

Rep Ref: 1357
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SWCS Inspector
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Dear Sir

SWCS Examination – Prospective Abolition of RSS

My comments are as follows. (Since this topic falls outside my original mandate from the Harnham Neighbourhood Association, I comment in this instance as a private individual, not as a representative of the Association).

1) Notwithstanding the Council's statement that its own locally derived estimates correspond broadly with the RSS, the existence of the RSS relieved the Council from the need to think through and justify a coherent vision for the future size and character of Salisbury. Substantial growth for Salisbury was mandatory under the RSS, as a subset of national growth forecasts, and the CS reflects this.

2) You will have noted, however, that there is a very substantial body of opinion in Salisbury (I suspect a majority) which is strongly opposed to growth on the scale proposed in the CS. Much of this may be simply resistance to any change, but it is absolutely clear that the growth proposed will have a very serious effect on the quality of life of many residents (most particularly Harnham residents). What are the local benefits that outweigh this?

3) Countering this are strong voices from within the business sector, and especially from landowners and developers, in favour of maximum possible growth.

4) A balance has to be struck between these two opinions, and my own view is that the CS does not get that balance right. Business growth should be organic and much more modest, exploiting Salisbury's advantages in the fields of tourism and hi-tech development. Based on coherent planning, plus demographic forecasts, the consequent housing needs can and should then be assessed on a bottom-up basis.

5) Does ANYONE really think that the RSS figures, derived top-down from national forecasts at a time of boom, now bear any relation to the current outlook? I think not. On this basis, the housing numbers and employment land figures in the CS are unsound. Abolition of the RSS provides an opportunity for a truly local plan to be developed. This opportunity should be grasped and the CS fundamentally reworked.

Yours faithfully
John P McGarry