.

Potential barriers to delivery of a 'radical' transport strategy

5.5.6 Wiltshire Council have historically shown a preference for building new roads to support development in Salisbury, rather than prioritising 'radical' options.

- As our representation on Policy 2 pointed out, a Wiltshire Council officer is minuted (Topic Paper 17) as saying that Harnham might get money for a bypass if development is located there.
- In Autumn 2008 Wiltshire County Council submitted an 'Expression of Interest' (EoI) to the South West Regional Assembly in relation to a Major Transport Scheme bid for Salisbury. The estimated cost of the major scheme was given as £65 million which it was stated would be expected to spend in 2014/15 – 2018/19. It is not at all clear from the EoI what this money is required for, but references to 'sympathetically graded embankments and cuttings', together with the amount of money being requested, suggested that a major road scheme was included in the package.
- Following the cancellation of the Highways Agency's proposed Salisbury southern bypass in 1997 Wiltshire Council have submitted two planning applications (2002 & 2005) for the Brunel Link/Harnham Relief Road in Salisbury. Both planning applications have subsequently been withdrawn, however the Brunel Link is retained as a saved policy from the Local Plan. A Major Scheme Bid for a Wylde Valley Relief Road (from Wilton Park Wall junction to Stapleford) was submitted to government in 2003. There

⁴ See Minute 71 and the associated report EEC/09/231/HQ in the Minutes of Devon Council Cabinet meeting on 3.11.2009, on the web at:
http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_exc_20091103.html

⁵ See Devon County Council press release at:
http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/deliveringservices/directorates_and_departments/chief_executive_s/communication/news_service/press-releases/press-release.htm?id=2310

is some history of road schemes, once designed, reappearing again and concerns therefore that these roads, or variants of them, will be back.

- 5.5.7 Because of the past history we are concerned that, if developments around Salisbury lead to unacceptable levels of congestion, Wiltshire Council will bring back former road schemes, or introduce new ones. These concerns continue in the absence of a confirmed and robust Transport Strategy which gives confidence that sufficient investment will be made in alternatives which can achieve a significant modal shift and which will be delivered with the Core Strategy.

Question 5.6 Transport. What, Who and When?

What are the highway and transportation measures, or range of potential measures, that would need to be put in place in order to ensure that the transport network would be able to support the Strategic Sites? In developing these sites can congestion and safety problems on the major transport corridors of the A303 and A36 be overcome, can pressure on the Salisbury ring road be accommodated and can meaningful alternative transport choices to the private car be provided? Who would be responsible for financing and implementing any measures that would be required and when would they be implemented?

- 5.6.1 We have commented on some of the further measures which we feel should be introduced into a 'radical' transport strategy in 5.5.2 – 5.5.5 above. We have some comments below on site specific issues and the A303 and the A36/Salisbury ring road.

Site Specific Comments

5.6.2 Hampton Park

The development template for Hampton Park suggests that a planning application will be submitted within 18 months of adoption of the Core Strategy. In fact the application (S/2009/1943) was submitted some way ahead of adoption of the Core Strategy with the bulk of the 2300+ pages of planning application being added to the Council's website in mid January 2010.

- 5.6.3 Hopefully this planning application will not get determined until the Core Strategy has been agreed, since the proposals for green travel fall some way short of what is suggested in the 'radical' approach which Atkins recommend needs to underpin the Core Strategy. As an example the Salisbury Transport Study Options Assessment (STSOAR) suggests a high frequency (six/hour) bus service from Hampton Park into town, while the planning application suggests only a half hourly service which does not extend into the development itself).

5.6.4 Harnham

We have several concerns regarding the suitability of a site in Harnham for employment uses, especially for HGV-generating uses, for the following reasons:

- As our representation on Matter 3 mentioned, consideration of the likely origin and destination of HGV traffic should inform employment site selection in Salisbury. Employment located in Harnham is likely to

increase the congestion at points such as the Harnham Gyratory, which is already identified as a congestion hotspot (Forecasting Report 4.1).

- The existing 4.5 ha Harnham Business Park is largely empty. It would appear that future employment use for the remainder of this site has not been taken into account in calculating the traffic impact on Netherhampton Road and Harnham Gyratory, since this site does not appear in the modelled developments (Table A.1 of the Forecast Report).
- Wiltshire Council have now (in their additional consultation on Wiltshire & Swindon Waste sites which started on 27.1.2010) suggested that the Harnham Business Park site be allocated for a Strategic Waste site. It is suggested that potential uses might include a Materials Recovery Facility, Waste Transfer Station or Local Recycling⁶. All of these uses would generate considerable volumes of traffic, including HGV traffic, and any sort of usage such as this has not been considered in the Harnham traffic modelling which has been undertaken.
- There is a statement (Problems & Issues report p.49) that 'the Harnham Gyratory currently performs well once traffic is able to access the gyratory, but there are delays on the approach roads'. This does raise the question as to quite how or whether junction remodelling will help the situation.
- Curiously, given the acknowledged congestion issues at the Harnham gyratory, it does not feature in the queue length surveys (section 7 of the Data Collection Report).

Amesbury (Kings Gate) & A303

- 5.6.5 As already commented in respect of Matter 4, **the lack of any transport strategy for Amesbury is a serious omission**. This is especially so given the issues regarding the congestion on the A303 and the removal of aspirations to dual that road from the Secretary of State's changes to the SW RSS. It is concerning that the Salisbury Transport Study Objectives document published in December 2009 is still quoting (para 2.12) transport policies from the **June 2006** draft RSS (e.g. policy TR3 re the second strategic route). This was superseded in **July 2008** by the draft revised RSS containing the Secretary of State's proposed changes and all the transport policies (including TR3) have been replaced.
- 5.6.6 Given the removal of any policy to dual the A303, transport investment on the corridor should now focus on improving the railway line which links London to Exeter via Salisbury. A considerably improved service could be introduced if dual track was re-instated on the Salisbury – Exeter link. The London to South West and South Wales Multi-Modal Study (SWARMMS) recommended *"re-instatement [of] double track between Exeter and Salisbury (possibly implemented on an incremental basis) to allow more services to run, to improve rail service reliability, to enable new stations to be built at Clyst Hayes and Wilton and to provide capacity to accommodate new freight services."*⁷. Following the cancellation of plans to dual the A303 at

⁶ Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Allocation Development Plan Document Additional Informal Consultation January 2010

⁷ Government Office for the South West, London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study SWARMMS FINAL REPORT May 2002, para 3.12 'Key Recommendations'

Stonehenge in 2007 and the subsequent removal of other A303 improvement schemes from the Highways Agency's programme it would be helpful if these aspirations could now be prioritised.

A36

- 5.6.7 It is acknowledged that up to half the traffic on the A36 may be through traffic depending on the time of day. This being so, consideration must be given to external factors which might change the amount of traffic on this road – examples include the announcement in 2009 by Associated British Ports that it intends to revive plans for a new deepwater container terminal at **Dibden Bay** on the western shore of Southampton Water, rejected by government after a year-long planning inquiry in 2001/02. The inability of the railway from Southampton to Bristol and South Wales to carry large international freight containers means that freight traffic on this route is carried on the parallel A36 trunk road.
- 5.6.8 Future traffic generators on the A36 may also include a proposed **regional distribution centre for Lidl** close to the junction between the M27 and the A36 at Ower in Hampshire and the planned threefold expansion of **Southampton airport** to carry 6 million passengers by 2030⁸.
- 5.6.9 Various measures to encourage modal shift to the railways for passengers have been outlined in 5.5.3 above. In order to achieve a modal shift for freight, gauge and height restrictions on the South Coast to Bristol and South Wales railway line need to be overcome. The Bristol Bath to South Coast Study reported that this would require significant investment⁹. However we believe this investment decision should be kept under review in the context of the increased pressures on the A36 and the growing emphasis on lower carbon transport choices.
- 5.6.10 The March 2006 Strategy Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy made the point (para 11.13) that the transport proposals could be improved by
- *More emphasis and investment being put on improving the rail network and making public transport more integrated and attractive than travel by car.*
 - *The creation of the second 'strategic' route not being included in the RSS until there is an improved Waterloo-Exeter-Plymouth fully dualled and electric rail line in place, should the case for improved connectivity with London be proven in sustainability (including economic) terms."*

⁸ Southampton Airport Master Plan 2006 – 2030. BAA Southampton. 2006

⁹ Bristol/Bath to South Coast Study, Final Report Strategic Corridor, GOSW 2004, para 4.6-4.7